

# Words about Deeds

100 years of International  
Voluntary Service for Peace



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## Part 3 - SCI from 1970 to 1995

### SCI in a changing world



# SCI in a changing world

Decolonisation, students' revolt, opposition to the US warfare in Vietnam: Western societies were marked by growing demands for change in the years around 1970. These developments affected SCI which had always had the aspiration to be part of a wider 'progressive' movement. Ideological differences within SCI became more apparent than ever and some branches tried out new forms of activity including a deeper reflection on the social and political implications of SCI's work (301). Practical and political work for the cause of conscientious objection continued to be an important pillar of SCI's mission (302, 304). Cooperation with partners in eastern European communist countries continued as well and became easier in the context of political détente between 'West' and 'East' during the 1970s (303). In this period, SCI also fostered reconciliation in the troubled context of Northern Ireland (305) and showed solidarity with liberation movements in Africa (308).

The rise of the women's liberation movement was another characteristic feature of social change in the 1970s and 1980s, not only in western societies, and it left its traces in SCI history especially in this period. It was the time when the first 'women only' workcamps were organised (306, 307). Besides workcamps, long term volunteering became an important way for volunteers to become active within and through SCI (313, 314). At the same time, the expansion of the movement came to an end in Africa and considerably slowed down in Asia, with the remarkable exception of Malaysia (309). On the European side, new SCI groups and later branches were founded in countries which had just been liberated from right-wing dictatorial regimes such as Catalonia / Spain (304) and Greece (311). But also far from Europe in Australia, SCI activities emerged on a small scale (312).

SCI's international structures in the third quarter of a century of its existence were remarkably unstable. The International Secretariat started to 'follow the secretary' - from Switzerland to Luxembourg, then to England, South India, and Germany - whereas the European secretariat was re-established only towards the end of the 1970s. The latter was moved to Antwerp, Belgium, in 1981, and one and a half decades later this office was transformed into a permanent International Secretariat separate from the residence of its staff (310).

Towards the end of this period, the Cold War between 'West' and 'East' also came to an end. Section 3 therefore ends with a piece on an environmental campaign which brought together SCI volunteers with activists in eastern Europe (315).



# The role of women in SCI

## The rocky path to women's empowerment

by Sonja Barac

*This article showcases certain moments in the history of SCI relating to the women's movement in different parts of the world, their work and obstacles they faced. The article focuses mostly on the period from 1980s onwards.*

### SCI sisters and workcamps

'SCI Sisters' were the pioneers of women's involvement in SCI projects - especially workcamps. At first they were confined to the role of taking care of the household (cooking, cleaning, etc.). Later on they directly assisted with humanitarian work during the Spanish War (see article 110). The question arose SCI meetings in the middle of the 20th century - is the involvement of women in SCI activities equal to men's and is the type of work they do always determined by their interests or by their gender?

A historical perspective was presented by Idy Hegnauer of the Swiss branch, in one of the seminars in 1983 that focused on the role of women in SCI. Idy described the domestic role (cooking, cleaning, caring for the sick) offered the early civilian 'sisters' of SCI: *Woman's nature tends to work towards unity and reconciliation. They are positive forces in human society, but they were mostly confined to kitchen and household work*

In the early history of SCI, most workcamps were not gender-mixed and, in cases where they were, the work of men and women on the workcamp was quite strictly divided: men would mostly take care of the administrative and coordination matters. In the 1950's handbook *Organizing International Voluntary Workcamps*, the pronoun *she* is mostly used in, for example, the section on household management: dietician: *She should have an adequate knowledge of cooking, catering, dietetics and general domestic routine...*

While reading the reports from seminars and workcamps, one cannot escape the impres-

sion that these women were highly motivated to bring peace and justice to the world through equality between genders. Learning from each other they came to important conclusions that, in the long run, shaped the action plans of different feminist working groups in SCI.

### It's time to self-organize!

From the 1970s on, SCI organised a few seminars and meetings in Europe, but the one that had the most impact on SCI movement was a seminar called *Role of Women in SCI*, that took place in Strasbourg (1983), whose goal was to gather women from SCI to meet, exchange and make future plans for their cooperation.

*'After a long road of faithful cooperation, have women within SCI reached, in 1983, at least equality of rights, respect and consideration with men?'* - (an introduction note on the report from Role of Women in SCI seminar).

The seminar focused on the topics like: *Why do we go to third world countries, male domination in SCI structures, creating an informal exchange of news regarding women's empowerment, working with migrant women in the local communities etc.*

In relation to the fact that not a lot of women from, Africa and Asia attended the seminar, Anna Riera, an activist from SCI Catalonia, sent out a letter to all the seminar participants opening with this sentence:

*At a recent seminar held by SCI on the theme 'Women in SCI' (Service Civil International)*

*we noticed that there was a predominance of Western women. We decided that each of us should maintain links with each other and also try to make contact with women from areas not represented (especially Asia and Africa).*

Other women, just like Anna, also felt a need to build up networks between different women's groups in SCI. This mind-set later on created a *Women's Information Network*, where SCI women around the world were in contact and followed activities from each (and every) side of the globe. This network and other seminars, workcamps and events that followed gave space to understanding of different circumstances and gave answers as to why it was so difficult to gather women from different areas to take part in these kinds of 'women's' activities and meetings.

But before some concrete changes occurred, it was important to point out that women's issues are not different from any other developmental topic at the present moment and are very much interconnected. Even though they face different issues across the globe, the seminar in Strasbourg in 1983 opened a 'Pandora's box' of topics that would create meaningful changes in SCI movement regarding communication between different

groups, women's exchanges, and the creation of new SCI policies.

## Europe and Asia - where do we meet?

The issues and differences between Eastern and Western societies, especially concerning women's rights, were something that women SCI activists were aware of. But even though challenges for women were different across the globe, women in Europe, just as anywhere else in the world, suffered structural violence, and that could be seen in some of the places where women SCI volunteers took part in workcamps. One of such examples was a workcamp in The Hague (Netherlands), called *Blijf van m'n Lijf*, where women that suffered physical violence could get shelter until they come up with a decision as to how to reorganize their lives after such a trauma (see article 307). SCI volunteers spent their days with these women that had undergone physical violence and were renovating the house they lived in. The group organized communal activities for the residents of *Blijf van m'n Lijf* while discussing pacifism, the relationship between men and women and gender roles.



Women workcamp in Grütschalp (Switzerland) 1982 (Photo: SCIIA)

While discussions in workcamps and seminars in Europe were focusing on relationships between men and women, pacifism in correlation with feminism and many other topics, it seems that in certain regions of Asia the topics to discuss were different: at the beginning of the *Women's support service booklet* that was published in Bangalore, India, in 1988, one can read that the focus was mostly on promotion of women's programmes, especially for working

with tribal women and for the inclusion of illiterate and semi-literate women in activities. Twelve programmes 1987 and 1988 took place - including a *Workcamp with Tribal women* and a workcamp called *Discovering themselves*, both in India. In these workcamps women from Europe participated, and a few comments followed after this exchange:

*We are very touched by the suffering of our friends here and by the trust in the group which has enabled such deep personal sharing.*

Some of the local women were quoted:

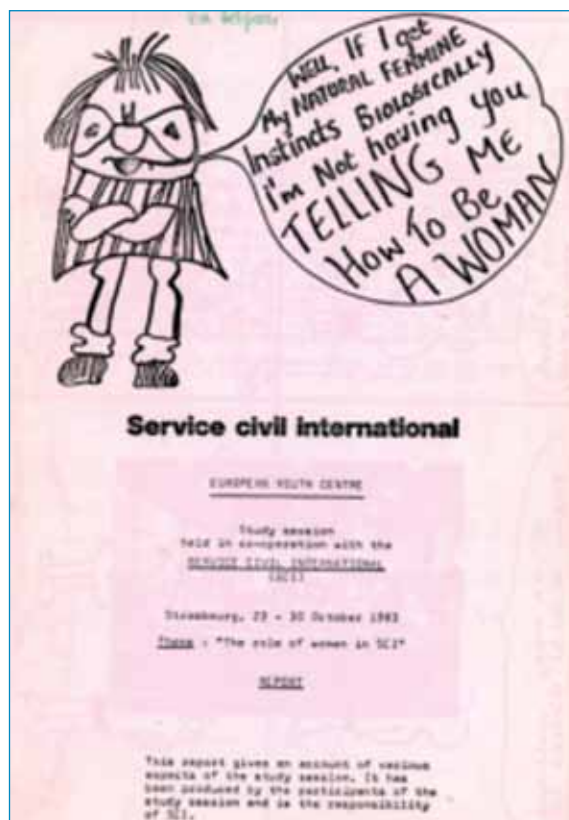
*I learnt about the status of women. I have come to know that I am in that status. I am unhappy about it.*

*I cannot read or write. I came for this meeting without telling my husband and I have learnt several things. I must be courageous.*

*Women should get educated. Women can also learn men's work. We can be equal to men. I felt bad that I am not educated. I want to educate my children.*

An introduction note to the *Women's Dialogue Seminar (1988)* states that one of the aims of women SCI activists is to *maintain better contacts with women in all parts of the world*. Participants Bokeya and Sultana from Bangladesh, Zainab from Malaysia and Halima from Morocco were the representatives of the 'non-European women's block' in this seminar.

While in SCI international seminars women are encouraged to stand up for themselves, to include immigrant women in activities, to learn about each other's cultures and to point out the differences between men and women and actively fight against gender-based discrimination, during a *seminar in Tamil Nadu (India) in 1990* there were some words about a different approach to include women from Asian countries in SCI activities; where it's written that the '*family must support the propensity of participation of women through SCI work*' and there should be also men helping them out - they should be the ones to '*encourage their women to join SCI and participate in the work*'. This sentence



Role of Women in SCI, 23 - 30 October 1983: front page of the report (Document: SCIIA)

goes in line with the fact that there is a predominance of Western women in seminars, trainings and meetings concerning women, as at the seminar in Strasbourg. On the other hand, there was a lack of women in general 'taking the lead' at the international level within SCI and that was a huge concern of women from all continents.

## Creation of a common communication platform between women in SCI

As previously mentioned and after the seminar that took place in Strasbourg in 1983, some SCI activists expressed the wish to make a platform where SCI women can communicate through and enhance their exchanges and partnerships.

The first platform of this kind was in a Women's newsletter from 1989. After the seminar that took place in Lokeren, Belgium in 1988, a few female SCI activists decided to take the topic of women in the movement to the



next level. Proposals from the Lokeren seminar were accepted at the European Committee Meeting in Barcelona (1988). The proposal included topics concerning the role of women in branches and groups, sex balance at all levels of branch structures, highlighting women's events throughout the year and the question of the WIN (see below) on the local, regional and international level.

A group of 10 women from 7 different countries gathered for a week in 1991 and a week in 1992 to re-launch the *Women's Information Network (WIN)*. The network had been established after the Women's dialogue seminar; it was a response to a strong need by women SCI activists to exchange information and create a place where they could meet and learn from each other. The network published a newsletter (the 'win news').

The WIN was restructured and divided into four different networks (or 'webs') to make the information sharing easier. The webs were structured geographically:

1<sup>st</sup> web: Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Japan, India, Bangladesh, Mauritius

2<sup>nd</sup> web: SCI Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Morocco

3<sup>rd</sup> web: Austria, VIA Belgium, Netherlands, FRG, Finland, Sweden, Norway

4<sup>th</sup> web: USA, Norway, Ireland

In the *win news* issue from 1992, Linda Musch and Valli Seshan (see article 210) point out the fact that creating such a network is maximizing the existing possibilities within SCI. As a peace organization that does various activities, women can do a lot to support each other's efforts, but they would, of course, need help from SCI branches to reach their goals.

In the same issue of the Women's newsletter in 1989 it was announced that group of women would meet in West Berlin and start working on *The Women's Workcamp Handbook*. Between 10 and 12 women gathered and prepared this handbook including advice on how to organize 'women only' camps, a guide for a 'safe travel' for women and other information. The aim of this seminar in West Berlin was to combine all the resources and information and issues that women in SCI face. There was a lot of material from women from Europe, but from other continents, like Africa and Asia, it was missing. Finally, in 1993, the *Woman's Workcamp Handbook* was published.

During the 1990's and after the realization among SCI women activists that something needed to be done in order to bridge the gap between men and women in the movement and ensure a gender balance within SCI, various seminars and working groups followed: such as the *Women's Working group (WWG)*, established in South Asia, as a response to women being faced with various problems when it comes to participating in political life, access to education and new technologies.

The supporting branches of the WWG were SCI India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The group was officially recognised as a Working Group at the International Committee Meeting of SCI only in 1997, but the



WEBS(networks) presented in the Women's newsletter (spring 1989) (Document: SCIIA)

activities and struggle of women around the world to create a safe space for exchange and empowerment came much earlier.

## What women in SCI taught us?

Besides all the work women in SCI did to reach equality, empowerment and to re-define the definition of solidarity, there were still certain situations and behaviours that were symptomatic: most IEC members were men even though there was a majority of women in the movement, and only men were sent to international meetings of SCI by, for example, most of the South Asian branches at the time. Throughout the years things slowly started to change, as those behaviours came to be noticed even though none of them had ever been recorded in official reports and meeting minutes in the past.

Even though we still have countries that ban abortion and violence on women is taking lives across the world, the feminist movements around the world are gaining momentum, and we notice a shift within SCI as well, where the current generation of activists is part of the changes. In 2015, a Working Group called 'Gender Blenders' was created, following a seminar on gender issues in the context of the 'No more war' activities. Seminars and trainings are organized to raise awareness about this topic on an international level. During the 1980s and 1990s in SCI, women's emancipation was an important topic and although not everything was always going according to plan and there were disagreements, our fellow 'SCI sisters' talked a lot about feminism, gender roles and rights of women within the movement and elsewhere. We can definitely thank them and



WIN meeting, 1992 (Photo: SCIIA)

learn from their experiences and nourish the power of women in today's SCI world. With their creativity while making international newsletters, presenting policies on international meetings to tackle the topics like gender equality, the presence of women's issues in SCI, and creating workcamp handbooks with (still today) useful information for women travelling abroad, our fellow volunteers left us a lot to lean on, but also a lot to learn from.

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# Den Haag (Netherlands) 1981

## Keep your hands off my body!

by Sonja Barac

*'Blijf van m'n Lijf' was a house for battered women situated in The Hague, providing shelter to women and their children. The address was kept secret; women could settle down and take time to figure out what they would like to do with their lives.*

The 16 women that took part in this workcamp lived in Blijf women's centre and they managed to get in direct contact with the ones that went through harassment. They worked four hours a day, renovating the common rooms of the house. Afternoons were reserved for leisure activities (reading, making visits, swimming), and in the evenings the women would meet in small discussion groups, sing, do image-theatre or do other kinds of activities together.

At the time this workcamp was taking place, feminist movements in SCI were already quite active. A women's working group was informally established in South Asia, and exchange between women in SCI from different continents would be more continuous in the following years; there was a need to address the problems of women, in its full variety and complexity. From creating information networks for women around the world to publishing a women's workcamp handbook - women in SCI were striving for equality and were passionate about pointing out specific problems they were facing.

The discussions among the women of the workcamp were documented the most - the ones about men, feminism and pacifism, and how to appreciate femininity in their own behaviour. Through these reports and from discussions, it could be seen that these women had, sometimes, very different opinions when it came to certain topics, as Gonnie S. wrote in the report. *'First we found*

*that Gonnie L., Anne and me had an idea of pacifism very different from the idea that Halszka had.... Halszka had at the word pacifism an image of hippies in the sixties'.*

*A real pacifism includes feminism and vice versa because pacifism excludes oppression - also oppression of women by men. Feminism, on the other hand, goes further than breaking the oppression of women. For me it also means trying to find better ways of life for everybody, breaking all the oppression in the world. No feminism without pacifism and no pacifism without feminism. That was the end of our discussion. Gonnie S. from the Netherlands*

*What a marathon session, trying to listen to everybody's stories! But it is good to take the time to ask questions and stay with every woman for a while. It struck me how many ways there are how many woman fights for her identity, how all the different personal backgrounds, settings, finally end in this common point - the camp. Brigitte from Austria*

Women were inspired by the overall situation in the Blijf women's centre so they created a short poem:

*Battered women are fighting for their rights  
When you are beaten, life isn't very bright  
so now we are here, ten countries all at once  
to help them a bit, by painting the house.*

### Reference

1. SCIIA 30249.31

### Figures

Country:	The Netherlands
Period:	01.08 - 21.08.1981
Number of volunteers:	16
Number of volunteer nationalities:	9
Type of work	Renovation in a house
Remarks:	women's work and study camp

# Solidarity for Liberation

by Nigel Watt

By 1981 decisions were needed about SCI's priorities in Africa. To throw light on the relationship with West African partners, SCI appointed Sabine Decker-Horz and Dorothee Bulow to carry out an evaluation in 1981-2 to clarify the situation and make recommendations for the future. Their report [1] traced the history of SCI's relationship and recommended that SCI should co-ordinate the Africa work of its branches from a base in Europe; that therefore the field office run by Gideon Akator (see article 211) should close down; that the International Africa Committee should have an enlarged membership; and that volunteers going to Africa should be better prepared. An SCI Africa Handbook was produced by Franco Perna, the former International Secretary of SCI, in 1982 describing SCI's structures and all its partners.[2]

An International Projects Seminar at Benburb in Northern Ireland in 1986 proposed the setting up of a new commission to co-ordinate all of SCI's work in Africa and Asia. This was SEED (Solidarity, Exchange and Education for Development). Its remit was 'to give insight into the political, social and economic causes of underdevelopment and oppression and to organise solidarity activities and exchanges with the South.' An Ros was appointed Co-ordinator (see also article 310). SEED organised a West Africa study tour in 1989 and produced a booklet entitled *All you always wanted to know about Solidarity Camps but were afraid to ask*. To give an idea of the scale of the exchanges, the SEED report for 1987 shows 71 volunteers from Europe to Africa and 51 to Asia, and 7 volunteers from Africa and 4 from Asia coming to Europe. This imbalance due to the cost of travel and harsh visa regimes was a continuing and regrettable pattern.

In September 1987 SEED launched a development education and solidarity campaign which would demonstrate how armaments could be converted for peace and would provide practical solidarity with Namibian

refugees and with the liberation movement, SWAPO. An information booklet [3] was published containing SCI's plans and background information on Namibia (then 'South-West Africa,' a former German colony which had been handed to South Africa as a League of Nations mandate after World War I and subjected to the racist laws of *apartheid*.) Led by the German branch, three second-hand military trucks, Mercedes Benz UNIMOGs of the type sold to the South African army, were purchased. They were converted and used to build the notorious *gaspir* anti-riot truck for the South African police forces to fight riots and stop civil protest. SCI organised the conversion of these military trucks into humanitarian ambulances by young unemployed people and international volunteers. At a Protestant National Convention (*Kirchentag*), German TV reported on the project nationwide for three days and promoted the collection of second-hand medical equipment. Christoph Müller and Stephen Bayer of SCI Germany facilitated the first campaigns and the related mobile anti-apartheid education programmes. A series of public events, interactive information sessions in schools and churches were organized by local SCI and solidarity groups along the routes of the ambulances to the ports in Europe which shipped goods to Africa. From April to September 1988 the ambulances toured through France, Catalonia, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Italy to draw public attention to the links between Europe and its arms industries and *apartheid* and to the plight of Namibian refugees in Angola and to show solidarity to the Namibian people. The ambulances were shipped to the refugee camp in Kwanza-Sul, Angola.

Between 2002 and 2005 Christoph Müller helped to develop the Youth Association of Zambia which organized workcamps in Namibia and Zambia on HIV/AIDS prevention. He produced a poster exhibition on the SCI-UNIMOG solidarity project for the Namibian



museum for independence in Windhoek. The veteran Namibian leader, Andimba Toivo ya Toivo, expressed warm appreciation for this action. Workcamps and solidarity actions were simultaneously organised by European SCI branches.

In the meantime, SCI's East-West Commission was in discussion with SIVSAJ, the coordinating body of the youth movements in communist countries, about a possible joint plan to build a training centre for young Namibians at the refugee camp in Kwanza-Sul in Angola. This was an ambitious idea which would have been costly. Together with Atanas Roupchev of SIVSAJ, Nigel Watt travelled to Angola to look at the proposed site and discuss with the SWAPO Youth League. In the end nothing came of the plan, as SIVSAJ disappeared in the events of 1989 and Namibia got its independence in 1990.

But these events did not discourage SCI. A new solidarity, 'Breaking Free,' was designed to show solidarity with the newly independent state and an information booklet [4] was produced and handed out during the campaign. A bus was bought in Ghent, Belgium and fitted out as an exhibition. From April to October 1991, it toured from Ghent to Great Britain, both parts of Ireland, Germany, Poland, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Slovenia, Italy and Greece. There was a team of volunteers who travelled with the bus including, at the start of the tour, Alfred Ohene-Ononor from VOLU Ghana. Solidarity workcamps were organised along the route by the German, Finnish, British, Northern Irish and Irish branches of SCI.

Many SCI members also wanted to show solidarity with the people of Western Sahara, the Spanish colony which in the decolonisation process had been taken over by Morocco, driving the liberation fighters of the Polisario movement into Algeria. This led to tensions between SCI and its Moroccan partners who were fiercely loyal to their government and were part of a long-standing and very active workcamp movement. Jean-Pierre Petit



Street exhibition during the 'Unimog' campaign, Paris 1988 (Photo: SCIIA)

found himself in a difficult position, having nurtured a very close relationship with the Moroccans. As a result of these strongly held differences, SCI Switzerland wanted to stop funding Jean-Pierre Petit's work and half of his budget was taken on by the International Secretariat.

Nigel Watt produced a report based on a tour of Africa in 1991 [5]. SCI's partners at the time included AICV (Ivory Coast), VOLU (Ghana), KVDA (Kenya), LWA (Lesotho), VWAN (Nigeria), SWAPO Youth League (Namibia), Inter-Ententes (Senegal), VWASL (Sierra Leone), ATOVOCT and FAGAD (Togo) and UVDA (Uganda).

SEED produced two booklets: An Introduction to African Workcamp Organisations; a Guide to South-South Exchanges. It also organised a study tour to Latin America in 1992, a solidarity campaign against injustice, and planned the Crossing Borders Campaign (1997) (see article 404).

## References

1. SCIIA 43205.7
2. The handbook is available in the archive
3. SCIIA 46116.3
4. SCIIA 46116.1
5. SCIIA 43206.5



# SCI Malaysia - 50 years flashback

## Stephen Nah - Married to SCI

*SCI came to Malaya when Malaya was not Malaysia yet. Known for its long-term volunteer programme, we received our first LTV, Vera Keables from IVS-GB to work at the Pure Life Society Orphanage, Kuala Lumpur, in 1963.*

My initiation into SCI was a chance invitation to attend a workcamp in Penang in 1970 by Navam Appadurai. I went and I loved it. By chance I got a job in Penang two years later, and happily caught up with SCI again. In 1972 we officially registered our first branch in Penang. This was about the same time when I met my wife, Sue Maznah. Since then I have been tied to her and SCI.

### Penang

In Penang our early activities centred around people with disabilities, especially the visually disabled at St Nicolas, the spastics at Green Lane and the aged at the Sisters of the Poor. Under John Orijitham's leadership we organised weekend camps, did regular maintenance of the centre's facilities, engaged the special people in regular activities like hiking, swimming, camping, singalong and even a cycle tour from Penang to Singapore. It was fun and I was young, then.

In 1989 SCI Penang initiated the SCI Penang Peace Run where annually over 300 people with disabilities - visual, physical, or on wheelchairs would join a thousand others in the carnival-like Peace Run. It's been running for 30 years non-stop. Accordingly, we also planned an international workcamp during this run and engaged our international volunteers in the race and staged an intercultural dance. It's a great way to connect our people, able and disabled through sports and dances.

### Kuala Lumpur (KL)

In 1977 I was relocated to KL. The city then was flanked with squatters' buildings, no skyscrapers, no flyovers. Soon we were engaged in two initiatives. Tan Siew Luan's experimen-

tal Organic Farming at Sungai Buloh where she stayed for ten years, and an educational project for pre-school children in the Sentul slum area.

To support these activities, we registered our second SCI Group, in KL in 1984. The *Sentul Educational Project* was unique, timely, relevant, well-liked and reached out to the people concerned. In 1986 in line with the International Year of Peace commemoration, our project received the First Earth Run Award for Outstanding Community Service by the Malaysian Olympic Council / UNICEF.

Another grass-root project that we supported in KL was the KIOKU family Day, where over 100 people with wheel-chairs, along with their family members would gather for an eventful Family Day. Initially we organised 90% of the programme for them but by the 6th year - the group of disabled people were trained by us, and able to do 90% by themselves. It was truly and verily a satisfying collaboration.

Malaysia is a blessed country without severe earthquakes, typhoons or drought. Nevertheless when need arose our team had gone into action. For example after the 2004 tsunami, the two major monsoon floods in Johore and Kelantan, and the 2015 Earthquake in Nepal. After these natural disasters we helped in emergency packing at the relief centres, raised funds and supplied needed essentials. We joined in the clean up as well.

In 2012 SCI Malaysia hosted its first International Committee Meeting (ICM).

For a change, we successfully held this in the middle of the city, with a Peace Forum, and back-to-back workcamp besides the usual ICM and the Asian Platform meeting (APM)



Sue Maznah and Stephen Nah (Photo: Stephen Nah)

- the event for Asian branches to prepare themselves for ICM and discuss Asian regional topics. This was the same year that Mihai Crisan retired as International President and Paolo Pagano took over. All the events went smoothly. It was memorable, productive and fun - and well within the budget.

The Core SCI teams both in Penang lead by Athimulan, and in KL by Edward Chuah, consist of dedicated long-timers and some busy young career members. We are able to network and collaborate with several like-minded organisations to help organise our **Annual Earth Day** (22 April ), **International Day of Peace** (21 September), **A Day of Joy with the Special People** (April) and the **Peace Run** (August). In these earmarked activities, SCI plays a leading role in organising the events.

Besides these regular calendar activities, we extend our reciprocal support to several other like-minded NGOs - attending their programmes, seminars, workshops, meetings wherever their themes revolve around enabling or promoting Peace, Harmony, Non-violence and Intercultural Understanding, This keeps us engaged in Peace Work, the whole year long.

Apart from the 30 years old Penang Peace Run, Two other very significant activities that we help spearheaded were the 2007 **Malindo Unity Swim (MUS)** and our ongoing

ing **International Day of Peace (IDP)** Event. The historic MUS, involved several government departments and NGOs in organising a marathon non-stop relay swim by 23 swimmers, able and disabled, over 27 hours covering 94 km from Port Dickson, Malaysia to Indonesia and back. It has earned a place in our Malaysian Book of Records. More importantly - the participating team showcased our ability to bring our diverse community - Malays, Chinese, Indian, and swimmers from all the States together to achieve this feat.

For the past fourteen years our **International Day of Peace** has captured the hearts of many. Activities during the weekend included Peace Convoys, a Peace Rally and March, Peace Art for Children, Cycle for Peace, Peace Messages on Paper Doves, Planting of Trees, Peace Exhibitions, Games, Forum, Dinner and Planting of Peace Poles. Simultaneous events have been held increasingly in more locations. In 2018, the Federal Minister of National Unity and the UNDP Resident Coordinator were delighted to witness over 500 people enjoying the festive commemoration and planting of a Peace Pole. Our target is to plant 100 Peace Poles over next 5 years.

## Still Married?

Yes, SCI is a way of life, its simple no-frill approach to living, its belief in good deeds and volunteering, of respect for others, non-violence, reflection, reconciliation, peace and harmony... and others, deeply appeal to me. There is so much **Sharing, Caring, Involvement** in SCI, and in my life partner, Sue. It's been 50 years, taking it a day at a time and just loving it with its occasional ups and downs, More Ups

*Stephen Nah helped to form both the Penang and KL Branch. He was an IEC member in 2010-2011. Continues to support the Asian Development Committee Secretariat and the two groups in Malaysia.*

# Words about Deeds

In November 1920, a group of volunteers from different European countries went to France in order to reconstruct a war-destroyed village. This was the starting point for *Service Civil International (SCI)* and one hundred years of international voluntary work for peace.

This richly illustrated volume offers insight into SCI's long journey, combining original research articles, workcamp spotlights, source texts and recollections from veterans and activists.

