



Zone 6

Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia

ZONE 6 HIGHLIGHTS

COUNTRIES	CENTRES/ GROUPS	SSIO MEMBERS	SSE STUDENTS	ISSE	SATHYA SAI SCHOOLS
Bosnia/Herzegovina	2	23			
Croatia	13	111			
France	4	66			
Greece	6	135	16		
Israel	2	47			
Italy	36	544	47	1	
Macedonia	2	13			
Romania	1	5			
Serbia/Montenegro	4	24			
Slovenia	2	40			
Spain	6	229	93		
Switzerland	11	295	61		
TOTAL	89	1,532	217	1	



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COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS



Bosnia & Herzegovina

On 26th October 2017, an interfaith gathering themed “Peace and Reconciliation” was held. Organised by the Franciscan order of Christian monks in Sarajevo, representatives of different faiths, including the SSIO, addressed the gathering, establishing collaborative dialogue between different faith groups.



Croatia

Volunteers in Bjelovar introduced an element of fun into lessons on human values. Rather than restrict themselves to didactic instruction, SSIO educators organised a series of puppet shows to enhance values-based storytelling to an audience of about 100 students. They presented “Wakie-Wakie Stories,” highlighting truth, right conduct, peace and nonviolence in their narratives.

A Walk for Values, marking international Human Values Day on 24th April 2017, was similarly accompanied by an innovative touch. Rather than carry signs, students walked with colourful balloons for 2.5 km, from their classroom to a community hall. There, they observed an entertaining program enshrining lessons on the values. The event was so appealing that it gained publicity in the local newspapers. In Rijeka, Human Values Day was marked with a lecture on the importance of food for nourishment and spirituality.

These themes were also featured in a zonal retreat from 13th–15th October 2017, which brought together SSIO members from Croatia and Slovenia. In an idyllic natural setting, participants engaged in discussions on spiritual topics.



Bosnia & Herzegovina



Croatia

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France

Cities across France were a final destination for many migrants who fled violence and hardship in their homelands. Touched by their suffering and the harrowing journeys many undertook to reach safety, SSIO volunteers made regular visits to a camp near Calais, which houses a distribution centre and a large, makeshift housing area. Thus far, the volunteers have distributed several truckloads of supplies, including food, clothing and hygiene items. Since the inception of this project, some 9,000 kgs of material has been collected and delivered to the facility. Volunteers also assisted in preparing up to a thousand meals each day, and on one occasion they joined in a rousing game of football with children in the camp.



Greece

Volunteers in Greece devoted many hours of service to the Medical Centre for Chronic Diseases in Agia Varvara. Their selfless service was acknowledged with an honorary plaque by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity on 12th January 2018. In her acceptance speech, the President of the Sathya Sai Centre of Athens remarked, "Every one of our volunteers has a common goal: to love, serve, and respect every being. It is our duty to meet the needs of the distressed and alleviate their pain, regardless of religion, race or colour."

These inspiring words set the tone for the 6th annual Europe-wide Service Camp, 21st–30th July 2017, in Athens. Forty SSIO members gathered from Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovenia and Greece to immerse themselves in 10 days of devotional and service activities. The various days' programmes also included dynamic workshops, dramas and devotional singing.



France



Greece

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Italy

Every Wednesday, for the past five years, Venice Square in Rome has seen SSIO volunteers deliver food, drinks, essential clothing and hygiene products to the city's destitute population. Working in three groups, volunteers scour the nearby area looking for those in need, offering not only supplies but their love in a heart-to-heart connection.

On 21st September 2017, volunteers participated in the 30th Anniversary of the Peace Run in Rome, to promote peace as an inner awareness and not simply as an antidote to war. The SSIO of Italy joined this annual event to raise public awareness on the importance of inner peace.

Volunteers also turned out in force to commemorate Human Values Day, 24th April 2017, across Italy. In Cagliari, members of the local Sathya Sai Centre cleaned up a famed archaeological site known as the Tomb of the Giants.

Elsewhere, SSIO members from Emilia-Romagna, Marche and Toscana helped needy families in their communities and entertained them with devotional songs. In Faenza, nearly 300 packets of food and hygiene products were handed out to the needy, and 120 people were served a hot meal freshly prepared by the volunteers.



Italy

ZONE 6 COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS



Serbia

SSIO volunteers organised a workshop on friendship and goodness at the Sunshine School in Belgrade on 28th October 2017. Two SSIO educators, along with three teachers from the school, guided 16 energetic children through the workshop. Various fun activities emphasised the values of cooperation and friendship and helped the children understand the consequences of their actions.

