



**International
Voluntary
Service**



A Joint Newsletter from IVS and VAP - December 2023

IVS and VAP have similar objectives working for peace and international understanding through voluntary work and particularly workcamps. This joint newsletter has been produced in recognition of that.

IVS Memories Project



Thank you everyone for contributing your memories and sharing your reflections on your experience with IVS and SCI.

This publication "IVS : 90 years and counting Volunteers' Reflections" is a selection of Memories, seventeen in total from our Memories Project. Having collected over fifty stories so far, some selection for this modest publication was necessary. We decided to focus on the period after the previous IVS for Peace publication that is post 1949 to present day. We wanted to include a range of experiences - short, long, local, international volunteering examples and those that included a reflective element. We hope we have achieved this and

the readers both enjoy and become inspired to support IVs going forward, whether as a volunteer, donor or member.

The book is dedicated to the countless volunteers, staff, peace activists and other stakeholders who have contributed to the actions of IVS for the past ninety years and counting.

We wish to thank Mark Allen publisher and his team who generously funded and produced this publication for IVS. Mark was a volunteer for IVS on an SCI Italy workcamp at Locri on the Ionian coast of Calabria, Italy, building a bridge across a valley. It was a seminal experience. He always longed to go back. Some 59 years later his wish came true. Mark writes: " Due to my experience in Locri, IVS had a profound effect on me, I subscribed to all its values."

Copies of the booklet can be ordered for £5 including p&p <https://ivsgb.org/shop/> or by sending a cheque for £5 to the IVS Office, Thorn House, 5 Rose Street, EDINBURGH EH2 2PR

We are still collecting new memories, recent or older, and will be advertising shortly in Peace News for more contributions. Please send to memories@ivsgb.org

Amitiés

Helen, Rosemary and Raj

News from IVS workcamps at Camp Kernow in Cornwall this Summer



'Camp Kernow was delighted to welcome nine volunteers from IVS to camp in 2023 bringing with them a wealth of experience, enthusiasm and energy to the summer camp programme. The volunteer role is varied and volunteers could find themselves helping children forge a marshmallow toasting fork with a Blacksmith one moment and taking children harvesting in the food garden the next. Memorable experiences this year included an incredible Peregrine Falcon flying display, a live Irish folk band with ceilidh dancing in the geo-dome and paddling along the Fal River spotting common grey seals basking in the sunshine along the way!

Volunteers bonded over the shared experience of living off-grid, weekends spent exploring Cornwall and London and delicious meals

showcasing the best of Swiss, Mexican and Italian cuisine! Camp Kernow looks forward to hosting further IVS volunteers in Summer 2024 for more off-grid adventures.'

Claire Coombe Camp Kernow

Projects to volunteer on

There are 28 short term projects on the SCI database which are starting in the first four months of 2024.

<https://workcamps.sci.ngo/icamps/> 13 of these are in Europe most of the rest in various Asian countries

The "Christmas for all" project in Togo is a social and solidarity action project that the NGO ASTOVOT is implementing in the last two weeks of December for the benefit of the children of the Zomayi district and its surroundings.



Pakistan Project: PK SPS 11.1 18 Feb – 3Mar'24 looks interesting "Gender Equality and Climate Protection"

New project at <https://ivs.gb.org/teaching-english-abroad/>



Cristina English School is a project of Dream Big Cambodia, a non-profit local organization. Cristina English School is an English school that operates in the village of Bakong, in the outskirts of Siem Reap, Cambodia. Its ultimate goal is to ease the situation of the most disadvantaged children from the countryside and to give them better opportunities in life, by providing them with free English lessons that help them improve their academic preparation and their overall skills. Concurrently to that, having become a meeting point for

lots of children around the area, the project has grown as an important element of social cohesion, after gaining a solid reputation as a safe place for the children to grow, share and play while their parents finalize their hours of work.

VAP Projects

VAP is organising our traditional Christmas workcamp in Dulwich, South London, between 10 and 20 December. We are expecting 6 volunteers from Asia (Vietnam, South Korea and Indonesia), Europe (Germany and Belgium) and Africa (Zimbabwe). They will work alongside our partners of the London Wildlife Trust, Southwark Council's Department of Environment and Leisure, and the Friends of Dulwich Park doing various environmental tasks in Dulwich and Belair parks and also in the beautiful Sydenham Wood. Volunteers will be staying at the South London Scout Centre.

Volunteers in the Sydenham Woods previous pre-Christmas workcamp



Additionally, at <https://www.vap.org.uk/projects.html> there are 29 projects listed by VAP which are starting in the first four months of 2024. Countries in which Project venues are listed include Germany, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, Thailand,

IVS Registration and Membership Fees

Some of the membership and registration fees are increasing from 1 January 2024

Membership will rise £5 to £30 (students, unwaged etc unchanged at £15)
Short term project registration fees in GB are unchanged at £75 but for projects abroad will rise £10 to £230. Details of registration fees for longer term voluntary projects can be found at <https://ivsqb.org/pricing/>

VAP Registration and Membership Fees

If you apply for one of the VAP **UK based projects** you will pay **£100** to VAP. This fee covers the VAP membership & administration plus food, accommodation, and cultural activities during the project.

If you apply for a short term project through the VAP **Standard Programme (2 to 4 weeks)** you will pay to VAP **£250** which includes VAP membership & administration.

Palestine and Israel

IVS is very concerned about the developments in Palestine and Israel. As you will know the founding principles of IVS were to further the aims of peace, justice and understanding in the world. Our workcamps bring together people from different countries to work together on a community project and to learn from each other. We have been offering volunteering projects for peace for over 90 years and are recognised by the UN as the UK's oldest international volunteering organisation.

We have workcamp partners in both Israel and Palestine, which British volunteers have attended and we are very concerned about the welfare of the staff and volunteers. One of these, IPYL – the International Palestinian Youth League, has run an annual workcamp in Bethlehem and surrounding areas that brings together young people from various cultures to build cultural bridges of understanding, reconciliation and global peace. They work in different areas including renovation and restoration, painting walls, gardening and tree planting. Over the years several UK volunteers have attended.

In Britain we also run projects focusing on peace building. For many years IVS member Sara Elkes, who as a child was sent to England from Lithuania at the start of the Second World War, organised an annual workcamp in Leicester which brought together international volunteers to meet and work with Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus and Christians. The idea was that diversity could lead to understanding between people of different faiths and cultures. As places of worship often have gardens, the idea was that doing practical work there and sharing meals would lead to understanding and trust. Work was done on gardens at a mosque, Hindu temple, Sikh gurdwara and a synagogue; and also at the Holocaust Memorial Centre at Beth Shalom.

SCI International Committee Meeting (ICM)

The 86th ICM Vienna Austria 6-10 December 2023

This was the first face to face ICM since 2019 and was well attended by over 50 people (19 online) from branches and partners all over the world. Our delegate unfortunately had to withdraw due to a family bereavement, so Richard Williams and Rosemary Hobday represented IVS GB online.

It is very impressive how these meetings are managed and chaired and how democratic decisions are made for the whole SCI movement. It does take time and patience and is very interesting and sometimes a bit exhausting!



The Strategic Plan and the Plan of Action 2023 were reviewed and a new Strategic plan 2024-2027 agreed with four goals;

Goal 1: Expand SCI.

Goal 2 : Reach a Higher Level of Sustainability at a Branch and International Level by Capacity Building and Diversifying Resources.

Goal 3 : Empower SCI Activists with Peace Education Activities to Increase our Impact around Peace with Self, Others and Nature.

Goal 4 : Be Proactive in the area of Climate and Social Justice, Recognising the Ongoing and Future Developments in Society

The Budget for 2024 was agreed. SCI has a Citizens, Equality and Rights Value programme (CERV) grant from the EU for the next two years. An international co-ordinator, Inge Saris was appointed in January 2023. Kerry Hargadon who is a co-opted member to the IVS board is employed as a project officer. She has worked on projects such as Forging Ubuntu, Grassroots Change, No War Anywhere, grant applications and she supports various working groups. Kerry has been developing a new Long Term Volunteer online placement system to which IVS member Paul Barrow is ably contributing. Paul was praised at the ICM for his voluntary work and IT expertise in this venture.

Some Highlights:

VWAN The Voluntary Workcamp Association of Nigeria application to become an SCI branch was approved. IVS wrote a letter of support. Nuno Doria from IVS is a member of the Africa working group.

The Child Safeguarding Policy was updated, amended and approved.

The IEC elections confirmed Bert Verstappen Via Netherlands /SCI Switzerland and Dr Shobha SCI India as members of the executive committee.

The Pierre Ceresole Awards were presented, SCI Malaysia and SCI India were two of the winners.

A resolution on Palestine was debated, amended and then withdrawn. A resolution on education in relation to the Israel/Palestinian conflict was passed. A minutes silence was observed for those affected by the wars in Gaza and the Ukraine and thoughts were with our partners in Palestine, Israel, Ukraine and Russia.

Peace Activism Campaign was highlighted ; To develop a three year campaign to consolidate SCI as a reference world organisation for peace activism.

IVS Memories Booklet was announced and shared at the meeting.

The next ICM will be hosted by SCI Malaysia in Penang December 2024. IVS needs an International Delegate for this meeting. Please consider. There will be a training for international delegates by SCI in the new year. Contact info@ivsgb.org

The SCI website is an interesting resource to find out more. <https://sci.ngo/>

To end: a quote from the Strategic Plan:

“Together we can create a ripple effect of positive change, inspiring individuals worldwide to become agents of peace.”

28th UN Climate Change Conference - COP28



IVS member, Rob Unwin, attended COP 28 as an online observer. He writes:

At the time of writing, COP 28 is being extended so it would be premature to summarise its outcomes. However, my overall impressions have been of a sumptuous venue with stars and sand dunes and then blue whales and sea turtles swimming 360 degrees around us, powerful speeches about the need to act and side rooms full of mostly young delegates diplomatically thrashing out the details.

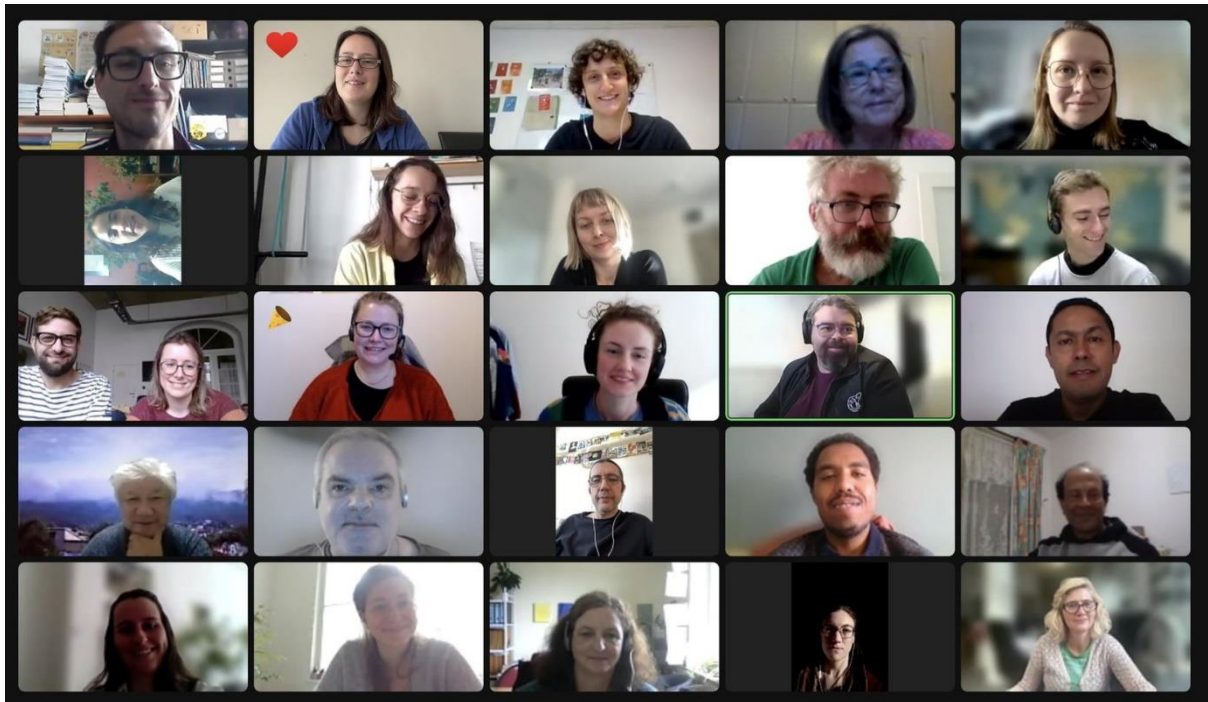
Having only caught glimpses of the inner 'Blue zone' at COP 26 in Glasgow, I was fascinated to see the national interests of the different participating countries exposed in real time and to appreciate the enormously complicated task of hammering out agreements. I saw a young Saudi woman embellish their carbon capture technologies, a Russian woman promoting natural gas is the transition fuel we need, and a Kazakh delegate championing the country's uranium. The UK team seemed in a weak position, promoting fossil fuel phase down so soon after their government had approved new oil and gas exploration.

An overriding theme was 'developing' countries arguing that 'developed' nations must compensate for their historical emissions before the rest of the world makes sacrifices, with the counter argument that China's recent emissions exceed those of the UK since 1750. Whilst the 'Loss and Damage Fund' was a welcome development, the finance pledged so far is perhaps four hundred times below what's required. It seems apparent that this 'Only game in town' needs true leadership, backed up by action and serious finance, by those nations with the means. That in turn requires their populations to support such sacrifices for the sake of us all.

SCI Exchange Platform Meeting 2023

The 2023 Exchange Platform Meeting (EPM) of SCI took place this year between 9 and 17 October. The meeting was held online with parallel 90 minutes sessions organised in the mornings and afternoons. IVS was daily represented by our programme manager Nuno Doria, and also in some specific sessions by our active members Paul Barrow and Gheorghe Zugravu.

This event which was attended by almost 100 participants, in spite of the sometimes distant nature of online meetings, was very successful as the preparation team and the various facilitators managed to keep a very good flow of debate in the many interesting sessions organised.



Some of the sessions had a more technical focus (eg. General Statistics of SCI, the Evaluation of SCI's Network Fee and of the Incoming Volunteers Fee, the Structure and Features of the new Online Placement System); others focused mainly on networking (eg. CCIVS/SCI/ICYE Decolonise IVS project, Creation of the Regional Network of the American IVS organisations, SCI's Grassroots project in Africa) and others aimed mostly at improving SCI's work and structures (LTVs Online Pre-Departure Training, SCI's Climate Team, No War Anywhere! Anti-militarism work in SCI and the Strengthening of SCI's international Working Groups).

IVS also actively participated in the annual meeting of the Africa Working Group through the presence of the two IVS members of the Steering Group, Kerry Hargadon and Nuno Doria. The very successful meeting took place on Saturday 14 October in two different sessions and was attended by 18 representatives of 3 SCI Branches and 10 African contacts, groups and partner organisations.

How you can help IVS

Volunteer

IVS is mostly run by volunteers . The Joint Chairs of IVS, the rest of IVS's Board of Trustees, and the Fundraising and Newsletter Group, are volunteers. If you'd like to volunteer with us, do get in touch. We are looking for:

- an extra person to sit on the IVS Board as a Trustee
- a bookkeeper to manage the receipts, payments and bank accounts
- an extra person for our Finance Advisory Group, or to serve as Assistant Treasurer
- a couple of people to assist IVS with its publicity and recruitment efforts.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities please write to director@ivs.gb.org

Recent volunteers on projects

We would particularly like to hear from recent volunteers about their experiences, impressions and views on how IVS can establish a digital presence on social media. If you can help here please write to info@ivsgb.org

Donate

IVS relies on donations to run its activities. A donation would help us to recruit, train, support and send volunteers overseas to support our work. It would also enable many more volunteers from overseas to come to Great Britain to support local charities to deliver hundreds of important services to those most in need. For instance, the UK government charges IVS £21 for each invitation we issue to a long-term volunteer as well as seeking approx. £800 in fees from that volunteer. Further information is on our website <https://ivsgb.org/donate-2>

Legacy to IVS

After careful consideration of various options, the work involved and potential risks, the IVS Board have decided that the generous legacy from Hazel Walker should be used to invest in property to provide IVS with a regular income. A subcommittee has been established, including people with experience of property matters, to oversee the process of purchasing a flat in Edinburgh for letting out. Managing agents will be employed to administer the letting and ensure that all the legal obligations of a landlord are complied with.

It is planned that the income from this investment will, with your donations, help keep IVS and international volunteering going into the future.

SCI Video for International Volunteer Day



SCI have produced a video of past volunteers speaking about their experience of working as volunteers through SCI. The video can be found on YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/b6djkdw>

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