

Develop or Self-Develop

Who is the volunteer in relation to colonial history?

13th-19th March 2020 in Vienna, Austria

Background of the seminar

Colonialism created the political and economic context, in which we live today: Some countries have accumulated resources and wealth over centuries, while other countries have been colonized, their resources exploited, their cultures destroyed and their people murdered, marginalized and structurally discriminated. Countries of the Global South are still today disadvantaged in their participation in the global economy and in international organisations - and people of color still face discrimination based on the concept of “race”, which was made up by the colonizers. In order to change the heritage of colonialism, we need to create global justice.

International volunteering takes place in this context: White Europeans go as international volunteers to the Global South, often with neo-colonial motivations of imposing Western values and mindsets onto local realities. In this seminar, international volunteering and youth organisations will gather to discuss, learn and exchange about this issue. Some questions that we ask ourselves and that we would like to discuss in this seminar are:

- How can we as international volunteering organisations respond to colonial mindsets and motivations of volunteers and make them aware in an appropriate way about the power structures at hand?
- How can we work with ideas of “development” and “self-development” in a constructive way?
- How do we make volunteers active citizens around global justice rather than passive believers of colonial narratives of developing, helping and saving?
- How do we as critical volunteering NGOs relate to commercial organisations around us that do not critically prepare volunteers (“volontourism”) - should we compete with, ignore, collaborate with or train them?

As an outcome, we will create a new 4th version of the toolkit “Picturing the Global South: The Power Behind Good Intentions”, which SCI Austria has been creating with a series of post-colonial seminars in the past few years.

Participant's profile

The participants will be staff, activists and volunteers from volunteering and youth organisations. All participants will be expected and stimulated to contribute to the activities and discussions. They are very welcome and invited to come up with their own ideas and present some methods or workshops they are experienced in and they want to share. Please contact us in advance to tell us about it and we will see how it can fit best in the seminar agenda. :)

All participants selected for this project must meet the following criteria

- be 18 years old or older
- work with volunteer management or sending volunteering projects abroad
- be able to work in English
- be interested in the seminar topics (volunteering in a North-South context, colonialism, global justice) and have a strong motivation to act as a multiplier
- commit to implement the learned knowledge and skills in practice back home
- commit to actively participate from the beginning to the end of the seminar

We explicitly encourage participants of all genders, sexual orientations, abilities, races and ethnic backgrounds to apply. The venue is wheelchair-accessible.

Please note that on some days, the seminar also foresees evening sessions. The seminar will take place in simple living conditions, rooms are shared between 2 to 4 people. Travel costs (up to a maximum amount, depending on country), accommodation, food and program are covered through a grant by Erasmus+.



Sustainable food: The food we provide will be vegetarian with vegan options. This is not just a practical decision, but also an ideological one: SCI believes in the values of sustainability and climate justice – and if we want to contribute to a more peaceful planet, we need to move on from animal agriculture and its destructive effects on our planet.



Sustainable travels?: This is also why we ask you to come to this seminar through more sustainable means of transport rather than flying (e.g. by train or bus), if somehow possible. We will give you more guidance on how you can reach the venue, once you are accepted to the seminar.

How to apply?

Applications should be sent to your sending organization, which will each select their own participants and then forward the applications to SCI Austria. All those accepted will later receive a detailed infosheet (incl. info on how to get to the venue, how to book your travels, more info about the agenda of the project). Deadline for applying is **08.02.2020**.

Contact

If you have any questions regarding the project and your application, don't hesitate to contact us at thomas.schallhart@gmx.at.

We are looking forward to your application :-)

Thomas, Nicolai and the SCI Austria team