

## EXC-014 MOTION FOR SI GA 2015

### Subject Working Group: Travel and hosts/ Regional Development

<b>Title of motion</b>
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Making connections: coordinating opportunities for in-depth and longer-stay experiences
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<b>National secretary and national member group proposing motion</b>
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Ann Greenhough on behalf of SI Exco.
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<b>Summary of the motion</b>
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The GA approves the promotion of opportunities for in-depth and longer-stay experiences alongside the more usual encounters between hosts and travellers during a two night stay.

Such opportunities will be coordinated on the new SI website under one 'umbrella', a resource to be known as Making Connections.

Information will be posted on the Making Connections page, creating links and bringing together interested travellers with those hosts who can offer a variety of opportunities for extended stays or more in-depth visits.

Volunteering, work experience, language learning, sharing skills and knowledge and connecting with local peace organisations are examples of potential activities that could be arranged in this way.

The aim is to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences between a traveller and their host family and community with the emphasis on informal local networks known personally to the host.

**Guidelines for the project:**

1. As well as information from individual hosts and travellers being posted the Making Connections page will also link to websites of countries where specific in-depth or longer stay opportunities are listed.
2. The idea of language learning with a purpose will be encouraged for all ages ideally through a specific activity, for example, a traveller exploring a special interest, acquiring new skills or volunteering.
3. Given the particular needs of young people, SYLE will continue to be about language learning for those under 30 although it will be possible to publicise the scheme under the Making Connections umbrella as well as it being part of youth activities.
4. Members of all ages will be able to take up the opportunities offered through the resource unless there is a specific reason to restrict to one age group.
5. Local groups of hosts will be able to connect with similar groups elsewhere with a view to exchange visits.
6. National groups will be encouraged to identify a lead person to promote opportunities in their country and to be a link to SI resources and information.
7. When going beyond a two nights stay, advanced planning for visits will be essential as it is likely to involve hosts making specific arrangements. As with SYLE, both host and traveller should make sure there is a clear understanding about expectations for the visit.
8. Those managing the resource will develop guidelines for hosts and travellers planning such extended visits.
9. Individual host entries online will in the future be able to give travellers more detailed information about a host's interests and community than has been possible in printed host lists. This could include links to websites of local organisations or projects known to the host.
10. The proposed special interest networks could be developed alongside this project with the possibility of sharing the same page on the SI website or being linked to it.

**Background information and reasons for proposing the motion.**

An enthusiastic debate at the Servas International meeting at Dalesbridge, UK in 2014 looked at how more in-depth experiences and extended stays could enhance encounters between travellers and hosts and promote peace building activities within Servas.

Mechanisms that would help achieve this were considered and recommendations made about how the new SI website could be used to help make connections between hosts and travellers.

It was felt that the long-established principle of hosts offering short term hospitality to travellers in their own homes should remain at the centre of Servas activities.

However some hosts are happy to offer extended stays of a few days or longer so that a traveller can take time to become involved in specific activities in their neighbourhood.

Servas is uniquely placed to offer such possibilities for travellers to get involved in alternatives to the usual tourist attractions and to explore the communities they visit in a more meaningful way. Such opportunities could have particular appeal to younger travellers.

There are some existing notable examples such as the project in Turkey each summer, where Servas members are involved in supporting community activities for children.

The proposal for this project takes into account the 2012 GA decision:

*'Set objectives and methodology for a Servas In-depth Longer Stay Experience program including cultural, environmental and volunteer experiences by creating a special commission to promote and organize this program between Servas members of different countries'*

**Likely benefits for Servas International and national groups if the motion is passed.**

New opportunities for host and travellers alongside the well-established tradition of two night stays.

**Resource implications if the motion is passed in terms of time, human resources and specialist expertise.**

- In the initial stage of the project the relevant SI committees and representatives from national groups will need to come together to establish a working group responsible for the project.
- The first task will be to set up the Making Connections webpage alongside the launch of the new SI website.
- IT expertise will be needed to make sure the technical requirements are in place.
- National groups will be asked to identify a lead person to link with the project and to encourage hosts to make known any specific opportunities for extended stays they might wish to offer travellers. As a first step these could be publicised in the country's host list or website and later linked to the SI website.
- In the longer term a group of volunteers will be needed to develop and maintain the Making Connections page.

**What are the budget implications, if any, of the motion for Servas International and for national groups in the short and longer term?**

No specific costs are identified other than development of the Making Connections page on the SI website.

**Who should be responsible for the actions arising from the motion in terms of planning, development and management, for example which officer within SI Exco or SI Committee.**

Within Exco the vice president would have oversight of the project, working with the development committee and youth team to first create a working group then later a team of volunteers to develop and maintain the Making Connections page on the SI website.

**Would there be implications for the Servas International statutes if the motion is passed?**

No

**What is the likely impact if the motion is not passed?**

Without the creation of the proposed resource exchange more in-depth and longer stay experiences will continue to be happen in an ad hoc way. An opportunity would be missed to enhance traveller and host contacts.