

90 years of volunteering for Peace &  
Intercultural Understanding.

# SCI



**SERVICE CIVIL  
INTERNATIONAL**

**SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL (SCI)** is one of the world's largest International volunteering organizations. SCI is a founding member of CCIVS and holds consultative status as an official NGO partner of UNESCO.

In 2010 the organization celebrated its 90th anniversary and remembered a rich past of organizing and coordinating voluntary projects for peace and intercultural understanding all over the world.

VOLUNTEER WITH

# SCI

**Volunteer Guide Book**

[www.sci-malaysia.org](http://www.sci-malaysia.org)

[www.workcamps.info](http://www.workcamps.info)

[www.sciint.org](http://www.sciint.org)

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**Get in touch to find out more about workcamp or us and how you can make the world a better place :)**

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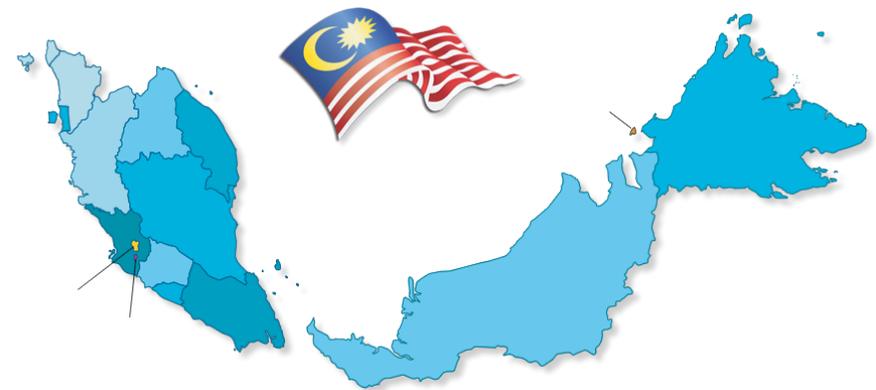


## WELCOME TO MALAYSIA



To know Malaysia is to love Malaysia - a bubbling, bustling melting-pot of races and religions where Malays, Indians, Chinese and many other ethnic groups live together in peace and harmony. Our multiculturalism has made Malaysia a gastronomic paradise and home to hundreds of colourful festivals. It's no wonder that we love celebrating and socialising. As a people, Malaysians are very relaxed, warm and friendly.

Geographically, Malaysia is almost as diverse as its culture. 11 states and 2 federal territories (Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya) form Peninsular Malaysia which is separated by the South China Sea from East Malaysia which includes the 2 states (Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo) and a third federal territory, the island of Labuan.



One of Malaysia's key attractions is its extreme contrasts which further add to this theme of 'diversity'. Towering skyscrapers look down upon wooden houses built on stilts while five-star hotels sit just metres away from ancient reefs.

Rugged mountains reach dramatically for the sky while their rainforest-clad slopes sweep down to floodplains teeming with forest life. Cool highland hideaways roll down to warm, sandy beaches and rich, humid mangroves.

## Do's and Don'ts

Malaysia is generally a laid back and relaxed place. However, we do have our own customs and visitors should try to observe these practices when they arrive. Some common courtesies and customs are as follows:

- Although handshakes are generally acceptable for both men and women, some Muslim ladies may acknowledge introductions to gentlemen by merely nodding and smiling. A handshake should only be initiated by ladies. The traditional greeting or salam resembles a handshake with both hands but without the grasp. The man offers both hands, lightly touches his friend's outstretched hands, and then brings his hands to his chest to mean, "I greet you from my heart". The visitor should reciprocate the salam .
- It is polite to call before visiting a home.
- Shoes must always be removed when entering a Malaysian home.
- Drinks are generally offered to guests. It is polite to accept.
- The right hand is always used when eating with one's hand or giving and receiving objects.
- The right forefinger is not used to point at places, objects or persons. Instead, the thumb of the right hand with four fingers folded under is the preferred usage.
- Shoes must be removed when entering places of worship such as mosques and temples. Some mosques provide robes and scarves for female visitors. Taking photographs at places of worship is usually permitted but always ask permission beforehand.
- Toasting is not a common practice in Malaysia. The country's large Muslim population does not drink alcohol.



*"If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever." ---Kofi Annan*



## SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL

Service Civil International (SCI) is responsible for the majority of workcamps taking place around the world each year since 1920.

The roots of Service Civil International lie in a very practical peace project. In 1920 a group of volunteers gathered to reconstruct a war-torn village on the French and German border. The initiative came from a Swiss man called **Pierre Ceresole**. It was his idea to work together in a spirit of friendship and demonstrate a concrete act of international solidarity. He wanted to show that people of different nationalities can work together instead of being each other's enemies.

This very same idea still lies in the heart of all activities of Service Civil International (SCI). International voluntary projects are seen as a tool for creating intercultural understanding and solidarity between people of different backgrounds.

SCI is now active all over the world. Volunteers are active in projects of reconstruction, ecology, social inclusion, North-South solidarity and more. Every year thousands of volunteers experience the dream of peace becoming a reality!

## NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS



What is SCI ? What does it stand for? What is the difference between SCI and other NGOs? How can you be involved?

SCI stands for Service Civil International.  
 Service... Voluntary Service, Service for others and humanity.  
 Civil... ordinary people like you and me - and not Governmental or Military Service.  
 International... we have 45 Branches and Groups worldwide. We were founded in 1920

SCI is a Peace Movement. We bring together people of different background and outlook to undertake useful voluntary work for the benefit of the community, aiming to create understanding and mutual respect between individual of all creeds and races so that the concept of violence become less and less acceptable and the degradation of human dignity impossible.

We collaborate with like-minded Peace Organisations to organise Workshops, Seminars, Forums, Debates, Peace Runs, Gathering, Outing and Celebration to promote a Culture of Peace and Voluntarism. Our core activity nevertheless is Workcamps. In fact SCI is a pioneer in Workcamps. Our first was held in Verdun France in 1920.

What's Workcamp? It is part of our international volunteering projects and activity, with individual, local and global where we get together for a week-end, or from 6 days to 2 weeks or up to 3 months (weekend, short, medium term project). During this period volunteers will get to work on a common theme. They will live, cook, eat, play and learn together and share their experiences. Living condition are basic, but SCI has Operating and Safety Standards that need to be met when workcamps are organised. Peace Study is an integral part of our activity.

This booklet contains the many useful Guidelines to assist members and workcamp volunteers to have a better understanding of what's a workcamp, and how to plan and run one so that we can, for the valuable and limited time, we have together get the most out of it... to understand, respect, appreciate and love each other and the community and environment more . To be at Peace and in Peace with all. Not easy - but always there can be a new beginning.

Welcome to the world of Workcamp and Voluntary Services for Peace. You can join in one or any of our activities you like, be it the workcamp, exchange programs or other planned activities. You can also help sponsor some of the programs or help share and promote our Programs or Activities. Just be part of it. Deeds not words. Salam and Amities

Stephen Nah  
 SCI Malaysia Founding Person

## SAFETY OF THE VOLUNTEERS

**SCI offers a workcamp insurance for our volunteers while you are taking part in workcamps.**

**However, volunteers should be aware this only covers workcamp related accidents.**

**Volunteers are highly encouraged to have your own travel insurance since SCI insurance does not cover any travel related incidence.**

### Safety of the Volunteers

1. It is hosting organisations responsibility to make sure safety of the volunteers. It is also the responsibility of the volunteers not put yourself or others in any risky or unsafe situations.
2. Please be aware that you as a volunteer have the right and the responsibility to refuse to do any work which you consider to be dangerous and unsafe.
3. Bringing alcohol to the camp site is discouraged for safety and cultural reasons.
4. Children should not be allowed in sleeping areas for their safety. If children take part in the camp, they should be accompanied by an adult.

### Supporting the Workcamp Leaders / Coordinators

If a camp coordinator runs into a problem with volunteers, he/she should first try to solve it on the spot (eg. help to resolve a conflict, change unfair working conditions), and may include the rest of the volunteers in solving the problem when necessary.

If they cannot solve the problem, the workcamp leader/coordinator informs the hosting organisation (e.g. when a volunteer leaves the camp without prior notice. The hosting organisation should then report the problem to the sending organisation. The sending organisation should take steps to get in touch with the volunteer, get feedback on the situation from the volunteer and report back to the hosting organisation).



Source: Global Volunteer Action Seminar  
 in Sydney - 2015



Source: NSPM Poland - 2014

Each workcamp should have a workcamp leader, whose job is to ensure smooth running of the workcamp.

During the project, the workcamp leader/coordinator serves as a connection between the workcamp volunteers and the

- hosting organisation
- project partner
- local society in which the workcamp takes place

The volunteers should be provided with opportunities to learn about each of these stakeholders and to get introduced to them and the local culture through direct communication and interaction as much as possible.



Source: Summer Workcamp in Malaysia - 2013



Source: Pierre with 2 other European volunteers in the first workcamp in India 1934

*Am 20. Januar war  
der Camp*

## SCI IN ASIA

In 1931 Ceresole got acquainted with Gandhi, which invited him to bring SCI to India. In 1934 he traveled to India in order to organize workcamps for a region affected by the earthquake in Bihar.

This project was repeated in 1935 and 1936. Further development aid projects followed after World War II.

In 1950 SCI was invited by the recent independent India in order to carry out construction of houses for refugees in Faridabad (India). A small group of international volunteers were recruited and many local volunteers join these workcamps.

The conflict between India and Pakistan inspired them to organise workcamps in Pakistan from 1951 onwards. As a consequence several local branches and groups of SCI were founded in Asia.

### Turning Point in History

In a row of seminars, workshops and meetings from 1969 onwards, the political implication of SCI in society were reviewed. As a consequence SCI abandoned the developmental aid approach as one of the main purposes of workcamps.

**The social and political awareness rising for and through International volunteers became the focus of most SCI activities.**

## SCI IN MALAYSIA

SCI (Service Civil International) Malaysia is a non governmental, non profit, non religious, registered under the Malaysian Society Act, Peace organisation consisting of two branches in Penang and Kuala Lumpur.

We bring together people of different background and outlook to undertake useful voluntary work for the benefit of the community, aiming to create understanding and mutual respect between individual of all creeds and races so that the concept of violence become less and less acceptable and the degradation of human dignity impossible.



Source: 1st SCI AGM



Source: 31st SCI AGM

## ARRIVING IN A NEW COUNTRY

Plan your trip well and allow enough time to travel from the airport to the campsite. Be aware of the arrival time. Try not to arrive late at night. Do not expect airport pick up by the hosting branch as it can be difficult to arrange. Host organisation normally expect volunteers to arrive at the campsite. Make sure you have relevant contact details and local currency for your travel to the campsite. It is a good practice to give a phone call before leave the airport to the host organisation that you have arrived in the country and let them know your travel plan to the camp site.

Make sure you have a printed copy of the info sheet in your hand language with all the contact details.

### Visa

Arrange your visa in advance if visa is needed. Hosting branch can assist with an invitation letter for the visa. Some countries do not have volunteer visa category and will be granted tourist or visitor visa. "Workcamp" term can be misinterpreted by the immigration authorities as "work" and may ask you to apply for work visa. If confusion occurs it is better to mention that you will be taking part in a short term cultural exchange program.

### Expect the unexpected:

- Flight delays
- Arrive too late at night or early in the morning
- Lost baggage
- Immigration issues

## INCOMING ORIENTATION

This takes place on the first day after arriving at the camp site or at the local branch office.

The following items can be included in the orientation:

1. Get to know each other
2. Expectations and worries of volunteers
3. Brief introduction to SCI local activities
4. Local Culture, customs and practices
5. Introduction to the project (reasons, who are the beneficiaries and people involved)
6. Dos and Don'ts
7. Emergency Contacts
8. Anything else important

# IMPORTANT COMPONENTS IN A WORKCAMP



## House Rules

Volunteers are encouraged to work together to formulate some common rules to follow as a group.

## Camp Diary

It is good to have a camp diary and volunteers are encouraged to volunteer to write the diary one person per day. Volunteers can write like a story but not limited how it can be done.

## Camp News

It is a good idea to have an open poster in which volunteers can post any news about the camp upcoming events and any incidents took place during the camp. This encourages volunteers to express themselves.

## Schedule

It is important to have a schedule so that volunteers know what is happening on the next day and until end of the camp. In general there is some flexibility so that volunteers can contribute and change some parts of the program.

## House Meeting

Usually, House Meeting takes place after work or after dinner. This is a place where volunteers can share their feelings about the day or if there is any personal issues or conflicts. It is also a place to plan for the next day activities.

The rundown of the meeting can be like this:

1. How are you feeling today
2. Any issues you want to talk about
3. Say thanks to the Kitchen team, camp leader or any other person.
4. Plan the next day
5. Appoint a kitchen team, Camp dairy writer, Camp leader (if it has not been done),
6. Any other Issues

## Free Time

Volunteers should have their personal time to get themselves clean and relax each day. In some case the free time can be limited due to various reasons. Free time is for volunteers to get to know the local culture and spend enough time getting to know each other. A free day should be included during the camp and in general related expenses should be covered. If there is an additional expenses it should be communicated prior to the camp.

## Study Part:

Study part can take place during free time a couple of times during the camp period. Different topics can be included in the study part. This is an important part of SCI workcamps.

There are workcamps held under the following themes with a specific study interest.

- Peace Messengers
- No More War
- Create a Climate for Peace

# SCI STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2016

SCI Strategic Plan is a tool for the future that should help the branches and volunteers within the/our movement to recognize where they are from and where are they going.

## MISSION

SCI International is promoting peace by organizing international volunteering projects, with individual, local and global impact.

## VISION

Our vision is a world of peace; social justice and sustainable development, where all people live together with mutual respect and without recourse to any kind of violence to solve conflict.

- ## VALUES
- \*Volunteering
  - \*Diversity
  - \*Non-violence
  - \*Respect of Human Rights
  - \*Solidarity
  - \*Respect for the sustainability of the ecosystem
  - \*Inclusion
  - \*Empowerment
  - \*Cooperation

# OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Strategic Goal 1

### EDUCATION & VOLUNTEERING

Inspire and activate people to have an impact in the world and empower them to foster a culture of peace and social justice



## Objective 1.1

To promote a culture of peace and pacifism

## Objective 1.2

To make volunteering a way of active citizenship and a lifestyle

## Objective 1.3

To promote intercultural dialogue and non-violent communication

## Objective 1.4

To make the world more socially, ecologically and economically sustainable

## Strategic Goal 2

### AWARENESS RAISING & SOLIDARITY

Increase the sense of belonging to a global community



## Objective 2.1

To promote a global approach to local and worldwide challenges

## Objective 2.2

To stimulate solidarity and to value diversity

## Enabling Actions

The Enabling Actions are like the pillars of the building. They address our aims for organizational development.



- Co-operation
- Sharing
- Advocacy
- Financial strength and transparency
- Capacity building
- Communication



**"IF YOU HAVE COME TO HELP ME, YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME. IF YOU HAVE COME BECAUSE YOU THINK YOUR LIBERTY IS LINKED TO MINE, LET US WORK TOGETHER"**

**DEVELOPING NATIONS DO NOT NEED SHORT-TERM HEROES. THEY NEED LONG-TERM PARTNERS.**



Source: Workcamp in Broga, Malaysia, 2015

## LOOK BEYOND AND LEARN

It is common that many people want to volunteer because they want to help poor people. You don't have to go on a plane to do that. Look around in your neighborhood and you will find people who need help.

Do not go on a voluntary project with "I am a Hero mindset". You are not going to change the world in a week or two, rather go with a humble attitude that you will learn something new about yourself and about the world we live in. Your host community will learn something new from you, about your culture and your way of thinking. It is a sharing experience.

If at the end of your volunteering experience you say, "I am so lucky or privileged, because they have so little." You have missed the whole point. You are poor, too. But maybe you are hiding behind all your stuff. There is material poverty, physical poverty, spiritual poverty and systemic poverty. Look beyond what you see. Understand yourself first, then you can understand the world.

### Lessons from the past

*"One thing must not be forgotten to mention in relation to the SCI work in Asia, This was the damage done by the one-way flood of governmental volunteers from the first world. After President Kennedy launched the American Peace Corps Programme in the early 1960s, many other industrialized countries followed suit. Although we do not say that nothing good was achieved by these governmental volunteers, nevertheless, this invited strict government control over all volunteer programs including indigenous volunteer groups like SCI branches and groups in Asia. And this control remains even now long after all governmental volunteer programmes were banned from certain Asian countries, such as India. These governmental volunteers' high standard of life-style in the local context tarnished the image of volunteers in local peoples' eyes, and, at the same time gave the local government a wrong idea of the concept of voluntarism and its usefulness."*

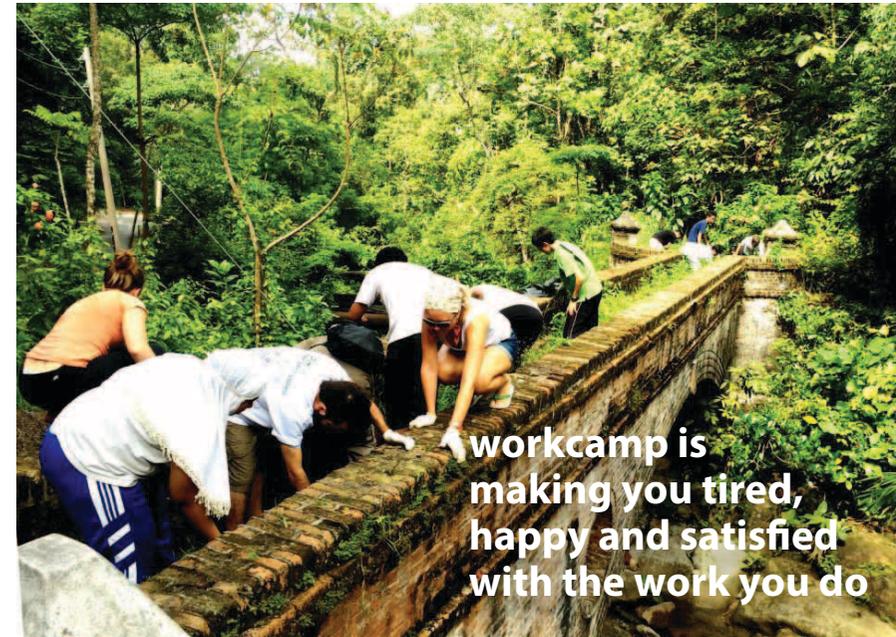
Source: Brief Account of SCI in Asia (1934 – 1976) cby Hiroatsu Sato - April 1987

## WHAT TO BRING



### Things to bring - check list:

- 1. Info Sheet / passport / travel guild
- 2. Working cloths (depends on nature of work)
- 3. A sleeping bag (in many cases)
- 4. A towel and toiletries
- 5. Pocket money & Camp fee ( if there is a camp fee)
- 6. First Aid Kit
- 7. Communication device / cheap mobile phone & Camera
- 7. Insurance details and emergency contact details
- 8. Souvenirs / pictures
- 9. Games & Musical Intruments (if any)



**workcamp is making you tired, happy and satisfied with the work you do**

## BEFORE THE WORKCAMP

### Workcamps are published online on [www.workcamps.info](http://www.workcamps.info)

Each branch can upload workcamps at any time of the year to the online system. However, it is recommended to upload camps at least 6 months prior to the starting day of the camp. There is a common practice to upload summer camps before the workcamp season begins, usually this is in mid February or March every year.

Interested volunteers send their application to the hosting branch and in some cases the camp leader / coordinator is consulted in the selection process. Some camps require special skills or there are specific things to be considered before accepting volunteers. In general each camp can only have two volunteers with the same nationality and age and gender balance is considered when accepting volunteers.

### Info Sheet

At least one month prior to start of the camp, a detailed info sheet will be sent to volunteers. This includes, contact details, how to travel to the camp site, what type of work, what to bring and so on.

### Communication with volunteers prior to the camp starting date

It is very important to start communicating with the hosting branch at least one month prior to the camp starting date. Hosting branch can only start communicating with the incoming volunteers after their application status change to "Volunteer confirmed participation".

It is also a common practice to keep the sending branch cced in any communication with the volunteer.

It is also a good practice to share the email address of the volunteers among the volunteers if you agree to do so. In the confirmation slip it can be indicated if you are willing to share their contact details with others.

### Meeting Point

Some branches offer to pick up volunteers from the airport. However, it is difficult and sometimes costly. You must bear the cost until you reach the camp site. A meeting point will be clearly mentioned on the info sheet.

### Volunteers arriving early or staying behind:

It happens often that volunteers arrive a day or two earlier. Some branches arrange accommodation with host families. However, this is not the case always. Make sure you book your own accommodation in advance if you arrive early. Host organisation can provide information on local cheap and safe accommodation facilities available.



Source : Workcamp in Malaysia - 2010

## WHY PEOPLE JOIN WORKCAMP?

- Mix of international participants
- Focused on peace and understanding
- Camps are basic
- Understand different people better
- Encourage each other: to be an example for others and local people
- Opportunity to appreciate the surroundings: to have hosts to show you around
- Working together
- Diversity in the camp: gender, age etc
- English speaking
- Sense of equality: everybody at the same level
- Enjoyable
- Security and sense of belonging (coming from safe area –family/friends) into another safe area
- Breaking prejudices
- Pleasant surprises (new friend, positive groups-experience)
- Making new friends
- Deeper understanding of hosting culture
- Broaden mind
- An opportunity to travel
- As part of the extra curricular activities

### Questionable situations:

- Motivation of the volunteers is purely tourism
- Motivation is a cheaper way to traveling



## COMMON WORKCAMP STANDARDS

1. Work during a workcamp must be absolutely nonprofit
2. Voluntary work must never be a replacement or alternative to paid professional work
3. A workcamp is aimed at activating local society - whenever possible volunteers work together with the locals
4. Workcamps must meet basic safety regulations (according to the local law)
5. A workcamp lasts a minimum of 10 days (ideally 2 weeks)
6. The obligatory activities should last not more than 6 hours per day
7. A workcamp should have a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 15 participants, including the camp coordinator
8. The work, the standards of food, accommodation and free time must be as described in the camp description and the info sheet
9. Volunteers must have access to clean water and sanitary
10. Food should meet at least the minimum nutrition criteria
11. Work during the camp should be organised and structured; the way it is organised should be clearly communicated to the volunteers from the beginning of the project
12. The volunteers should be given tools needed to perform the work and receive adequate training
13. Workcamp should have a study part

Source: SCI exchange practical procedure 2014

## PREPARATION OF VOLUNTEERS - common SCI standards

- volunteer should have some knowledge of SCI
- volunteer should be informed of what a workcamp is (what to expect and what not to)
- volunteer should get tips and useful information on how to get prepared (what to bring etc.)
- volunteer should be informed about the role of camp coordinator
- volunteer should be given tools to participate in and enhance the intercultural dialogue
- volunteer should be informed about his/her rights including the right of saying 'No' for example in dangerous situations or other cases of a camp not meeting common standards and be given other tools to act in such cases (contact with the sending branch etc.)
- volunteer should be informed about his/her obligations (i.e. participating in group activities, work as described and agreed on) and about the fact that food and accommodation are being provided in exchange of fulfilling these obligations
- volunteers should be open and prepared to adjust to the local context
- in order to help the volunteers adjust to the local standards there should be a clear introduction given in the beginning of the camp as well as in the info-sheet regarding various issues such as: recycling rules and possibilities, whether the water from the tap is drinkable, the cultural context etc.)

Source: SCI exchange practical procedure 2014



Source: Workcamp in Poland 2015

### Be Mindful:

Traveling by air cannot be avoided in many cases. Be mindful that air travel pollutes the planet. Calculate how much carbon your traveling produces. Avoid short distance air travel whenever possible.

Be aware of your impact on the host community. Your contribution should be positive. Be aware of the local culture and costumes, they should be respect at all times.

Make sure your behavior does not reaffirm the common stereotypes. Remember you represent your own country and you are an unofficial ambassador representing your own nationality and your country.