



## SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL

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### SCI International's Statement on measures related to COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear friends,

Already the world looks a lot different since SCI's statement of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and this is a testament to the speed nations and societies have had to react in order to decrease as much as possible the potential catastrophic consequences this pandemic could have. The COVID-19 pandemic does not only have huge health implications, burdening our medical systems to breaking point, but will also have an unpredictable negative effect on the economy.

SCI's purpose is to promote a culture of peace through intercultural dialogue and understanding. Our vision of living in a culture of peace means a world where all people live together in mutual respect and without resorting to violence, where there is social justice and sustainable development, and where, most of all, people are at the heart of what we do. In order to achieve this, SCI has been organising international volunteering projects for the past 100 years, meeting and working with great people over the years.

This is why the discussion on our response to COVID-19 was not taken lightly. On the one hand, it was a difficult discussion given the huge impact that the situation is having and will have on our projects and goals. On the other hand, our values give us a clear direction. In this moment, solidarity means supporting the measures suggested by experts, and that many countries put in place, asking citizens to stay indoors and practice social distancing in an effort to protect those most vulnerable amongst us. Limiting the spread of COVID-19 and flattening the curve to give our systems and societies a chance to cope is and should be a priority for everyone.

We also believe that a core part of peace is inclusion, ensuring that no one is left behind, especially those most vulnerable.

As a result of this belief and the uncertainty of what will happen in the future, **we have decided to suspend placement to our workcamps, effective from 12pm CET on 21<sup>st</sup> March until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020.** We have decided that promoting international travel during this pandemic with no clear understanding of the effects on both the volunteers and local communities is not an acceptable risk and we need to see how the situation develops in order to take any further actions.

This does not mean that our mission stops or that we are not still working on our vision of a culture of peace. SCI is working hard to find ways to organise our activities, communicating with local partners and communities to understand needs and opportunities for collaboration. Innovation and responding to these needs will be at the forefront of our work, better understanding what we can do



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online, how we can stimulate this intercultural understanding from a distance and working hard to ensure our future projects are safe.

We know that everyone has been hit hard with this pandemic and the future is unclear. We have also seen people come together in acts of kindness and compassion that will be crucial in the weeks to come. We applaud all those who are working tirelessly to navigate us through the coming times and offer full support to everyone currently struggling to find their feet.

SCI stays fully committed to our vision of a world living in a culture of peace. Now is the moment for us to work together and experiment with new methods to make this a reality. We will continue to discuss measures and plan alternative activities, so please check our website for regular updates. Now more than ever we will need the spark and energy volunteering can bring.

As always stay safe, kind and healthy.

Amities,

SCI International