



### **A Joint Newsletter from IVS and VAP - March 2025**

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.

## **THE 2025 WORKCAMP SEASON HAS STARTED !**

This year's workcamp season started and hundreds of short term projects are right now being added to the project databases of IVS/SCI and VAP. When considering volunteering abroad remember to look out for government advice at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safer-adventure-travel-and-volunteering-overseas>

You can now find 260 short term voluntary (STV) work projects on SCI's international workcamp database: <https://workcamps.sci.ngo/icamps/> and 500 STV projects in VAP's database of projects: <https://vap.org.uk/>

On the VAP database there are projects starting between 1 May & 10 July 2025 scattered through 28 countries: To have a look at them go to <http://www.vap.org.uk/> and click on **Find My Projects now!** (top right).

A few projects appear on both the IVS and the VAP web-sites where they have a common partner.

There will be plenty more projects going to be added in the coming weeks so if you can't find exactly the one that fit your dates or interests don't give up!

If you need help or advice don't hesitate to contact Nuno Doria, IVS/VAP Programme Manager at [info@ivs.gb.org](mailto:info@ivs.gb.org) (IVS) or [action@vap.org.uk](mailto:action@vap.org.uk) (VAP).

### **Some examples of workcamp opportunities**

#### **KENYA**

#### **Roddy's Eco Cover Environmental Programme**



Link to apply: <https://workcamps.sci.ngo/icamps/camp-details/16715.html>

KVDA Kenya                      Camp code: KE-KVD 10.5                      12 to 30 July 2025  
Topic: Environment protection    Work Types: Environment / Manual / Social  
20 volunteers

Roddy's Eco-Cover is a community-based organisation founded in 2011 to champion environmental awareness with forestry as key concern.

Agro forestry work will include tree planting, preparation of tree nurseries and weeding. Cultural learning coupled with home visits for exposure to development challenges with study theme: Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership Development. Volunteers will stay in a homestead within the community with basic living conditions. Possibility to visit the historic sites like Hippo point on Lake Victoria in Kisumu City, renowned Kakamega Rain Forest and the Equator point at Maseno University;

Extra fee to be paid in the hosting country: 300 Euro

## **SWEDEN                      Bäckedal Folk High School**



Link to apply: <https://workcamps.sci.ngo/icamps/camp-details/16822.html>

IAL                      Camp code: SE-SCI 12.1                      From 15 to 27 June 2025  
Topic: Art, culture and local history    Works: Agriculture / Cultural heritage / Restoration, renovation  
10 volunteers

Bäckedal Folk High School is an institute of popular education for adults. Leather- metal- and textile processes, from ancient to modern times,

This is a work and study camp. The work will be building, repairing, maintenance, cleaning and painting. The theme of studies is how we create sustainable knowledge and compass for the future. All volunteers will be accommodated at the school's premises

**NETHERLANDS****Counter NATO!**

Link to apply: <https://workcamps.sci.ngo/icamps/camp-details/16992.html>

VIA Netherlands      Camp code: NL-VIA 4.1      From 15 to 23 June 2025

Topic: Peace and disarmament

8 volunteers

This is a work and study camp. A coalition of peace organisations in the Netherlands, together with the international No-to-NATO coalition decided to organise a counter-summit in The Hague in 21-22 June just before the NATO summit. Joined in by VIA the volunteers will support the counter-summit (aim: 250 participants) and the demonstration (aim: 1000 pax) with a logistical support camp, and prepare banners and creative action-formats for the weekend. The study theme will mainly take place before the counter-summit weekend and consists of a variety of workshops: new security thinking, the NATO war strategy and responses to that, arms trade, directions for the peace movement and of course the role of SCI in that spectrum.

IMPORTANT: The counter summit will take place BEFORE the NATO summit itself.

Volunteers will be mainly carrying out logistical tasks. there might be repression by the local police. Not likely, but one never knows and volunteers should be aware of it!

**SRI LANKA****Sustainable Roots through Language Skill Development and Organic Farming**

Link to apply: <https://workcamps.sci.ngo/icamps/camp-details/16671.html>

SCI Sri Lanka      Camp code: LK-SCI 10.3      From 16 to 25 August 2025

Topic: Environment protection      Work Types: Environment/Language study/Peace

10 volunteers      Child friendly camp (Minimum age: 11)

SCI Sri Lanka working with partner organization Like, The T.E.A. Project(Training, Empowerment, Awareness) which works to empower Sri Lankan children from poverty. The T.E.A. Project Centre for Children's Empowerment supports disadvantaged children & young people from poor tea plantation communiTEAs.

Work will be preparation of vegetable beds and nursery beds for organic farming, Repairing the water source, the fence and the wall cupboards in the centre, Building outdoor kitchen, Cleaning outside well and Teaching English. This hand-on activity will provide the study focus on Sustainable Community Development and Environmental Education. Participants will stay in a centre with basic living condition and shared sleeping spaces are separated for males and females. The main spoken languages during the camp will be English but local languages are Tamil/Sinhalese. Volunteers should be physically fit and adaptable, with a passion for sustainability and organic farming.

Location: Kandy is located in Central Province

Extra fee to be paid in the hosting country: 150 Euro

## THAILAND

### Watpikulthong School 2



Link to apply: <https://workcamps.sci.ngo/icamps/camp-details/16675.html>

DaLaa Thailand Camp code: TH-DA 7.6806 From 8 to 21 June 2025

Topic: Children and youth

Work Types: Teaching

10 volunteers

Phikulthong School is a small Buddhist school in Phatthalung province, Southern Thailand. The camp will provide the chance for the students to improve their English by using the language in real life with foreign volunteers. Here you can experience the locals' way of life, exchange your culture with other volunteers and villagers, support the children's education and also provide non-formal English classes and other fun activities for the students, create teaching materials for teachers and kids 3: Volunteers should prepare some teaching materials and lessons plans to create activities that will enhance values of respect and cooperation among students and volunteers.

The camp will sleep on mats on the classroom floor. Very few to no people in the village can speak good English. Learning basic Thai and body language will be necessary.

Extra fee to be paid in the hosting country: 9500 Thai Baht



## Alliance Conference and Technical Meeting,

With the merger of IVS and VAP the combined organisation is now a member of several international networks. Notably SCI, but also the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations, an International Non-Governmental Youth Organisation that represents national organisations which promote intercultural education, understanding and peace through voluntary service.

The Secretariat of the Alliance is based in Istanbul, hosted by a Turkish member organisation, and here is a report on the annual technical meeting of Alliance, held in Serbia.

### Zrenjanin, Serbia, 18-22 February 2025

Beautifully hosted by the Young Researchers of Serbia, the Alliance annual gathering for their 'Technical Meeting' was preceded by a one-day conference with workshops on the theme of long and medium term volunteering. The conference seamlessly ran on to the four-day Technical Meeting with a timetable of various issues, workshops and bilaterals.



This was my first Alliance Technical Meeting. However I recognised its origins from my experience with CMP (Christian Movement for Peace) some forty years ago, in the time before internet communication, each spring representatives of volunteering organisations would meet to advertise and exchange their programmes of short term, 'workcamp' volunteering for the ensuing season. Echoes of that past survive in the one-to-one bilateral meetings in which special relationships between two organisations are begun, developed and sustained.

I feel I gained much from attending. Here are some thoughts and highlights:

- The Alliance is an avowedly European grouping with membership of the European Youth Forum. Nevertheless there are both full members and partners to be found in countries outside Europe. Some workshops and sessions discussed the organisation's internal structure and the terms of membership and partnership. I did not involve myself with these as there were always alternatives for me to attend of relevance to IVS-VAP.

- Sadly, many delegates were missing as Serbia had refused visas to all delegates from Africa and several from Asia, including India, Nepal, Vietnam. Most of these I count as personal friends from CCIVS events, as were those present from South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan. Adli from IPYL (International Palestinian Youth League) attended, also for the first time.
- It became clear to me that Alliance staff and members produce some high-quality work. An example came in the workshop on LGBTQIA+ agenda on which they have worked this past year, producing a series of detailed 'posters' on a full range of issues that arise. There was nothing with which I could find fault. However a valid point raised in the meeting was that the very detail and complexity made the posters unsuitable as an advocacy tool. Something simpler and more direct was required to be of use in our projects where the aim was to get people thinking and talking openly in a stress free atmosphere.



- An excellent workshop on LMTV mentoring was led by the delegation from Finland. There is a three-way relationship to be managed with our volunteers at Othona. We need to ensure that our mentors have an understanding of both host and volunteer.
- A superb presentation from VolTra, Hong Kong, linking LMTV with sustainable environmental lifestyles.
- Bilateral meetings were useful for me to explain how VAP is now subsumed within IVS and how the VAP service would remain with our existing partners. With SJ (Societe Jeunesse) they were able to confirm that once they heard from Nuno that Othona was open to receive another pair of volunteers they would apply to the French Government for funding. They warned that it could be a matter of months before funds came through and they were able to recruit, so even if notification came soon, it was unlikely volunteers could start at Othona before next autumn. Also in a bilateral, an illuminating discussion with the delegate from Kharkiv, Ukraine.

- Unfortunately their website is now well out of date. I nevertheless learned much from what I found at Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations - Voluntary Workcamps
- A final thought, but one requiring further thinking. Post Brexit our position within the international community can feel a very lonely place. We have to decide with which international networks we wish to work most closely and the nature of such membership, partnership, activism as is appropriate.

In advance of my travels, friends had warned me that Serbia was in a state of some turmoil. While that in no way impinged on a peaceful week at Zrenjanin, I encountered the situation staying with friends in Novi Sad for a few days immediately before and immediately after, the conference.

Disturbances which spread throughout Serbia, had been triggered on 1st November 2024 by the tragic collapse at recently refurbished Novi Sad railway station, of a concrete canopy, killing fifteen people. The building, currently unused, stands close to the city's bus station where I met up with Egyesek friends arriving from Budapest, to take the local bus for Zrenjanin.

With my Novi Sad friend I toured the Novi Sad university campus. Silent, almost deserted, academic activity suspended, posters and banners demanded answers, made accusations. Another day, as we went from our apartment near the city centre toward the main transport hub, we observed coming towards us across the full width of one side of the dual carriageway main boulevard, a vast silent crowd, advancing on the Vojvodina Province Government building. The solid throng stretched back in a slow moving several hundred-metre-long funereal march.

Serbia has much to resolve.

Paul Winter

## Help Fund Dulwich pre-Christmas Workcamp 2025



There is to be a workcamp in Dulwich from 14<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> December for 12 volunteers to carry out environmental in the woods with London Wildlife Trust at Sydenham Woods. Funds are needed to cover the cost of food and accommodation. About £600 is required. Donations are requested and can be made using the IVS web site <https://ivs.gb.org/donate/> where one-off or regular payments can be set up. Donors could consider making monthly payments of £5 from now til December

## Go Green Weekend in Essex 23 – 26 May

IVS partner Othona, Essex, invites us to join them at their community centre, Bradwell on Sea for a full on Green Celebration weekend at the end of May. [Essex Green Weekend](#) | [Othona Essex](#)



At the time of writing there still appears to be space available to stay at the centre. However note there are alternative options of camping on site or finding other accommodation locally. If your time is limited make just a day of it, driving to the lonely Essex coast or taking a train from Liverpool Street or Stratford, and changing at Wickford for the Southminster shuttle. From Southminster Station a bus or taxi is necessary to complete the journey.

This will be the fourth occasion of what is becoming a regular annual event. Sponsored by Essex mental health charity TrustLinks, [Green Weekend 2025 - Trust Links](#) the weekend blends joyful festivities with learning and deliberation of the serious issues facing the sea shore, countryside, nation and world.

Founded in 1946, it is thought that Othona welcomed IVS participation as long ago as 1948. Volunteer Action for Peace (VAP) and its predecessors have held annual summer workcamps at Othona, certainly since the early eighties and possibly from one or two decades before that.

Please, if you do go, introduce yourself as a member of the international volunteering community, to Winnie. In 2022 Winnie came from Hong Kong to participate in the VAP summer workcamp at Othona. This April she will take up a place as a member of the core community.

## Update on Merger IVS and VAP

At the 2024 AGMs of both IVS and VAP it was agreed that the two charities would merge and this would be put into effect by Volunteer Action for Peace becoming a department of International Voluntary Service GB. Since then work has been going on in conjunction with the Charity Commission to finalise the VAP accounts and close down that charity, with any assets being transferred to IVS.



## Preliminary Notice for IVS AGM 2025

In accordance with the Byelaws, notice is given that IVS will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Saturday 14 June 2025. It is hoped that the meeting can be a blend of in-person, at the Alan Baxter Gallery, Cowcross Street near Farringdon station in central London, and on-line presence. For a resolution to be considered by the AGM it must be received by the Chair, in writing, at least six weeks before the AGM

Nominations are also sought for people to stand for the Board. Three members will be coming to the end of their current term. Members can also be co-opted to the Board for a period of up to one year. If you wish to propose a resolution, or stand for the IVS Board, write to IVS at Thorn House, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PR or send an e-mail to [Director@ivs.gb.org](mailto:Director@ivs.gb.org)

The AGM is open to members of IVS and of VAP and there will be a progress report on the merger of the two organisations. More details about the IVS AGM, including venue, nominations and any other resolutions will be circulated to members of both organisations nearer the time.

## Membership Subscriptions

As part of the merger of IVS and VAP, members of VAP are encouraged to pay their membership fees into an on-going IVS bank account. This can be done on-line, visit <https://ivs.gb.org/join/>

Alternatively payments may be made by cheque which is posted to the IVS office at Thorn House, 5 Rose Street, EDINBURGH EH2 2PR.

Annual Membership fees for the merged organisation are £30 standard rate and £15 for persons who are students, unwaged or on a low income. Membership is valid for 12 months from the date of payment.

## 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](mailto: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@ivs.gb.org](mailto:info@ivs.gb.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 £25 for each invitation we issue to a long-term volunteer as well as seeking some £1000 in NHS fees from that volunteer. Further information is on our website <https://ivs.gb.org/donate-2>

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