

## **WHAT IS “CISV”?**

### **Children’s International Summer Village**

CISV was founded in the late 1940’s by a psychologist named Dr. Doris Allen with the objective of developing an organization that would foster intercultural understanding and friendship as an essential step towards world peace. Dr. Allen’s received four honorary doctorates for her international peace work in CISV and as a psychologist. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 (The year of the child), The Freedom Medal in 1999, the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 2001, among other world-known awards.

Dr. Allen created this organization when her ten year old son asked her, after knowing that both, his grandparent and his father had fought both world wars, when will he be fighting the third one. Doris Allen believed that “by creating opportunities for children of different cultures to come together to learn and make friends, they would grow up to become ambassadors for a more just and peaceful world.” She once said: “I knew, that the ultimate source for peace, long range, lay with the children.” (CISV) With the help of her family, she developed the model for a multinational “village”, where children from several countries would come together and explore their differences and similarities.

CISV is an international organization that helps young participants develop to their full potential as future leaders and active citizens, to make a difference in their communities and in the world; it gives them the opportunity to build global friendships and networks that will last them a lifetime. CISV believes that peace is possible through building international friendship and mutual understanding, starting with educating and inspiring children. CISV works with four fundamental pillars: diversity, conflict resolution, sustainable development and human rights.

Their first program is called Villages, which bring 11 year-old children together to take part in an “educational and cultural activities”. They have been specially designed to appeal to them at a key learning stage, on a 28-day period. Villages create a safe setting in which children from around the world can learn about each other’s lives and how to communicate, cooperate and live together. Their second program is called Interchange. This program is for children from 12 to 13 years-olds and places a delegation of teens with host families in another country. The third program is Step-Up, where young people learn to be leaders and encourage participants to take responsibility for planning and organizing educational activities. This program also encourages participants to see how they can use what they have learned to make an impact once they return home. It is specially designed for 14 to 15 years old children with a duration of 23 days. Then, CISV has their Seminar Camp, where they focus on the development of decisions making and coordination of educational content. This program is for 17 to 18 year olds with a duration of 21 days. Lastly, Youth Meeting, where they bring small groups of participants of a similar age together from different countries within a region. They explore issues that affect all their countries in some way and share their different perspectives. This program is for people from 12 to 19+ years old with a duration of 8 or 15 days.

CISV International is committed on working and partnering with other like-minded organizations, not in search for profit and commercial gains, but in order to have a greater impact in society. They claim to “always be interested and open on hearing new ideas for partnership working, whether it is a new project that we can jointly develop and deliver, or a mutual profile-raising opportunity”. (UNESCO) Their current partners are: Momondo, to help create more opportunities for cross-cultural understanding and AFS, to engage young people with the sustainable development goals. CISV also has official relations with UNESCO, The Council of Europe, and it is a candidate member of the European Youth Forum.

CISV's motto is to educate and inspire action for a more just and peaceful world. This organization works every year on spreading their mission on a national and international level. People can see its impact in the work they do throughout the year, on their official web page, and reading about all the experiences and testimonies of participants published around the internet.

#### References:

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