



VSI ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

1 January - 31 December 2022

Seirbhís Deonach Idirnáisúnta Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta
Voluntary Service International



Carmichael House, 4 Brunswick Street North, Dublin, D07 RHA8, Ireland
Voluntary Service International (VSI) is a limited company having no share capital. Company number: 40520; CHY (Revenue) Number: 9220; Registered Charity Number: 20023065

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2. Legal & Administrative Information

Directors:

Robin Hanan (Chair)

Nikita Patak (Co-Treasurer) (Appointed 11 March 2022)

Aidan Graver (Co-Treasurer) (Appointed 11 March 2022)

Máille Brady-Bates

Claire Devlin

Liam Keenan (Resigned 20 August 2022)

Dervla King

Voluntary Service International (VSI) is a limited company having no share capital.

Company registered number: 40520

Charity tax exemption number CHY Number: 9220

Charity Regulatory Authority number (Registered Charity Number): 20023065

Registered office: 4 Brunswick Street North, Dublin, D07 RHA8, Ireland

Company Secretary: Helen Walmsley

CEO: Helen Walmsley

Board Committees: Finance Sub-Committee of the Board was composed of Nikita Patak, Aidan Graver, Robin Hanan and Helen Walmsley, with Del Thorogood in attendance

Governance Policy and Compliance Committee was chaired by Claire Devlin and included Máille Brady-Bates, Robin Hanan and Helen Walmsley.

VSI is now fully compliant with the Charities Regulator's Governance Code.

Accountants: Bradan, 19 College Green, Dublin 2

Auditor: Roberts Nathan, 9 Exchange Pl, International Financial Services Centre, Dublin 1

Bankers: Permanent TSB, 70 Grafton Street, Dublin 2

3. About Voluntary Service International



Voluntary Service International (VSI) is the Irish branch of Service Civil International (SCI), a worldwide peace movement that began after the First World War.

We are a volunteer-based movement founded in 1965 and headquartered in Dublin. For over 55 years we have promoted peace, social justice and sustainable development at home and abroad. During that time, walls have fallen, borders have moved and the challenges facing us have changed. While many things have undoubtedly improved, there are still many of the same problems (e.g. conflict, human rights) alongside the emergence of new problems (e.g. climate change, growing inequality).

These challenges are large and multifaceted but we at VSI believe we can play a part in addressing them. At the heart of many of these problems is a lack of understanding. Of people, their backgrounds, their cultures, their own day-to-day challenges. Of the environment, its importance, its fragility, our impact on it. And the interdependence of all of these things.

The tool we have chosen to help combat this is a simple one, but we know through experience that it is a powerful one: volunteering. By bringing together volunteers from across the globe we aim to increase awareness and understanding of the people, the societies and the environment around us. This deeper understanding will contribute to a global and local society which is more open-minded, aware and responsible for its own behaviour and actions. We are able to do this with the help of our network partner organisations at home and abroad, enabling volunteering experiences that promote peace, social justice and sustainable development. In 57 years, we have achieved a lot as an organisation. We recognise that, over this time, the world has changed and that we, as VSI, need to adapt to this and the new challenges it presents.

Our vision

is a world of peace, social justice and sustainable development, where all people live together with mutual respect.

Our mission

is to promote a culture of peace, social justice and sustainable development by organizing and supporting volunteering projects, both in Ireland and internationally.

Our Values

Non-violence: choosing peaceful resistance and conflict resolution without recourse to violence as a principle and a method

Human Rights: Respect for individuals as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Solidarity: International solidarity for a more just and equitable world, and solidarity between all human beings

Respect for the Environment and the ecosystems of which we are a part of and upon which we are dependent

Inclusion: being open and inclusive of all individuals without discrimination

Empowerment: providing people with knowledge and tools to understand and act to transform the social, cultural and economic structures that affect their lives at all levels

Co-operation with local communities as well as other local, national and international partners to strengthen the positive potential within civil society as a whole

4. Introduction from the Chairperson

The COVID pandemic and lockdown continued for longer than we had hoped, continuing to hamper face-to-face contacts, which are central to VSI's and SCI's work. Staff, Board and volunteers continued to develop online volunteering and educational programmes and to consider how to improve our future programmes.

These programmes were made possible by the creativity and commitment of the strong staff team led by CEO Helen Walmsley. In the first part of the year, Áine Boyle was Programmes Co-ordinator, supported by two European Solidarity Corps (ESC) volunteers, Eiméar Savage (Programmes Officer) and Nicolas de Wergifosse (Communications and Marketing Officer). Senka Nenadov joined the VSI team from Serbia for two months in the summer as an ESC volunteer. Eiméar was appointed Programmes Co-ordinator in November, when Áine moved on to new adventures. Two new ESC volunteers joined the team later in the year, Seán Maguire from September and Anabelle Burova from November.

Due to COVID restrictions, we were unable to host any International Volunteer Projects ('workcamps') in Ireland during the year. We sent a small number of in-person and online volunteers to projects with our branches and partners in Europe. We continued to send and host volunteers on ESC projects, providing a variety of volunteering opportunities for young people from Ireland. Our Dublin Local Group volunteers finally resumed volunteering in 2022, following a 2-year suspension of their work due to COVID.

In 2022 we were awarded the Global Citizenship Education (GCE) grant from Irish Aid to support our volunteers to explore and engage with global issues. Through our Youth Climate Justice Fund from the DCEDIY we supported young people to explore inequalities created by climate change and actions, to reduce inequalities and poverty. We are signatories to Comhlámh, Dóchas and IDEA codes for quality and standards and are supported by these organisations in these areas of our work. These initiatives have supported us to meet our strategic goal of re-emphasising the value of volunteering for peace and to further embed our overall mission and values into our work.



I would like to thank the Board members for a very active year's work. In 2022 we were joined by our new co-Treasurers Nikita Patak and Aidan Graver. Máille Brady-Bates, Claire Devlin and Dervla King continued throughout the year. Liam Keenan did not go forward for re-election at the AGM.

In 2022 we moved to new office premises at the Carmichael centre in Dublin 7. We held our 2022 AGM in-person in our new office building and arranged for some attendees to join us online. We are pleased to have continued working with our auditors Roberts Nathan.

VSI's work would not have been possible without the support of funders and donors. Our principal sources of funding were the Youth Service Grant, Youth Capital Fund and Youth Climate Justice Fund of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and the European Commission (through the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme, administered by Léargas). We were awarded the Global Citizenship Education grant from Irish Aid and we also received a grant from the Health Service Executive. In 2022 we received project and membership fees and generous donations from members, volunteers and donors. We are grateful for the support from DCEDIY as part of the Shared Services support in accountancy and governance delivered through Bradan accountants and The Wheel, coordinated by NYCI.

We dearly miss Diarmaid McGarrigle who sadly died in August. Diarmaid worked at Glebe House, our partner and volunteer project host organisation in Strangford, Northern Ireland and devoted his life to international voluntary service.

Finally, I would like to personally thank the volunteers who are the lifeblood of VSI for their work at every level, including projects in Ireland, internationally and online.



Robin Hanan, Chairperson

5. VSI Staff & Office

Office Move

In April, VSI moved offices! We said goodbye to 20 Dominick St. and continued our mission to promote peace and solidarity from Carmichael House, 4 North Brunswick St. in Dublin 7. Packing up was a long and interesting process, with many years of volunteering memories and activities stored in the old office. Staff and volunteers sorted through our paper files (over 50 years worth!) and have prepared files and papers for our archives, a lengthy process! We were committed to repurposing as much of the furniture and old office equipment as we could which added to the time it all took. Carmichael House is a great facility where many small Irish not-for-profit organisations are based, enabling VSI to forge new connections. Why not come by and say hello!



VSI Staff outside the new VSI office building, Carmichael House

Áine says goodbye to the VSI team!

In November, Áine, our Programmes Co-ordinator, came to the end of her time with the VSI team. Áine joined VSI as an ESC volunteer, before becoming our Programmes Coordinator. We would like to thank Áine for all of her hard work and contributions to the VSI mission over the past two years, which included our first ever Youth for Climate Justice Project. VSI wishes Áine all the best for the future!

"It's very hard to believe that two years have passed. I've learnt so much in that period, met so many incredible people, and had a lot of fun along the way! Thank you so much to the VSI team for your support over the last two years. See you around the SCI/VSI world!"



Áine at the VSI Office!

Eiméar is our new Programmes Co-ordinator!

After finishing her ESC project in 2022, Eiméar decided to continue her journey with VSI by becoming our new Programmes Co-ordinator! Eiméar on her new role: 'I really enjoy being part of the VSI team, so I was sad that my time with VSI was due to end in October when my ESC finished. Needless to say, I feel very lucky to be able to continue my journey with VSI, an organisation that holds very similar values to my own. It is a privilege to take over from Áine as the new Programmes Co-ordinator and to continue working with all our volunteers and members.'

I've learned so much since I started here, and have gained new skills and experience that I can't wait to put into practice and build on in the new year. I am excited to see what opportunities this new role brings, and look forward to working closely with the rest of the VSI team and our partners in Ireland and further afield.'

ESC Projects in VSI

Eiméar



Eiméar volunteered as our Programmes Officer ESC for 12 months until November 2022, when she joined the staff team, see above for her comments on her experience in VSI.

Nick



In October 2022, our Marketing & Communications Officer, Nick, completed his ESC project with VSI: "My time as VSI's Marketing and Communications Officer has proved both eventful and interesting. I started in October 2021, so my first few months as an ESC volunteer took place online against the backdrop of a global pandemic. Following these

early days, as restrictions eased, the team was finally able to meet in person. My last few months with VSI brought a whole host of new tasks, including promoting VSI at volunteer events, nationally and internationally - my ESC has come full-circle. For those thinking about taking part in their own VSI and/or ESC adventure, I can tell you first-hand that it's worth doing!

Senka



The VSI team were pleased to welcome Senka in May, who came all the way from Serbia to complete her ESC in person at the VSI office in Dublin! After planning to come in 2021, it was a long but worthwhile wait! Senka spent two months in Dublin volunteering with us, where she represented VSI at events and delivered a presentation on volunteering and the ESC

Annabelle



Annabelle began volunteering as the Programmes Officer with VSI in November 2022: "I had thought about doing a long-term ESC for a while and when I found the placement in VSI, it seemed like a perfect fit. I am excited to be a part of an organization that represents the same goals that I value. In the first couple of weeks, I took part in the Youth for Climate Justice project, completed my on-

programme at the Central Remedial Clinic in Clontarf. Big thanks to Senka for all of the enthusiasm, energy and experience that she has contributed to the staff team. We wish Senka the very best and look forward to seeing her around the VSI/SCI world in the future!

Here are Senka's thoughts on her time in the VSI office: 'I have to say a huge thank you to Helen, Mateja and Áine. They made what I was thinking is impossible into a reality! As somebody from a non-EU country, who is also disabled, I feel incredibly thankful. This ESC opportunity exceeded my expectations in all aspects, from the incredible accommodation which is fully accessible and international, to all the professional experience I gained by trying and doing. I want to make clear my gratitude for being able to get to know you five, including my fellow ESC co-workers, Eiméar and Nick, professionally and personally, over the nine weeks. Without your friendship, support and collaboration, my time here would not have been the same, and that I know for sure.'

arrival training, and took part in the STAND Global Issues online course.

Seán

Seán joined our team in September as the VSI Marketing & Communications Officer: "I joined the VSI team in September and I have really enjoyed my time in the office. I have been fortunate over the course of the year to have supported the VSI team by promoting VSI projects, and representing VSI at volunteering fairs, meetings, and seminars. I'm glad that, day-to-day, I can promote work and values that I believe in, while learning a lot about global issues and meeting new people in the process."



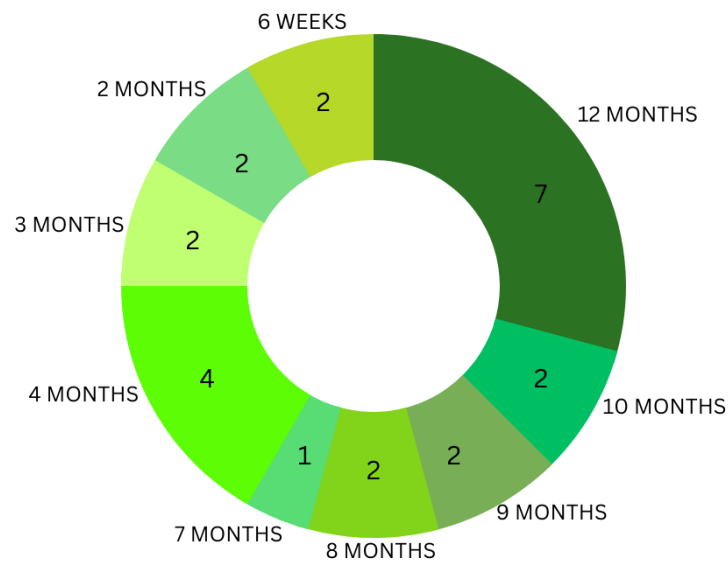
6. Volunteering Activities

VSI resumed sending volunteers overseas once the COVID-19 travel ban was lifted in the autumn of 2021. Throughout 2022, we saw a steady increase in the number of overseas volunteers, particularly through the European Solidarity Corps programme. Learn more about our volunteers' activities below.

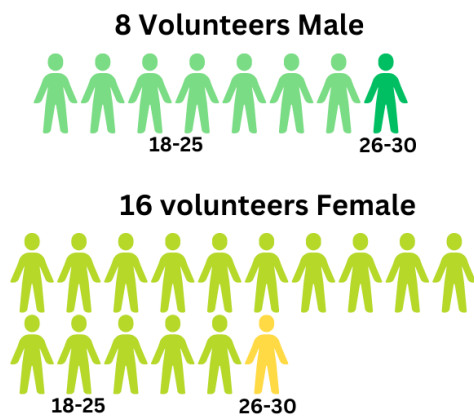
VOLUNTEER PROGRAMMES STATISTICS

ESC PROJECT STATISTICS

ESC Project Duration



ESC's age/gender



ESC Project Destinations



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER PROJECT STATISTICS

IN-PERSON IVP PROJECTS



1



1



1



2

ONLINE IVP PROJECTS

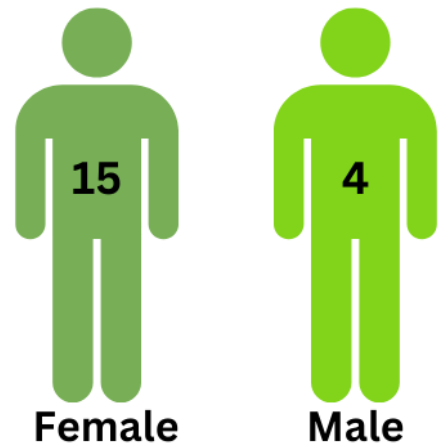
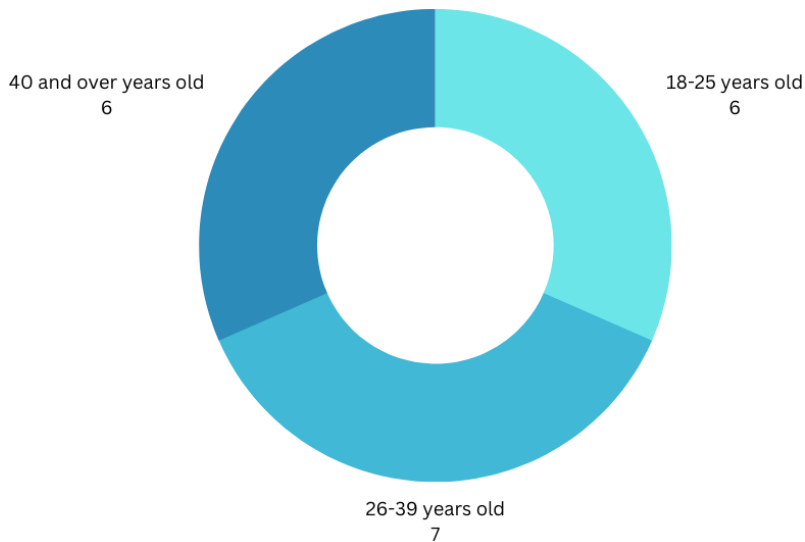


2



1

NUMBER OF IVP VOLUNTEERS



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

International Volunteer Projects (IVPs) are a unique form of volunteering, which bring together people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds to live and work together on short-term projects with local communities in over 70 countries worldwide.

Volunteers support these communities in their long-term work for a more just, environmentally friendly and peaceful society. The projects also aim to develop the intercultural understanding of volunteers, who learn about the cultures of other volunteers in the group through discussion, themed free-time activities and cooking together.

In 2022 VSI were unable to host projects in Ireland due to COVID-19 but we were able to start sending volunteers abroad. The year 2022 was a combination of in-person and online projects. The project topics ranged from environmental protection and arts, to arranging educational activities for young people.

IVP International

In 2022, we sent 3 volunteers from Ireland to IVPs abroad. In total, these volunteers completed 5 projects in 4 different countries. The projects offered a range of different topics and activities.

1. English Summer Camp in Kranjska Gora - SCI Slovenia, 2 projects in the month of July.
The main goal of the project was to improve children's English vocabulary and conversational English through fun, sport and creative activities.
2. Art Camp (Langendorf SO) - SCI Switzerland, in August.
This project was about an art space, that was open to young artists, teachers, children, young people, and others interested. It offered participants various opportunities to develop their creative skills. Volunteers were able to meet and exchange ideas in an unconventional way. The project also involved the participants in planning and implementing events and activities.
3. Environmentally aware and Trash hunting- SEEDS Iceland, in August.
This project was part of a series of projects organised by SEEDS in cooperation with different partners. SEEDS worked with and supported the Icelandic ministry for Environment and Natural Resources on a project to clean up the Icelandic coastline.
4. Renovate a Baroque Rectory in Semnevice - INEX Czech Republic, in July.
This project was oriented to build a sustainable community, support regional ecological and educational activities and revitalize the Baroque rectory. The aim of this project was to renovate the rectory and its surroundings, and enhance community spirit.



Over the duration of the project you get to know the other volunteers quite well. It was fascinating to see the changes in attitude and confidence in some of the participants. Taking part in the workcamp was an incredibly positive experience for them, and me.

- Denis, Renovate a Baroque Rectory volunteer

IVP Online

In 2022, VSI placed 16 volunteers on a variety of online IVP projects. Online IVPs allowed volunteers to continue to connect with people from across the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online volunteers work together virtually for peace and social justice, and enjoy a strong focus on non-formal learning through groupwork, discussions and presentations. Below you can find details of the different projects.

1. International Art Project Online – SCI Germany, in March – two VSI volunteers participated. Volunteers worked together and individually to create pieces of art, through which they built community and shared their thoughts on topics.
2. 'Hear with your Eyes, See with your Ears': Memories of female concentration camp survivors – SCI Germany, in August - two VSI volunteers participated. Volunteers analysed video interviews from the Ravensbrück Memorial Museum media collection of survivors of the Ravensbrück women's concentration camp, with the aim of making interviews more accessible to the general public.
3. Teach English Language – Volunteers for Peace, Vietnam, from January – twelve volunteers participated. Volunteers provided English classes to Vietnamese adults on a one-to-one basis to help them develop their spoken English skills.

It is extremely fulfilling to watch students gain confidence in expressing themselves over time.

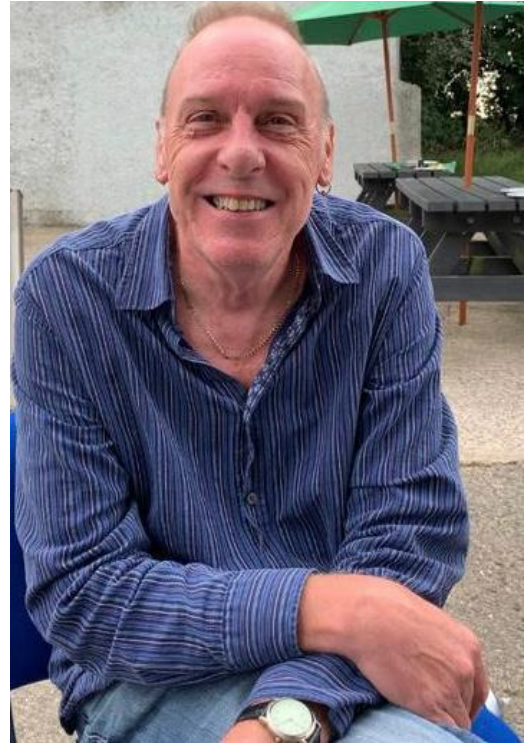
My students come from disadvantaged backgrounds so it's also rewarding to know that our lessons will help them in a more meaningful way such as by helping them find a better paid job in the future.

I really enjoyed getting to know my students and teaching them English. It was a very relaxed and friendly teaching environment and at times it felt more like we were sharing stories and experiences than having a class! The teaching resources that were available were a great help. I felt a bit nervous going into the programme because I didn't have so much experience in formal English teaching, but my confidence really grew! I was having a lot of fun coming up with new exercises and challenging my students. It was also heart-warming to see how much their confidence in English has grown.

- Sangha, left, & Judith, right, Teach English Language volunteers

Remembering Diarmaid McGarrigle

VSI volunteers and members were deeply saddened when Diarmaid McGarrigle died suddenly but peacefully, on 25th August 2022. Diarmaid had recently retired from Glebe House, Harmony Community Trust, our partner and IVP host organisation in Strangford, Northern Ireland. He was also involved in IVS-NI, our former branch in Northern Ireland. We miss Diarmaid dearly as a friend, colleague and volunteer who had a lifelong love of volunteering and devoted his life to international voluntary service.



DUBLIN LOCAL GROUP (DLG)



Andy, DLG volunteer

“In 2022 the Dublin Local Group finally got back to volunteering, a full 2 years since COVID started. It took the DLG volunteers and VSI staff a great deal of work to draw up policies, protocols and guidelines to make sure we followed government guidelines and to ensure that both our clients and volunteers were protected. Our first visit was organised in mid-June and our first job in 2022 was decluttering and cleaning a whole apartment in one morning. This is a job we all felt very proud of! We continued volunteering all the way to Christmas. Thanks to our 10 active volunteers, we visited 11 clients and did 6 jobs over 17 weeks. We did our very best to make 2022 a great success despite the difficult situation and we also managed to organise some social events to make sure the group kept in touch.”

- Lydia Capitano, DLG volunteer

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS (ESC)

We work through the ESC programme as both a coordinating and sending organisation. VSI has been awarded a Quality Label by Léargas which recognises our ability to deliver high quality solidarity activities in accordance with the principles, objectives and quality standards of the European Solidarity Corps.

This EU-funded volunteer programme is open to 18-30 year olds, and provides young people with opportunities to get involved in the work of a wide variety of non-governmental, not-for-profit organisations, either abroad or in their home country, for between 2 and 12 months.

The programme is fully funded, with volunteers' living allowance and accommodation, travel costs, insurance and language training all covered. The voluntary activities involve a range of themes and topics including community and youth work, human rights, social inclusion, theatre, multimedia, environmental protection, sustainability, and many more. Through civic engagement, the programme aims to foster a sense of community and intercultural understanding among young people across the EU and beyond.

VSI resumed sending volunteers internationally through the programme in the autumn of 2021, and throughout 2022 we saw a steady increase in ESC volunteers going abroad. In 2022, VSI welcomed two new in-country ESC volunteers to the VSI team, to continue the work of the previous two in-office volunteers on programmes and marketing and communications, as well as one short-term ESC volunteer, who helped out across the board.

Read on to learn about the experiences of ESC volunteers whom VSI sent on projects across the EU in 2022.

ESC Sending Programme



Emer and Ciara, ESCs in the Netherlands

Emer and Ciara, ESC volunteers in the Netherlands

Emer and Ciara were both on placement in the Netherlands for 8 months with Lava Legato, a community-based organisation, working with young adults and marginalized groups.

My experience in my ESC with Lava Legato was thoroughly enjoyable. I gained so many skills, developed my knowledge in the area of social work and disabilities, and met people from all over Europe and developed life long friendships with them.

- Ciara, ESC Volunteer

Rúairí, ESC volunteer in Italy

Rúairí volunteered for 12 months with ‘Zō Centro Culture Contemporanee,’ a centre for contemporary and cultural arts in Catania, Sicily. He participated in a wide range of theatrical and musical activities, such as helping with stage set-up and behind-the-scenes work including sound and lighting for shows.



Rúairí, ESC in Italy

Robert, ESC volunteer in France

Robert volunteered for 6 weeks in France with ‘IDC - Initiative et Développement Citoyen.’ As part of the “Be Green” project, he learned about sustainable and healthy ways of living. Robert also had a chance to host a workshop with his fellow volunteers on the process of growing mushrooms and on why we should recycle more.



Robert, back right, preparing workshop activities

Here at the IDC we are learning to recycle the coffee waste by using it to grow mushrooms and also we use the coffee waste the in our compost mix to help improve the quality of the soil and the quality of the vegetables we grow on the soil each year.

Robert, ESC Volunteer

Aoife and Julia, ESC volunteers in Iceland

Aoife and Julia volunteered for 3 months in Iceland with Worldwide Friends in Vervalðarvinir. They helped in a wide range of environmental and educational activities, including potting black cottonwood trees for reforestation projects, doing beach cleans, as well as organising workshops. In their free time they saw amazing waterfalls and glaciers along the Snæfellsnes peninsula and the south coast of Iceland.



Julia (middle) & Aoife (far right) in Iceland

Cian, ESC volunteer in France

Cian started his 12 month placement in France in 2022. He is part of the European Solidarity Corps Young Ambassadors initiative in Bordeaux.

Volunteers with 'Maison De l'Europe Bordeaux - Aquitaine' promote core values of multiculturalism, diversity, and peace, through promoting and participating in major cultural and sporting events.



Cian, ESC in France (2nd from left, top row)



Erin, ESC in Luxembourg

Erin, ESC volunteer in Luxembourg

Erin started her 12 month placement in the 'Ateliers by SNJ' in Luxembourg. It is a workshop run by the national youth service as a transitional space for young people who are not in education, employment or training. These young people take part in various activities, including textile or woodwork upcycling projects and cooking.

Craig, ESC volunteer in Poland

VSI co-ordinated Craig's ESC project which started in 2019 when he completed 8 months of a 12 month ESC project in Chisinau, Moldova, as a photographic journalist. Unfortunately, he had to leave that project early due to the pandemic. Craig volunteered in Poznan, Poland with SCI branch, 'One World Association', where he completed the remainder of his ESC. He took part in various short-term volunteering projects, including one with Ukrainian refugees, where he organised games and activities.



Craig, ESC in Poland, with local scouts

7. Global Citizenship Education

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAMME

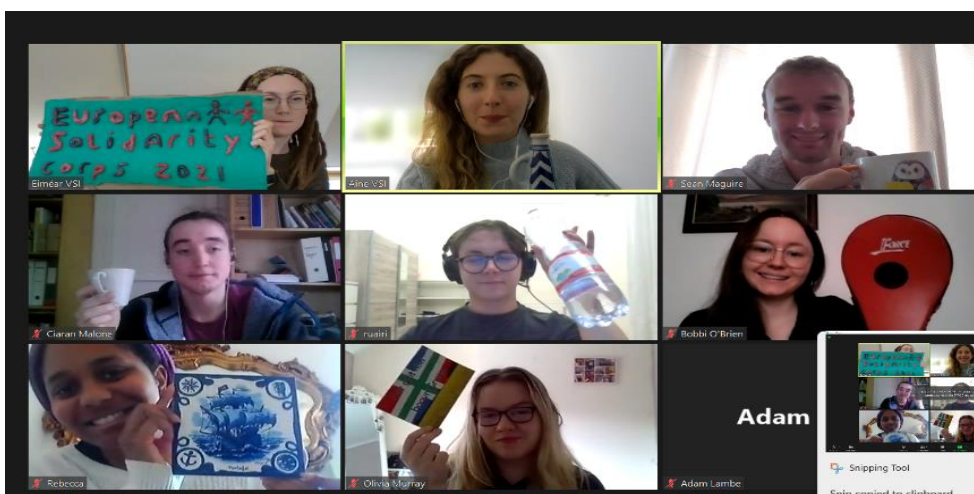
VSI received funding from Irish Aid to run a one-year Global Citizenship Education (GCE) programme with our volunteers. This was an important development in relation to our strategic plan and delivering on our goals and targets such as those set out in our self-assessment submission for the IDEA Code of Good Practice on Development Education. It has also enabled us to further embed our overall mission and values into our work.

The programme commenced in August 2022, with the aim of ensuring all VSI volunteers receive two GCE workshops - one prior to their volunteering and one after returning from their placement. In addition to that, VSI began hosting monthly meetups on topics related to global justice, with volunteers choosing the topic and facilitating the workshop. The GCE workshops and meetups were online, with one in-person meetup in 2022.

To further strengthen our progress on our strategic plan and inspired by the interest of volunteers in this year's GCE programme, VSI submitted a 3-year application for funding under Irish Aid's 2023 GCE grant, in December 2022. This will allow us to continue our GCE programme after July 2023. Meanwhile, we will continue to deliver our 2022 GCE programme by hosting monthly meetups and GCE workshops into 2023.

Global Citizenship Education Workshops

In September, we completed our first 'pre-departure' GCE workshop - 'From Volunteering to Global Citizenship: Taking the first step' - which nine volunteers attended. In October, five volunteers attended our first 'post-placement' workshop - 'From Volunteering to Global Citizenship: Next steps'. Both workshops were jointly facilitated by Áine and Eiméar, where volunteers and facilitators alike engaged in a range of thought-provoking activities and discussions.



'From Volunteering to Global Citizenship: Taking the first step' workshop

Monthly Meetups

VSI hosted the first in our series of online monthly meetups in August. It was facilitated by Rebecca Labour after she attended SCI Austria's Erasmus+ project, 'Beyond Neocolonialism'. The topic was Climate Justice and Neocolonialism, and nine volunteers attended the meetup. In September, we hosted a meetup on Gender Inequality, which was facilitated by Eiméar, VSI's Programmes Officer, which ten volunteers attended.

October's meetup was in-person at the VSI office and was hosted by Bobbi O'Brien, where volunteers learned about the importance of community and community activism. The November meetup was on Climate Justice and was jointly facilitated by four volunteers from this year's Youth for Climate Justice project, with eight volunteers in attendance. We are happy with the turnout rates to our workshops and meetups in 2022, and hope to build on those as we expect our volunteer numbers to increase over time.



First in-person monthly meetup in October

COMING HOME TO COMMUNITY

A WORKSHOP HOSTED BY VSI AND THE CHTC PROJECT

Why you should come!

- Learn about the importance of rebuilding community in our daily lives
- Experience non-formal education
- Make connections with likeminded people
- Learn a little about intentional communities, community activism, communication, and permaculture
- Learn how to become a community building activist
- Free tea, coffee, oat milk, and snacks!



BYO MUG/KEEP CUP!



REGISTER YOUR INTEREST HERE

26TH OCTOBER 2022

12:30 – 14:30

LOCATION VSI OFFICE, 4-7 NORTH
BRUNSWICK STREET, DUBLIN 7

Connect!

cominghometocommunity@gmail.com
programmes@vsi.ie



Promotional poster for October meetup

YOUTH FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE PROJECT

VSI repeated our online ‘Youth for Climate Justice’ project in November 2022 for the second consecutive year, funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth under their Youth Climate Justice Fund 2022.

The project featured a week of online workshops led by Áine, with the help of two participants from the 2021 project, Bobbi O’Brien and Rebecca Labour. It culminated in an in-person seminar, with 12 young people from across Ireland taking part in the project. Participants were encouraged to explore the climate crisis from a human-centred perspective, focusing on the inequalities created by climate change, nationally and globally, and recognising climate actions as part of a broader effort to reduce inequalities and poverty. Over the course of one week, they received campaign and social media skills training, developed their own climate justice social media campaigns and explored possible next steps in climate justice activism following the project. One of the stand out aspects of this year’s project was the fact that two participants from last year helped facilitate it. This is clear evidence of the strong impact the Youth for Climate Justice project can have, when participants remain engaged with both VSI’s work and climate justice activism. We were inspired by the enthusiasm and motivation of the young people who participated in the project - a huge thanks to you all for your hard work!



Youth For Climate Justice Project, First Zoom Session

Follow-up

Participants’ engagement in climate justice activism was certainly not limited to the project itself. Their online campaigns were shared widely on social media, reaching many more young people, and some of them went on to facilitate their own workshop on climate justice, after receiving professional facilitation skills training. This

two hour workshop was the VSI November monthly meetup, and was hosted by four of the Youth for Climate Justice participants. One participant became a Guest Delegate on the National Youth Assembly on Climate, and another attended an international SCI seminar in Innsbruck, Austria. Some of the participants created a book club after the project, where they met to discuss climate-related books. Finally, we delivered an online information session on volunteering opportunities with VSI for participants in December, encouraging them to get involved in other volunteer activities and to remain engaged with VSI.



Youth For Climate Justice participants at the in-person seminar

It was super enjoyable - just having the opportunity to share my knowledge on the topic made me more motivated in facilitating. I was in their shoes previously so I was in a position to help them based on my experience, e.g. sharing my campaign from last year.

- Rebecca, YCJP 2022 Facilitator

It allowed me to take a deep dive into a topic that I'm passionate about and share it in a creative way so that I could teach other people about it. Having the support from the VSI team made the process really manageable

- Bobbi, YCJP 2022 Facilitator

8. Networking & Collaboration

The impact of COVID-19 continued during 2022, affecting both our national and international projects. Many activities remained online, especially for the first few months of the year, but as time went by, we began to see more and more in-person events taking place. Read on for a rundown of all the in-person and online events VSI staff and volunteers took part in this year.

ERASMUS+ SEMINARS

In 2022 we were delighted to be able to give our volunteers the opportunity to attend international seminars in-person after two years of online only activities.

European Youth for Global Solidarity (Beyond Neocolonialism)

This seminar was organised by SCI Austria and took place from 17th – 23rd July in Vienna. Rebecca Labour, a participant in VSI's 2021 Youth for Climate Justice Project, took part. Here's what she said about it: 'We examined terminologies surrounding colonialism, learned how to create an impactful campaign and engaged in conversations around the issue of neocolonialism. I enjoyed it a lot, it was an incredible opportunity to learn and grow.'



Rebecca, top row, fourth from left

The Gender Effect: Training of Trainers

SCI Italy hosted this seminar from 10th - 16th April in Rome. Aine Boyle, VSI's Programmes Co-ordinator, attended, where 27 young people from across Europe met to explore, learn and develop skills in various aspects related to the theme of gender. Here's what Aine had to say about her time there: 'The training explored how we can combat gender-based discrimination in volunteering and youth projects and create safer spaces for people of all genders and sexualities. The topics we discussed during the week included gender stereotypes, sexual harassment, sexuality and consent. It was emotionally intense but also really motivating and I'm excited to work towards making our volunteer projects a safe space for everyone.'



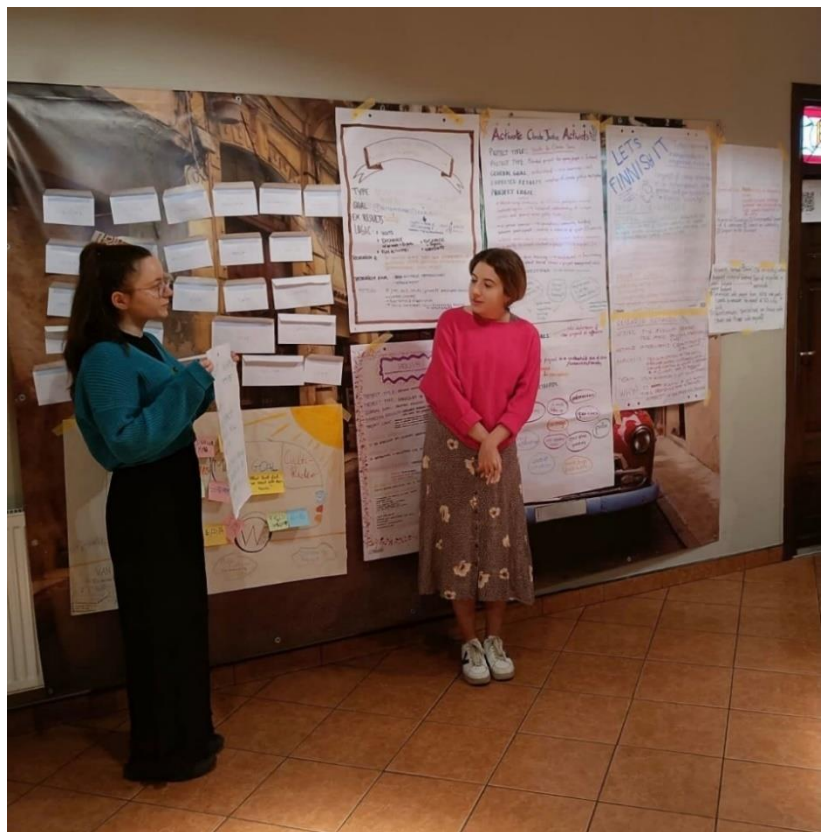
Aine at The Gender Effect training, bottom row, third from left

Be the Change Training

SCI Poland held two seminars in Poznan that VSI was a partner in. The first one, 'Be the Change', took place from 20th – 26th April, and the second one, 'The Change we Became', from 15th - 19th September 2022.

Both seminars were attended by VSI volunteer Bobbi O'Brien and Programmes Co-ordinator Áine, with VSI volunteer Rebecca Labour also taking part in the second seminar. The training explored how VSI can best measure and demonstrate the impact of international volunteer projects.

Here's what Bobbi had to say about it: 'I didn't know what to expect going into the training, but it was better than I could have imagined! I learned so much about what impact measurement is and why it's so important for volunteer work. We learned in such an interactive and fun way it didn't feel like work at all! I'm so glad I attended this training course.'

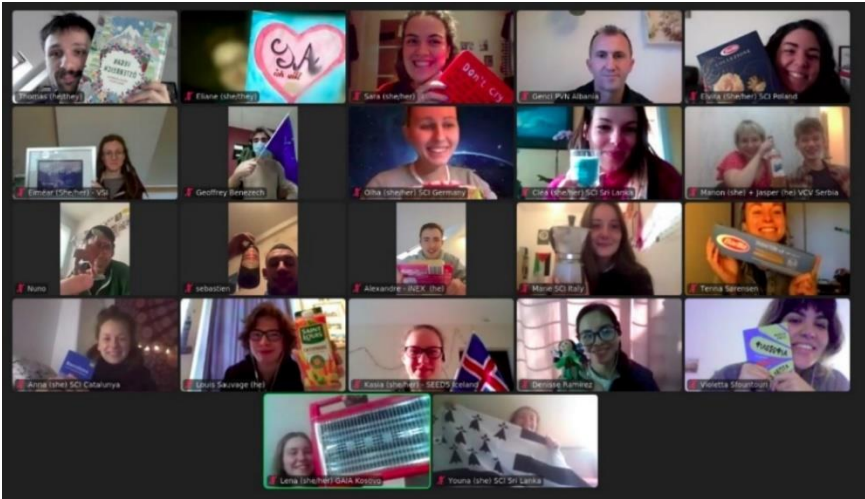


Áine and Bobbi at SCI's 'Be The Change' Training

SCI TRAINING

Placement Officer Training

Eiméar took part in SCI's online Placement Officer (PO) Training from 8th – 14th February, where POs from all over Europe as well as Sri Lanka and Mexico were in attendance. They learned how to use SCI's Online Placement System, heard about the history of SCI, and discussed how best to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 for volunteer projects.



Eiméar at SCI's Placement Officer Training

Here's Eiméar's take on it: 'I found it really engaging and fun, and we got to know each other well by the end of it. I feel a greater sense of community with fellow POs as a result and look forward to putting what I learned into practice throughout the year ahead.'

This House is on Fire

Nick attended SCI's "This House is on Fire" online seminar from 15th – 20th February. Here's what he had to say about it: 'Across the week, people from all over SCI's international network of volunteers and professionals collaborated to explore and discuss how SCI can best address both political and ongoing global issues. This proved interesting and educational as we explored both information gathered by the facilitators while exploring the perspectives of each branch regarding why and how best to take action on these issues. In light of Covid-19 this training took place online. I was glad to attend this on behalf of VSI as I got to connect with many of my counterparts in other branches, creating a sense of community within the network.'

Exchange Platform Meeting (EPM)

From 10th – 16th October, members of the VSI team travelled to Belgium to take part in the annual SCI Exchange Platform Meeting (EPM). Here, volunteers and staff from SCI's global network convened to discuss SCI's projects and practices under the theme of 'volunteering for youth as a tool for inclusion'. Here's what Eiméar had to say about it: 'This week-long in-person event brought SCI branches and partners from different corners of the world together to exchange ideas and share their vision for the future of SCI. It was an inspiring week and I will stay connected with the people I met there. I look forward to seeing what the future has in store!'



SCI Exchange Platform Meeting: Áine (front row, third from left), Nick (back row, second from left) and Eiméar, (back row, centre)

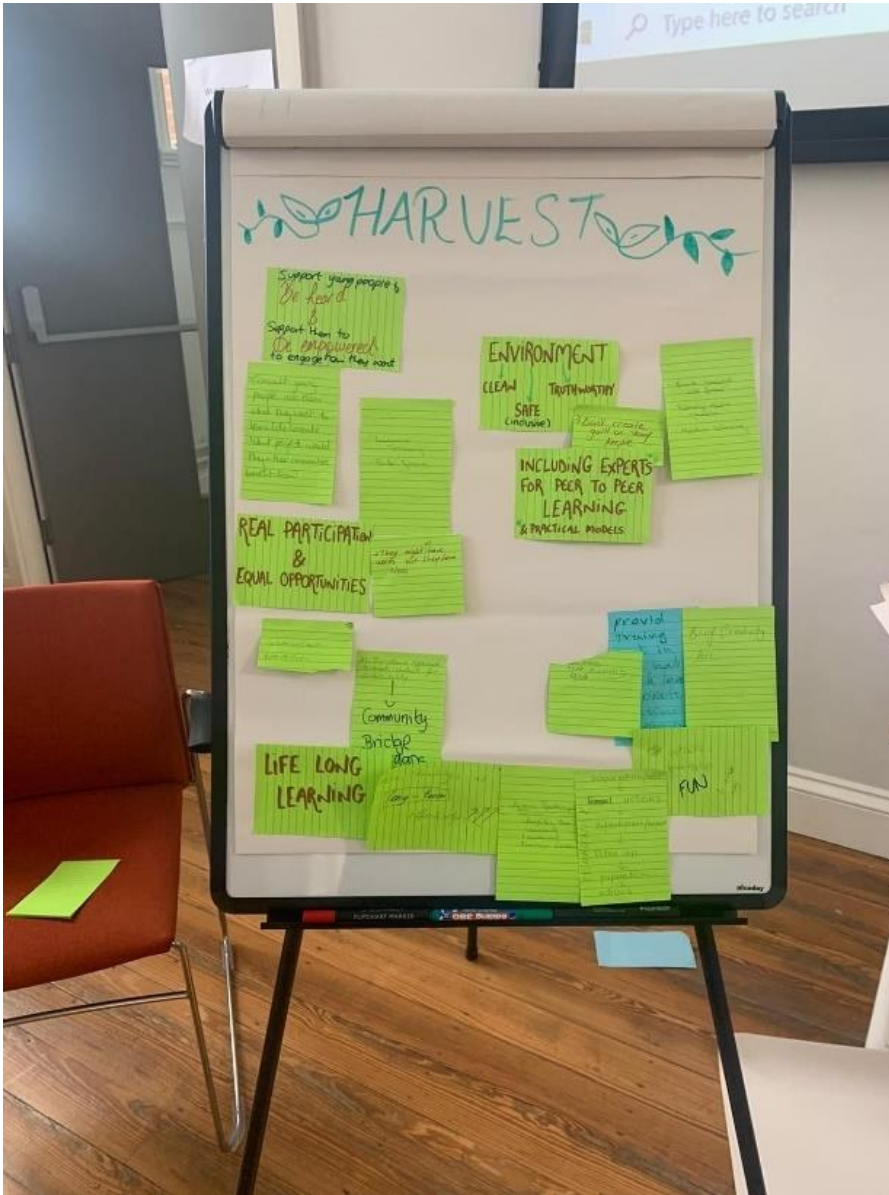
The Power of Good Intentions

From 1st – 7th December, two of our volunteers - Alanna, who participated in our 2022 Youth for Climate Justice project, and Isabel, a past ESC volunteer - attended ‘The Power Behind Good Intentions’, a seminar about colonialism and ‘voluntouring’, hosted in Innsbruck by SCI Austria. During it, Isabel did an interview about her experience volunteering in the Global South, which is now on the SCI website! She went on to host VSI’s January monthly meetup on this topic and wrote an article about her time at the seminar for VSI. Here’s what she said about



Isabel (third from right) at ‘The Power Behind Good Intentions, in Austria

the seminar: ‘After a series of interactive presentations, open discussions, group reflections, and an excellent silent exhibition, we came up with some ways for volunteers - and their sending organisations - to practically overcome racist, neocolonial bias in their work going forward. We are very thankful to have had the opportunity to share perspectives and bounce ideas off each other on this vital topic. We also loved connecting with the other participants, and really hope to see them again soon!’



Green Fingers

Eiméar attended this Erasmus+ project hosted by Léargas on environmental sustainability in November. This 3-day training took place in Cork, where a diverse group of participants from both Ireland and abroad learned about sustainability and climate justice, and discussed how they can make their everyday work practices and volunteer projects more sustainable. Afterwards, Eiméar said she was ‘looking forward to implementing what we learned during the training in future VSI workshops and events.’

Sustainable ideas from the ‘Green Fingers’ project, in November

NETWORKING IN IRELAND

Launch of the European Year of Youth

In February, VSI attended the launch of the European Year of Youth, organised by Léargas & Eurodesk. This was the first in-person event Eiméar and Nick attended since starting their ESCs. Eiméar joined a panel of four others to speak about their experience with various EU-funded volunteer opportunities, encouraging young people to explore what is available to them. We also heard from MEP Maria Walsh, about her journey into politics, and Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman. It was an inspirational day all-round.



Eiméar with Minister Roderic O’Gorman at the launch of the European Year of youth

Léargas Youthfest

In December, VSI team members attended ‘Youthfest’, an event organised by Léargas to celebrate the conclusion of the European Year of Youth. VSI was delighted to be presented with our Quality Label plaque from Léargas, representing VSI’s certification to deliver high quality solidarity activities in accordance with the principles, objectives and quality standards of the European Solidarity Corps. The team also attended a workshop on Skills Summary and how it can help young people identify and describe their skills.



VSI Team members with the Quality Label plaque from Léargas: Seán (left), Eiméar (centre), and Annabelle (right.)

Volunteer Fairs in Galway, Dublin, and Carlow

On September 7th, VSI attended NUIG ALIVE Volunteering fair to promote our upcoming Youth For Climate Justice project, as well as our ongoing IVP and ESC opportunities. We had a lot of students show interest in our work, with many of them subscribing to our monthly newsletter and following our social media pages for opportunities and updates.

It was a great success, and we would like to thank NUIG ALIVE for organising such an enjoyable afternoon.



Nick (left) and Seán (right) at NUIG ALIVE Volunteer Fair



Seán (left) and Eiméar (right) at VSI's DCU Helpdesk

On September 19th, our Marketing & Communications Officer, Nick, attended the Opportunities Abroad Fair at Carlow College. This was a chance to tell students about our IVP and ESC opportunities, and to share stories from our international volunteers. Thanks to Carlow College for making it happen!

On September 20th, VSI were invited to attend an infodesk outside the office of the DCU Students' Union. Plenty of people stopped by to talk about our volunteering opportunities, and there was a lot of interest in our Youth For Climate Justice project. A big thanks to DCU Volunteering for inviting us to take part!

Affiliations

VSI's Strategic Plan reaffirms our commitment to working in partnership with organisations which share our aims. We continue to play an active role in a number of networks from which we receive support and advice throughout the year. These organisations provide networking events and training that VSI staff and volunteers participate in.

IDEA Code Network

VSI has been a member of Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) for many years and in 2021, we signed up to their Code of Good Practice for Development Education. Code members commit to strengthening their development education practice through an annual self-assessment process. VSI submitted our second self-assessment in February. The self-assessment process was a great opportunity for the VSI staff and Board to discuss and reflect on VSI's work in this area. VSI has a long history of development education, and we are committed to growing and strengthening our practice in this area, using the IDEA Code as a framework to guide us.

In June, Eiméar and Senka attended the 2-day IDEA conference, 'The Future of Global Citizenship - Educating for a Changing World'. This was a combination of in-person and online workshops, talks, panel discussions, and collaboration with others in the field, exploring what the future holds for Global Citizenship Education in Ireland.



NYCI membership

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland, and VSI has been a member for many years. NYCI acts as a liaison and support between member organisations and the DCEDIY regarding the Youth Service Grant (YSG). The NYCI was integral to setting-up and supporting the DCEDIY's Shared Services support for small organisations in receipt of the YSG which VSI benefits from through accountancy and governance support and training. Helen attends NYCI Heads of Organisations and Specialist Organisations meetings throughout the year. NYCI processes VSI's Garda Vetting applications for our volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults and also provides support in this area.



Comhlámh Code of Good Practice

Comhlámh nurtures, guides and mobilises development workers and volunteers to work for social justice locally and globally. VSI is a signatory to Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice, a set of standards for Irish international Volunteer Sending Agencies. Every year, VSI staff and volunteers attend Comhlámh Peer Support Meetings. Being a signatory to the Code has improved VSI's volunteer programmes, and the services and supports we provide to our volunteers.



Dóchas Membership

VSI has also been a member of Dóchas, the Irish Association for Non-Governmental Development Organisations for many years. VSI is a signatory to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages and we are involved in the Small Members, the Disability and International Development groups.



9. Funders

VSI would like to thank our funders and donors, without whom our activities would not have been possible.

- The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)
- The European Commission (through the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme and Léargas)
- Irish Aid
- Health Service Executive
- Private donors
- Members



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Irish Aid
Government of Ireland
Rialtas na hÉireann



10. Get Involved!

BECOME A MEMBER

Members are the heart of VSI. Without a strong membership, we could not maintain or develop our programmes which are just as important to us now as they were when VSI was founded over 55 years ago, or when our international

As well as being a part of the VSI community and supporting our work, as a member of VSI you will have:

- Access to a wide range of national, international and online volunteering opportunities
- Regular membership updates and volunteering news through bulletins and newsletters
- Opportunities to get involved with ongoing projects and events in Ireland
- Access to training and seminar opportunities in Ireland, abroad and online
- Invitation to our AGM and the opportunity to contribute your ideas to VSI
- The opportunity to support our vision and mission, share our values, and contribute ideas to further develop and progress our organisation and our impact

Voluntary Service International (VSI)

www.vsi.ie

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