

UNIVERSAL CHARTER OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE

We, the representatives of the member organisations of the **Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)** present our fundamental principles and ideals through this Universal Charter of Voluntary Service.

PREAMBLE

The people of the world today are faced with basic challenges: warfare and conflict, the struggle for social, cultural and economic development and the preservation of the global eco-system.

The volunteer service movement is committed to overcoming these challenges through the creation of a society free of exploitation. Peace can only be ensured through tolerance, justice and understanding, and the guarantee of basic needs and social progress.

Social justice and development depend, in turn, on all members of society participating in productive and socially useful work, in a spirit of true equality and the recognition of the right of others to dignity and respect, as called for by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Voluntary service by people with different skills and high ideals is a practical demonstration of the commitment, solidarity and co-operation which our world so urgently needs. It is our aim to promote these ideals both locally and globally.

We believe that INTERNATIONAL voluntary service is one of the main means 'to think globally, act locally'. These two dimensions are necessary to any work for peace and development. The international work camp is one of the most appropriate method for international voluntary service.

PRINCIPLES

Volunteers are people who offer to devote their knowledge, time and energy, within the framework of a collective social effort, to work actively for the general interest of the community, as an activist and with no negative effect on paid employment.

International voluntary service should bring mutual benefit to volunteers and to the wider community. Volunteers should have the opportunity to learn from valuable experiences and to develop through new friendships and inter-cultural learning. Volunteers must not be exploited for private interests. Volunteers cannot expect any compensation except the growth in knowledge, consciousness and value of both themselves and the local community.

The volunteers and the local community should expect no reward except for the increased knowledge, consciousness and sense of value both of themselves and of the other.

International voluntary service should seek to encourage the belief of the volunteers and their hosts in their personal potential as tools of sustainable human progress.

International voluntary service should demonstrate a concern for the problems of local communities and show how, by raising awareness among the social agents involved and through democratic agreement and co-operative effort within the communities, these problems may be overcome.

Volunteers should co-operate with the local community as fully as possible, to be able to assist in useful development work and to assist the members of the local community to widen and improve their knowledge, skills and experience. Thus, international voluntary service, through encouraging the development of local volunteer programmes, support local development objectives, provide practical training and education, develop social responsibility, self-awareness and self reliance, as the basis for sustainable socio-economic progress.

International voluntary service should encourage a spirit of reciprocal international co-operation in development, and emphasise the need to reconstruct global society to achieve material and social equality between countries and between people.

International voluntary service should promote through popular and democratic participation the greatest possible political, social, cultural and economic independence.

COMMITMENT

Volunteers, hosting organisations and hosting communities should work within the spirit of this Charter.

We, who co-sign it, commit ourselves to subscribe to the principles above established and we appeal upon states, national and international bodies as well as local governments to provide the voluntary organisations with all necessary means to develop national and/or international voluntary service.

This Charter can be amended over time. However, voluntary service at the local and global level is a tide of practical idealism, which will only be effective if it retains its basic principles.



CCIVS

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