

# The Flying Penguin

Newsletter of International Volunteers for Peace

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## Volunteer Stories

### Carrying on the Good Work

*Jan Van Eimern volunteering in post earthquake Nepal.*

First of all let me say that I had a wonderful time working as a volunteer in Nepal. The local SCI members, and the Nepalese people for that matter, are some of the friendliest people you'll have the pleasure to meet. Kind, helpful and happy even in tough times. I'm happy I chose to go to Nepal for my workcamp. It will be a memory I will cherish for the rest of my life. Sounds a bit cheesy but it is true! What is it that makes it so memorable? First and foremost helping people when they need it the most is probably one of the most kind and rewarding things we can do as humans. Second the Nepalese culture is so very different in so many ways from mine (Sweden) and it was amazing to be let into it in a genuine way by locals. And have it all explained to me. It certainly puts some of my everyday life things into perspective.



The Shree Balmiki Lower Secondary School is located 15min outside of Bhaktapur, in the rural countryside among the wheat fields. During the earthquake one of the two school buildings was so badly damaged it is no longer safe for use. A new school building has been

erected but the funds have run out and it stands unfinished. This is where SCI is looking for volunteers to help with the final touches to make the new school building operational. As it stands only the structure (floors, walls and roof) are finished. The work will consist of plastering the brick walls and dividing the house area into separate classrooms and painting the walls. There will also be plenty of opportunity to hang out with the children whom you are helping.

Finally a workcamp is also a cultural exchange. You will be taught about the Nepalese ways and be able to tell about yours. You will learn to eat with your hand. Experience Bhaktapur's famous festivals and feast on the delicious Nepalese food! See traditional dancing and music. Admire the ancient temples and see the holy cows moving untouched through traffic!. Follow the SCI Nepal Bhaktapur branch on Facebook [here](#).

### Yes We Camp!

**Cultural exchange and Disaster relief camp- Nepal**  
(15 - 26 August 2016)

Bhaktapur is the smallest and an ancient city of Nepal it had held a UNESCO heritage award since 1975.The recent turmoil unfortunately smashed ancient temples and monuments leaving in ruins the ancient City and its tourist industry. Volunteers will be involved in painting and cleaning the school area, programs for Children and working on the earthquake camps. Other activities organised include attending the local festival, optional trip to the high hills of Kathmandu Valley, and cultural festival.

At this time, SCI has over 400 International workcamps, discover more at our [Project Search](#) page.



## Rehabilitation of Bushland

*Tree planting with Taralga Primary School*



Volunteers arrive for the workcamp in Taralga in May 2016

An international workcamp was held in Taralga in May 2016 with local and international volunteers. This is a continuing project, part of Greater Eastern Ranges Initiative and funded by the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife. IVP is rehabilitating a neglected bushland fragment next to the Stonequarry cemetery.

One important goal of the project is to make Stonequarry a living classroom, where children and adults can learn about their environment, ecology and the interrelationship of humans and nature.

A planned onsite workshop for the local primary school children had to be called off due to heavy rain. The volunteers instead went to the school where they presented their cultures, the work done at the Stonequarry site and the importance of wildlife corridors. Nicky Taws from Greening Australia presented the local birds and their amazing nests and our volunteers assisted with the presentation. Local artist Jane Lyons led a creative art workshop (see below)



The tree planting was deferred until 24th July with a new team of volunteers and local school students under the guidance of Greening Australia.

## SCI NEWS



## IVP Australia Gets on Board with SCI

Rita Warleigh, the founder and long time member of IVP Australia has now joined the International Executive Committee (IEC) of SCI. This means we are now better able to influence international volunteer exchange practices and keep abreast of exciting projects and opportunities for our members.

## SCI Funding for Causes

SCI has now created three funds that are available to all branches. This means that we can apply for projects on the following themes: Climate change, Disaster relief, Refugees. So if you have an idea for a workcamp or project on one of these themes please get in touch with us.

## SCI Centenary in 2020

SCI will be 100 years young in 2020!. A small team of volunteers are collating ideas for the celebration of this auspicious event. We would love to have an event in Australia and invite all members to come forward with ideas and if possible join this team. If you are a member of other peace organisations who maybe interested please let them know.

## Peers to Peace (P2P)

SCI have launched a call for volunteers for a Prep Team for an 18-month project called Peers to Peace (P2P). This project is funded through European Union Erasmus Plus and will include 6 training events around the world and also some long-term volunteering opportunities.

The Prep Team will have their first face-to-face meeting in Germany in October this year. If you would like to know more about this project please contact us as soon as possible as we need to provide applications by 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

## Planning for the Future

*Strategic planning day in June*

A Strategic planning session took place on the afternoon of June 12<sup>th</sup> following the AGM, with committee members and active members of IVP. The session was facilitated by Grace Walsh, a current member of the SCI Pool of Trainers and Facilitators.

The session began with the group briefly brainstorming where they would like to see IVP in the coming 6-12 month period. The responses identified a number of areas of focus including organising a number of workcamps, involving returned volunteers and developing projects in partnership with communities in Australia (Aboriginal communities and refugee groups in particular). There were also discussions about building the capacity and functionality of the committee, recruiting more local volunteers and improving knowledge management .



*Annual General Meeting held in June 2016*

The group then went on to identify specific areas that needed to be focused on and discussed this in more detail. Areas covered included volunteer management, projects, community outreach, membership and marketing.

A detailed strategic review report has been circulated to the committee members, and a sub-group established to work on the inputs and ideas generated during the session.

## Stay in Touch

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## IVP – What's Happening

*The year in review – 2015 to 2016*

The past year has been remarkable for IVP. Amidst a challenging funding environment and changes in our operational team of dedicated volunteers , we have reorganised and renewed our belief in the principles that are at core of the SCI movement.

We are rebuilding the branch on three fronts: establishing a committee that will continue to welcome volunteers from abroad for Australian projects and send out motivated volunteers to SCI projects through the Online Placement System; building our community-citizen science project; and playing a positive role in the SCI network, initially through the Asian Platform, and also participating in the various activities of SCI.

This ambition has frankly tested us. Yet we can report on some remarkable milestones from the 2015 year: a successful hosting of the initial GLOVOLA seminar in Sydney at the end of June 2015; launch of a new web site; a renewed focus on social media activities; all committee positions filled albeit changing during the year. Our Taralga project has been a platform for volunteer activity from overseas and locally, and has opened involvement to a much larger network of community activists.

We are also extremely lucky to have the assistance of several long term members of SCI in Europe now living here and supporting IVP: Eva Josza (SCI Hungary) and Grace Walsh (IVS Ireland).

## Volunteering Opportunities at IVP

We would welcome the interest of members who can contribute by joining our management committee and taking responsibility for one of the operational areas. This could be community outreach, project management, social media or administration. Most volunteering work can be done online and committee meetings are held on a Sunday in person or Skype.

*volunteering to make a difference*