

INTERCULTURAL TALK

ICYE NEWSLETTER



Climate Colonialism

and its impact on international volunteering

"Indigenous people, local communities, young people, women and girls, should be leaders of climate action and not victims of climate policies."

ARCHANA SORENG, MEMBER OF
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY
GENERAL'S YOUTH ADVISORY
GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE



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What is Climate Colonialism

by Stine Jensen

When we talk about climate colonialism, we refer to the ongoing inequalities between countries in the Global North and those in the Global South. The structures and institutions that were created in the time of colonialism (modern colonialism started during "the Age of Discovery" in the 15th and extends to the 20th century) still impact on how climate change is addressed, how resources are exploited, how industrial wealth is acquired and how economic dominance is exercised.

Farhana Sultana (2022) reminds us about the unheard voices of the people and the disproportionate effect climate change has on them, despite this being caused by the countries in the Global North, including their transnational companies.

Climate colonialism highlights how previous colonial powers continue the colonial past through their neoliberal capitalistic economies, their territorial policies and their international development approach. This impacts the climate of former colonies disproportionately more than their own countries.

Sultana highlights that "decolonizing climate needs to address the complexities of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, international development, and geopolitics that contribute to the reproduction of ongoing colonialities through

existing global governance structures, discursive framings, imagined solutions, and interventions." (Sultana, 2022).

This was also obvious at the COP27 on climate change, held in Egypt in November 2022. Even though a historic 'loss and damage fund' was agreed on, Siwat Varnakomola points out that the summit can still be seen "as having recast the 19th Century European colonialist narrative - seeking to civilise the 'inferior' Other to justify resource grabbing." (Varnakomola, 2022)

Climate colonialism is very present in our time. It influences how we have to address climate change mitigation in our own volunteering work and the ecological model we promote through our projects and advocacy work. There is need to speak out e.g. against extractive policies and corporations who continue to exploit nature in the name of progress.

This newsletter will therefore be looking at different areas related to this topic.

We cannot only dedicate ourselves to thinking about decolonizing, we must act to decolonize.[3]

[1] Farhana Sultana (2022) The unbearable heaviness of climate coloniality, Political Geography

[2] Siwat Varnakomola (2022) Hidden behind COP27: Colonialism in the Guise of Green Development?

[3] <http://globalsolidaritylocalaction.sites.haverford.edu/what-is-decolonization-why-is-it-important/>

Decolonising IVS Study Session in Vienna



In the beginning of October, Stine - the new ESC volunteer at IO - went to a study session that was organised by the partners of the European funded *Decolonize IVS* project. The aim of the project is to seek to understand more about continuing forms of neo-colonialism including climate colonialism and reconsider whether long-term volunteering projects, especially involving young Europeans going to volunteer in the Global South, can help to break down existing power structures or whether they in fact are reinforcing them.

In Vienna, participants from Austria, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Nepal, Romania, and Zimbabwe came together to reflect on key concepts to explore in relation to decolonisation. The majority of the participants were young people in their 20's and all very eager to learn more about the topic of decolonisation. The week went so fast, with lots of exercises and inspiration. A dialogue between two scientists, Katharina Fritsch and Marcela Torres, about decolonisation further deepened the reflection on the topic.



In group work, participants defined and produced short videos on eight key concepts relevant for an IVS context: decolonisation, intersectionality, cultural appropriation, power and privileges, neo-colonialism, diversity, volunteering and global justice.

A decolonial city tour gave the participants the possibility to make the link between theory and practice and see how colonial legacies are still present in Vienna.

On the last day, the researcher Filipe Moreira Alves explained the research method to be used in the next research training in February 2023 in Brussels. He explained that Participatory Action Research engages participants in an active role in the research and builds on their expertise.

The project is producing the **Decolonise Newsletter**. You can sign up for it [here](#) and learn more about how IVS can contribute to the discussion around Decolonization.

Climate crisis in the Philippines

Interview with Rhenelyn Queen Dadulo

President of Global Initiative for Exchange and Development (GIED)/ ICYE Philippines

How does climate change affect your ICYE Philippines? Can you give an example?

Our community is our working field. Its people and environment are very much intertwined with our work since our community is situated in one of the most vulnerable and disaster prone areas in the Philippines. Any severe change of climate would immediately change the condition of our work.

The Philippines, being an archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, is one of the most typhoon prone countries in the world. We have over 20 typhoons coming to our country almost regularly every year. Additionally, the Philippines lies along the Pacific Ring of Fire, resulting regularly in damage and loss of lives. This condition alone defines us as a very disadvantaged nation in terms of climate vulnerability, especially in the eyes of our international partners and volunteers. But, being in the field of international voluntary service work, we also take this as a great opportunity to challenge our partners and volunteers to go beyond their comfort zone and take part in overcoming our climate challenges by also reflecting on their own contribution while also understanding the systemic issues.



An example is the recent powerful typhoon *Rai* which hit the Philippines on December 16, 2021. It destroyed homes, flooded towns, severed power and communications lines and displaced hundreds of thousands in the central and southern regions of the Philippines. *Rai*, which made landfall as a category 5 typhoon, revived memories of the devastation brought in 2013 by Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most powerful tropical cyclones ever recorded, which killed 6,300 people in the Philippines. *Rai* displaced nearly 490,000 people in the Philippines before moving toward the South China Sea. GIED and most of its local partners in Cebu were not spared and were among the displaced victims of the calamity.

How does climate change affect your volunteers?

In the context of the climate conditions on the Philippines, volunteers who are not aware or have very limited experiences with disasters, can easily be traumatized when they experience it first hand. Others can feel isolated or helpless when the mobility is greatly reduced due to typhoons. While for others who are well prepared, it could be an opportunity for them to take part in humanitarian aid, rescue and emergency operations. The volunteers actions/reactions are very much dependent on their mental, psychological/emotional, physical and spiritual capacity to challenge themselves for these types of work and/or conditions and to become dynamic actors in the field of disaster risk reduction.

Do you think there need to be more projects working against climate change?

Yes. We are now in the period where we are reaping what previous generations have sown in terms of exploiting our natural resources. We are experiencing the impact of their actions today. It is therefore time to become bolder with our approach to help minimize the effect of climate change through many different practices of mitigation, prevention and control of our environment for our own sake and for future generations.

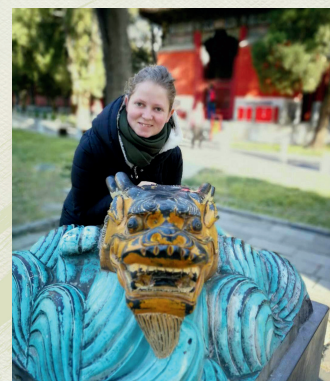
What do you think about the term climate colonialism?

It is the result of humanities' never ending hunger for supremacy, power and greed/wealth by exploiting the earth and affecting the whole universe not just physically but also ethically, emotionally and spiritually.



New volunteer at the IO

My name is Stine and I am the new volunteer in the IO office. I am 27 years old and come from Denmark. I have just finished my master's degree in Chinese and Economics. As I am not really sure what I want to do with myself and my life, I felt it would be a great opportunity to volunteer at the IO. I have been part of Dansk ICYE for 10 years now, as I started in 2012 as a mentor for a volunteer from Taiwan. Later, after high school I went with ICYE to Taiwan for six months working as an English teacher at a school. I am still settling in, but I am loving the adventure to live in a foreign place and am looking forward to see what will happen in the future.



Living Earth Campaign



ICYE is part of the *Living Earth* campaign (LIVE) coordinated by the Coordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS). The campaign is focusing not only on what it means to live a peaceful and harmonious existence on Earth, but also how to show respect towards the Earth as a living being. The Living Earth campaign focuses on three main areas of action: “Hand on Action,” “Awareness Raising” and “Advocacy and Visibility.” You can read more about the campaign and how to participate [here](#).



Webinar on Permaculture



If you want to learn more, you can watch the webinar on YouTube by clicking [HERE](#)

In the framework of the *Living Earth* campaign, CCIVS organised a webinar introducing the concept of permaculture. This is a regenerative approach to land management and settlement design that adopts arrangements observed in flourishing natural ecosystems. Permaculture uses creative design processes based on whole-systems thinking, considering all materials and energies in flow that affect or are affected by proposed changes. In the webinar, “the three ethics” related to permaculture are explained: earth care, people care and fair share.

Green Projects for Volunteers

ICYE Ecuador offers volunteers the opportunity to work at the project [Fundación Brethren y Unida](#).

The Foundation's aim is to build the creative capacities of people of different ages and gender and to improve the living conditions of the communities within a framework of equality, solidarity and shared co-responsibility.

Volunteers have the chance to live and work on an eco-friendly farm and help with taking care of both the land and the animals, learn more about permaculture and reforestation, how to prepare the soil, how to plant and harvest crops with an ecologically sustainable approach. The farm also organises ecotourism activities.

Mitigating Climate Change



Interview with Mellisa Magaga Member of the Zimbabwe Workcamps Association

What kind of green projects have you been involved in and can you give some examples?

I am involved in agroecological projects. Examples of agroecology are agriculture design, where we are teaching people to design gardens and houses in our traditional manner. Seeding food festivals where we are inviting farmers to share and learn about seeds and growing crops or water harvesting to be saving water for dry season are others.

How does climate change influence your work?

Undoubtedly, climate and weather induced instability already affects the levels of and access to food supply, altering social and economic stability and regional competitiveness.

Adaptation is considered a key factor that will shape the future severity of climate change impacts on food production. Changes that will not radically modify the monoculture nature of dominant agroecosystems may still moderate negative impacts temporarily.

The biggest and most durable benefits will likely result from more radical agroecological measures that will strengthen the resilience of farmers and rural communities, such as diversification of agroecosystems in the form of polycultures, agroforestry systems, and crop-livestock mixed systems accompanied by organic soil management, water conservation and harvesting, and general enhancement of agrobiodiversity.

Traditional farming systems are repositories of a wealth of principles and measures that can help modern agricultural systems become more resilient to climatic extremes. Many of these agroecological strategies that reduce vulnerabilities to climate

Zimbabwe Workcamps Association

One of the partners on the *Decolonize IVS* project is the Zimbabwe Workcamps Association. It is a youth volunteer organization founded in October 1993 and a member of CCIVS.

Their primary objective is to promote community development through the use of voluntary service. They also promote youth exchanges so that young people from Zimbabwe can be aware of international issues through international workcamps. They offer activities related to permaculture and agroecology.

variability include crop diversification, maintaining local genetic diversity, animal integration, soil organic management, water conservation and harvesting, etc.

Understanding the agroecological features that underlie the resilience of traditional agroecosystems is an urgent matter, as they can serve as the foundation for the design of adapted agricultural systems.

Observations of agricultural performance after extreme climatic events (hurricanes and droughts) in the last two decades have revealed that resilience to climate disasters is closely linked to farms with increased levels of biodiversity. Field surveys and results reported in the literature suggest that agroecosystems are more resilient when inserted in a complex landscape matrix, featuring adapted local germplasm deployed in diversified cropping systems managed with organic matter, rich soils and water conservation-harvesting techniques.

It is key to identify systems that have withstood climatic events recently or in the past, and understanding the agroecological features of such systems, that allowed them to resist and/or recover from extreme events, is of increased urgency. The derived resiliency principles and practices that underlie successful farms can be disseminated to thousands of farmers via *Campesino a Campesino* (farmers to farmers) networks to scale up agroecological practices that enhance the resiliency of agroecosystems. The effective diffusion of agroecological technologies will largely determine how well and how fast farmers adapt to climate change.

Do you think there should be more green projects and where?

Yes, in Africa and Sub Saharian Africa, Romania, Bulgaria and Italy.

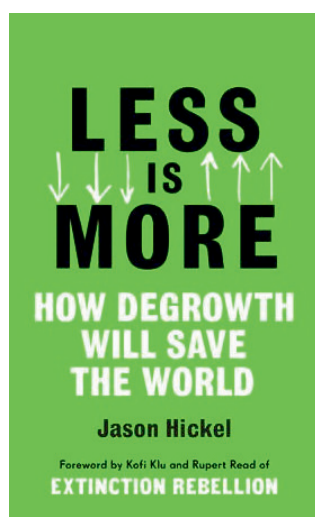
Why these countries?

Because we need more knowledge exchange between countries in the Global North and the Global South. This can be done in real life as volunteering, but also be through online classes teaching about the topic of agroecology.



What role does volunteering have in climate changes do you think?

It can help to expand and mobilize constituencies, and to engage people in national planning and implementation for the sustainable development goals on issues of climate change. And volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions.



We would like to recommend the book *Less is More. How Degrowth Will Save the World* (2020) by the economic anthropologist Dr Jason Hickel. In this book, he argues that capitalism is systemically designed to destroy human civilization on the planet, and a paradigm shift is needed to avoid this. The book offers an inspiring vision for "what a post-capitalist economy could look like. An economy that is more just, more caring, and more fun. An economy that enables humans to flourish while reversing the ecological breakdown. By taking less, we can become more". (From: *Less is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World* by Jason Hickel | Goodreads)

Implementing ICYE's Policy

„Greener together“



In the beginning of 2022, *Greener together* - ICYE's commitment for a sustainable and regenerative future was approved by the Federation to contribute to a sustainable and regenerative future. Now ICYE is working with colleagues from different member organisations to develop clear strategies on how to translate the commitments from the policy into concrete action.

For the goal to *strive for green and sustainable offices and implement green events and activities*, a self-assessment checklist with a collection of good practices has been developed and will be piloted with staff and co-workers in the next months in selected offices.

Many ideas were also discussed and a first concept was drafted on how a *green volunteering exchange programme* could look like. Moreover, key elements on how to reduce and compensate carbon emissions caused by international mobility were developed.

The Sub Committee aims to present a first version of the implementation guide for the policy at the Federation's next General Assembly, scheduled for November 2023 in Ghana.

You find the full text of the policy [here](#)



The 5th of December is a very special day as it is both International Volunteering Day and World Soil Day. World Soil Day (WSD) is held annually as a means to highlight "the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources." ([UN](#)).

ICYE member organisations are engaging in activities and campaigns each year to raise awareness on the topic and to build on the good practices from our work with volunteers and communities.

"A shift is required to see the Earth, not as belonging to us to receive and exploit, but as a common responsibility, entrusted to us, placed in our care, to nurture and protect, that we may be nurtured and protected in return." CCIVS Soil4Life Manifesto