

Mission Statement

of Service Civil International – Deutscher Zweig e.V. (German branch)

as of: 08.03.2020 (translation)

From the constitution

The foundings of the Service Civil International in 1920 and Service Civil International – German Branch (SCI) in 1946 were tokens of reconciliation and reconstruction after the World Wars.

SCI's overarching goal is to promote a spirit that renders war morally impossible, defying borders and barriers through joint work and mutual assistance.

1 Our goals

1.1 The SCI aims to build peace by promoting peaceful ways of living together, interpersonal exchange, and joint work by people and social groups from different countries through short- and long-term volunteering as well as educational work, campaigns and other forms of exchange.

1.2 We consider as crucial prerequisites for peace the practice of nonviolent conflict resolution, remembrance and reconciliation, social justice, the abolition of any form of discrimination and, by association, the promotion of equal treatment under universal and inalienable human rights, democratic participation, and sustainable use of resources.

1.3 We espouse ways of nonviolent conflict resolution to build and preserve peace; for violent and military approaches always cause injury, death and destruction. Remembrance and reconciliation are the foundation of lasting peace after wars and conflicts. Social justice and sustainability are imperative for peace because conflicts are fought over power and resources. The democratisation on all levels and in all areas of society is indispensable for that everyone can make their wishes and needs heard equally. The SCI promotes a change of society towards equal political and social rights and opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

2 Our principles

2.1 Openness and respect in interaction with each other are fundamental for the SCI. On the basis of these values, the organisation is a politically and religiously unaffiliated union of people from different political and social backgrounds and is open to all interested individuals who fundamentally align with SCI's goals and basic principles.

2.2 The members and activists are united in the belief that interaction with one another that is mindful, appreciative, reflective, open and critical of power is possible and attainable through concrete action. Through our programs, we aspire to bring together people from different backgrounds to enable valuable experiences, practice peaceful forms of shared learning and working and thereby challenge our own inherent prejudices and stereotypes.

3 Our volunteer services

3.1 Volunteer work

Volunteer work is a pathway to peace. It enables a combination of joint hands-on work with political learning and action, all while testing utopias and ideals in real-life settings. International and local volunteers can build their skills through communal work in projects for the common good. They can contribute to the creation of a more peaceful society by engaging socially, ecologically or politically. To that end, the SCI primarily encourages personal self-determination, respect for others and for the unfamiliar, as well as the abilities to self-reflect and handle conflict. It thereby inspires to reflect upon one's own identity, role and socialisation. To achieve these goals, the SCI collaborates with local project partners. We also conduct educational work and train multipliers.

3.2 Nonviolent conflict resolution

The SCI supports and demands total disarmament and the abolition of any military services. It advocates for nonviolent conflict resolution and accordingly only operates through nonviolent means. We solidarize with victims of violence and military conflicts, as well as with people who are displaced or forced to flee.

3.3 Remembrance and reconciliation

Owing to German history, remembrance of fascism, war and colonialism is of special concern to the SCI. Important elements of this are reconciliation work between former war opponents and volunteer work in concentration camp memorials. Historic reappraisal of the Cold War likewise remains a focus of our work. Furthermore, it is important to us to call attention to the continued influence of colonial, racist and anti-Semitic structures, and to solidarize with persons affected both in the past and today.

3.4 Promoting democracy

The SCI aims to make tangible how grassroots democratic structures can be developed and lived together. An important part of group processes is the conscious negotiation and reflection of group structures and roles including leadership roles. This can be tried out and experienced in different volunteer groups.

3.5 Social justice

The SCI advocates for everyone's right to basic needs provision, primary health care and education. The SCI opposes the exploitation and oppression of people and strives for a solidary society in which everyone can take part in social life and pursue personal goals.

3.6 Non-discrimination

The SCI promotes tolerance, solidarity and respect between all people and opposes every form of fascism and discrimination, such as sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, classism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia (see our "Statement Against Discrimination"). The SCI calls out the causes of ostracism and denigration of humans and takes action against discrimination – including within our volunteer groups and our organisational life. In doing so, it is important to us to unveil, question and, when possible, change existing power structures. This is important both in our international partnerships and programs as well as any other form of SCI group meetings.

3.7 Sustainability and climate justice

We fight for climate justice. A sustainable way of life that preserves natural resources is an important foundation of peace. Especially in the exploitative, capitalist global economic

system, many livelihoods are destroyed. Disadvantaged/discriminated persons are disproportionately affected by the consequences in comparison to privileged persons. Any approach to solutions must take the perspectives of various discriminated groups into account. Therefore, in our volunteer work we emphasise mindfulness in how we engage with each other and nature.

4. Coming together in our organisation

The cooperation in our organisation is shaped by our principles of mutual openness and respect. Direct democratic structures are designed to enable everyone to contribute to and help shape the organisation according to their own wishes. The foundation of our work lies in interpersonal exchange, since it has proven to be essential for mutual understanding and for overcoming prejudices both locally and globally.

The SCI provides a space to discuss and try out political, ethical and social beliefs and utopias. This capacitates us to reflect on our actions and to continuously develop and progress.