

Newsletter 07/2009



6th issue, July 2009

Solidarités Jeunesses Vietnam

SJ Vietnam News

Our Long-Term Volunteers

9 International volunteers



1 Belgian



3 French



2 German



2 Spanish



1 American

Call for participants !!!

Patrimonito workcamp is coming soon...

For our World Heritage Workcamp in Ha Long Bay, we are currently looking for **16 international volunteers**.

From the **17th** until the **28th** of August, SJ Vietnam will be hosting the workcamp for the second time.

The theme of this year is *Green Ha Long Bay Forever*. The main goal of the workcamp will be to sensitize the local population to the Ha Long Bay site.

The activities will include workshops, forum, collecting garbage, cycling around the city and meeting local environmental clubs and authorities.

If you need more information please contact Tung, our workcamp coordinator workcam@sjvietnam.org



© UNESCO 1995

WORKCAMPS 06/07-17/07

WE ARE LOOKING FOR LOCAL VOLUNTEERS & INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS FOR :

- SJV0916, Gardening at Hold the future
- SJV0917, Hai Duong Welfare Center
- SJV0918, Youth House School

Please check the description on our website:
www.sjvietnam.org
and/or contact us at :
workcamp@sjvietnam.org

International Volunteers, we are looking for you... !

For this summer, SJ Vietnam is looking for new long-term volunteers to join its projects in and around Hanoi.

This is our current situation for August & September:

In Hanoi

Youth House project – vacancies: 2

Blind School – vacancies: 4

National Pediatrics Hospital – vacancies: 4

Bo De Pagoda - 2

Around Hanoi

Hai Duong Welfare Center – vacancies: 2

Xuan Thuy National Park - vacancies: 2

Please contact our LTV Department: ltv@sjvietnam.org and check the description of the projects on our website: www.sjvietnam.org



SJ Vietnam News

Facilitator Training Course by Yen

Dear all SJV staff,

My name is Yen and I have been your member for SJ Vietnam nearly one year. I have attended many workcamps and activities organized by SJV but one the most impressive activities I have been joined is your facilitator training course.

Firstly, I was very curious about what would be going on during the course... How are the trainers and trainees? How can we work smoothly together and how the course will run??? First impression lasts forever; I was welcomed by two friendly trainers Annegrette and Roxane when I first stepped in the training place. Then I met other Vietnamese volunteers who also came to attend the course and now, I am happy that we are very close to each others.

The course started with some interesting activities so that the trainees and trainers can get to know each others well. After that, I had chances to know more about SJ Vietnam organization, its workcamps and projects. I was so surprised to watch a funny performance by the trainers, which help the trainees to understand the steps to applying an international work camp. We worked very hard with lots of tasks to do in the first day but I felt happy as it is a good opportunity to challenge a facilitator's ability and strength.

It seems that the first training day is covered mostly by trainers' task then the second day is trainees' turn to show their various skills. That was the first time I tasted so many difficult situations that I have never imagined before. I had chances to act as a camp leader, and also in the position of a volunteer who has lots of complaints. This part of the course is really useful for the facilitator to practice and learn from the other trainees' skills. In my opinion, the training course is really good and practical for me. It helps me to understand how a workcamp really works, the hardship that a facilitator may face and last but not least, I had a wonderful chance to make new friends and work in teamwork.

Thank you very much for organizing this training course.



11 local volunteers took part to the Training for Workcamp facilitators on the 4th and 5th of July

SJ Vietnam News

Dear Friends,

The International Bureau of Social Tourism (BITS) is very pleased to welcome *SJ Vietnam* among its members.

The main mission of our organization, which was created in 1963, is to promote better access to leisure, holidays and tourism for the greatest number of people – mainly youth and students, families, seniors and disabled persons – and to promote a tourism based on sustainability and solidarity which grants benefits to hosting peoples and respects natural and cultural heritage.

Today, with over 150 member organizations in nearly 45 countries, the BITS gathers associations, trade unions, cooperatives, academic institutions, private operators as well as public authorities who share this main goal and all the principles of the *Montreal Declaration* "Towards a humanist and social vision of tourism" that was adopted in 1996 and which still the reference text for all the members.

Over the last 15 years, the BITS started to extend its network beyond the European continent where social tourism has its main roots. In 1994, it created a regional office for the Americas based in Montreal (Canada). It has allowed the development of the membership in North America but also in several Latin-American countries which are very active in this field. In 2004, we launched a new section for Africa where there is an increasing number of NGOs interested to promote social and fair tourism. There is no doubt that the next step will be Asia where we want to be more active and where there are also important needs in this sector. I believe the cooperation we will develop with *SNJ Vietnam* will certainly contribute to this goal.

I am sure that through the BITS, *SNJ Vietnam* will be able to promote its actions and programs, to exchange valuable information and practices with other organisation sharing the same interest and to learn about the trends and perspectives in this field.

For more information about the BITS, I invite you to have a look at our website: www.bits-int.org

Charles-E. Bélanger

Director, BITS

"**Les enfants du dragon**" is a young association (JORF of 07/03/2009) created at the initiative of Marc De Muynck, a French O.A.P., who began its humanitarian work in Vietnam in 2006 with the Switzerland NGO "Maison Chance" in Ho Chi Minh.

Early in 2007, under his leadership, some projects started with the partnership of associations such as "Coup de Pouce Humanitaire", "Solidari-Terre" and "Mère Isabelle": building of 24 houses for the poorest in Phu An village, Đồng Nai province, setting up a 16- computer -room for young people of this village.

In Ho Chi Minh with a patron's support, renovation and ground elevation in a suburban school that was often flooded, small purchases of school equipment and renovation of a small Buddhist school-orphanage of the same very disadvantaged district. Financial support was granted for the renovation and enclosure of a plot in a maternal center run by a Catholic sister in Long Khanh (Đồng Nai).

In February 2009 came the idea to found the association with a group of friends ...

Since then the building of houses goes on in Phu An and in the Mekong Delta, as well as supporting small orphanages.

In 2009, a part of the budget is spent on well drilling and in November will be opened a Spirulina growing school-farm (2 pools of 50 M2). Production will be reserved above all for children from orphanages supported by the association.

Furthermore, in 2008, Peter Latzko, shot a documentary movie called "Les enfants du dragon." This 54 -minute film broadcast in France is available on DVD at the association's headquarters.

<http://www.lesenfantsdudragon.com/>

73 r Roger Salengro - Quarouble 59243 (France) Tél. +33 0327 273 751



Why Vietnam? _By Tomas_

There is a huge market where you get everything - cheap clothes, Vietnamese newspapers, Pho, Com Bo, Com Cay and much, much more. It is called "Sapa" and you can find it in Prague, the very heart of the Czech Republic.

How come? Well, the Vietnamese are the third biggest minority group in the Czech Republic of approximately 50 000 people, which makes 0.5% of the Czech population. They live mainly in big cities like Prague or Brno and also along the borders of the country. Although they come from a very different cultural context, some of them are very well integrated into the society, which often creates an interesting and sometimes surprising fusion. Vietnamese students are usually among the best in the class; some of the members of the second generation started to discuss their double Czech – Vietnamese identity on their blogs, calling themselves the "Banana kids". Furthermore, there are some remarkable inter-cultural Czech Vietnamese initiatives going on. For example, on the 15th of May 2009 one could have gone to *9viet*, a cultural event composed of a documentary film projection, a photography vernissage, a fashion show and a dance performance, all reflecting the Czech – Vietnamese cultural experience.

But how is this all possible? The Czech Republic has never been a colonial power; Vietnam is about 12,000 kilometres away, and on first sight there seems to be nearly nothing these two countries have in common.

In fact, there is something and it has a lot to do with the *Socialist Internacionala* – socialist partnership. Actually, we can trace the beginning of modern Vietnamese – Czech relations to 1950, when the former Czechoslovakia, as the fourth country in the international arena, opened diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Since then there has been an increasing exchange of goods, experiences and people. For example one of the Hanoi breweries started operating in 1957, also thanks to the Czech experts helping with the brewing technology.

In the following years, tens of thousands of Vietnamese came to Czechoslovakia to gain professional experience and higher education. During the 1980s the trend somehow changed and Vietnamese began working in heavy industries as builders, welders etc. Many of them have settled down and stayed for good.

A change occurred after 1990, when many broker agencies began operating in both countries, making a profit out of getting people from Vietnam to work in the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, huge corruption was involved in the process when a price for a plane ticket and a working visa paid to an agency climbed to up to \$14 000. Families usually have to put up their properties as collateral for a loan in order to send their son or daughter abroad. That means about four years of very hard work to be completed in the Czech Republic to repay the debts back home in Vietnam. Because of this immense responsibility of Vietnamese workers for their family's fortune, they are often disadvantaged and vulnerable to exploitation by their employer. But the Vietnamese workers just cannot afford to lose their job.

However, with the economic crisis hitting Czechia in 2008, foreign workers were the first to leave their redundant working places. This has left many Vietnamese in a very difficult situation, with which they are still struggling now.

The Czech – Vietnamese connection, based on nearly 60 years of mutual cooperation, is very significant. For this reason Vietnam is one of the priority countries in the Czech development cooperation policy, which gives fair opportunity for widening and broadening cooperation between SJ Vietnam and partners from the Czech side. How far and broad the cooperation will be depends mainly on us, the employees and volunteers of SJ Vietnam.

A detailed article on this topic in The New York Times:

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/05/world/europe/05iht-viet.html?_r=1&pagewanted=2.

A film document, the Czech Television: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/10213388119-zeme-snu/>.



**Solidarités
Jeunesses
Vietnam**
*Volunteers for
learning, sharing
and being*

Address :

Suite 306, Building C6
Block 1, My Dinh 1,
Hanoi, Vietnam

Phone :

+84.4.62872829
+84.4.32154993

Fax :

+84.4.62872829

Email:

info@sjvietnam.org

Check our website for
upcoming events and
latest news!

www.sjvietnam.org

Welcome

. To our PR intern, Pham Phuong Lien and Vu Thanh Hoa and volunteer department intern cum HR intern, Cao Thi Thu Trang .

We are very glad to have them among us and we wish them a wonderful time in SJ Vietnam!

. To Kim, Tomas, Alvaro, Maria, our new long-term volunteers from the United States, Czech Republic, and Spain.

We hope they enjoy their voluntary work as well as Vietnam to the fullest!



Goodbye

. To Roxane after 10 months she has worked in SJ Vietnam. We thank her for her dedication. Wish her all the best!

Coming Soon...

WORKCAMPS

Special workcamp from the 7th until the 18th of September

. Mid-Autumn Festival workcamp, SJV0924

For further information please contact workcamp@sjvietnam.org

WORKSHOP

Our Glen volunteers will organize a workshop about development in August for our staff and long-term volunteers....