

News from SI Media & Communications team (SI MCT)

Trending Today

- SI President speech
- Peace endeavours
- Oldest member of Servas
- A poem on Home



From one of World Cafe

PRESIDENT'S WELCOMING SPEECH

Radha, the president of Servas International, started his speech reflecting on the organization's activities over the past three years and outlining strategies for future development. The address began with a warm expression of gratitude, as Radha thanked all attendees for their participation and commended the organizers for the exceptional work in hosting the event.

Moving into the core of the discussion, detailing the highlights of the last three years working at Servas International. The focus was squarely on Servas's global impact and how the organization has operated in diverse countries throughout this period.

A central theme of the speech was the future, specifically addressing critical questions such as "How can Servas improve and significantly increase its membership?" This signaled a forward-looking approach, emphasizing the need for strategic growth and enhanced organizational effectiveness.

The speech also included several important announcements regarding leadership. Radha highlighted Servas members who intend to continue in their positions within SI, signaling stability and dedication within the leadership structure.



WORLD CAFES

The first activity of the day required the active participation of the SICOGA attendees. The participants shared their most relevant ideas around three themes. Hopefully their insights can bring you some inspiration!

WC1: Building bridges for a peaceful world

Moderated by Francisco Salomon

Participants at this workshop were divided into groups and had the opportunity to discuss key questions, such as, 'How can communities reduce prejudice and foster peaceful coexistence?' Also, they were able to share their personal stories and experiences. In a structured table rotation, groups answered different themed questions, with all key ideas finally consolidated into topics: Respecting the differences and being open to the other one's culture, promoting connections among Servas members and not Servas members through the use of technologies. Salomon encouraged and invited attendees to continue debating these points with Servas members during SICOGA 2025, aiming to increase dialogue and solutions for global peace.

WC2: Initiatives across countries and within a country

Moderated by Isabelle and Christina.

The goal is to increase Servas populations, and this is a big challenge because today society is individualistic and there is a huge lack of trust .

Creating some activities that can involve non-Servas members also to introduce to them this organisation . And maybe for maintaining the relationship with all the members (also the people who have a lot of work, school or a family) we can make activities that include all , once at a month. There will be activities that you can do anyway (like go to eat together) and have time to relax, a space where you can speak without hesitation or judgment, and the most important thing : you can learn about others, about their way of seeing the world, or their languages and cultures.

WC3: Hosting and Travelling

Jonny Sångänger and Joseph Lestranger moderated the session to brainstorm ideas on improving hosting and travelling, which form the cornerstone of Servas.

The suggestions were focused on actions at three levels- individual, group and international.

While many participants stressed on the importance of prompt responses, flexibility and using effective communication channels by both hosts and travellers, some also proposed the option of including more pictures of the household for better engagement with prospective travellers.

Sharing pictures and short reports (especially from young travellers), using hashtags, displaying more detailed host profiles, especially for day-hosts, and encouraging feedback and reports from travellers were some of the other ideas floated.



Servas Children Earth Library and Museum is now open!

Located in the village of Ekinci-Aydiy, Antakya, Turkey, home of the Servas Peace School.

Beytittrob–Toprakev (Earth House) was once my family home, where I lived together with my ten siblings and two cows. It was a time of poverty, but also of deep solidarity. When a devastating earthquake struck, our house was destroyed.

With the support of my family, cousins, and the international Servas community, we rebuilt it—this time with a new purpose. We decided to transform Beytittrob–Toprakev into a home for a library and museum, dedicated to local people and Servas members from all around the world.

The library will hold books from diverse cultures, and the museum will showcase local and international cultural items—celebrating connection, resilience, and peace.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to rebuilding this home, especially the dedicated workers (mostly from Syria) and my dear brother, who worked day and night to help make this dream come true.

Mehmet Ateş

Coordinator, Servas Peace School



Servas International Representatives at the United Nations — SICOGA, October 4, 2025

“On October 4th, 2025, at SICOGA, Servas International (SI) Representatives at the United Nations — Hamsavahini Singh, Kent Macaulay, former Peace Secretary and Representative Danielle Sierre (in person), together with UN Reps from New York, Vienna, and Geneva (virtually) — participated in the 3rd and 4th Plenary Sessions: “Peace Projects Around the World”. The team presented their ongoing work through a video presentation, illustrating how Servas members can actively support the organization’s mission and vision of promoting peace and intercultural understanding.

The discussion highlighted the growth of Servas International under its ECOSOC status, now represented by 16 active UN Reps, playing an increasingly vital role in peacebuilding initiatives. The team also emphasized the connection between the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and peace efforts, while outlining global opportunities for Servas members to engage meaningfully.

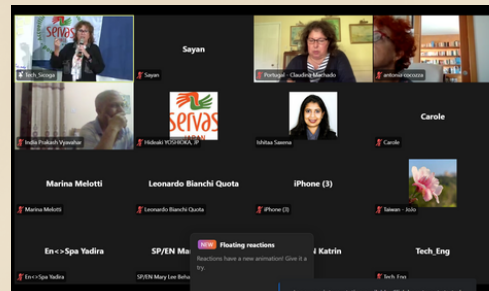
Special mention was made of Servas’ contributions to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), where members from across the world participated through parallel and virtual sessions, providing a platform for women to voice their perspectives in international forums. Looking ahead, SI aims to enhance collaboration through CoNGO (Conference of NGOs) — an umbrella body of over 550 NGOs — and plans to establish a fourth UN location at the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON), alongside New York, Geneva, and Vienna, to expand engagement opportunities for members across Africa”.

- Hamsavahini Singh (SI UN Coordinator)



Virtual Participation

Kudos on the 23 online participants who have participated and contributed to the different plenary sessions throughout the day. The link to the following sessions can be found in the <https://servas.org/sicoga-2025-timetable>



WISEST, SMARTEST AND CUTEST

The ~~Oldest~~ Attendee

At the age of 91, Doña Carmen Rafaela has made it to Dijon all the way from Costa Rica. Over more than 24 hours of travelling by plane, tram, bus, and car, she was part of the last group to arrive at the CRI centre on the 3rd at night to join her 7th SICOGA.

She is still the national secretary of the national group in Costa Rica and organises yearly meetings, visits to homes for women in precarious situations, among other activities. She has hosted people from all continents in her little house in San Sebastian for the 45 years that she has been part of Servas. In her house, you can find letters requesting to be hosted and messages from the visitors who have had the pleasure of sharing the warmth of her home. If you want to read them, you will have to add to the list and visit her!



Editors Cultural Corner

Home

Warsan Shire

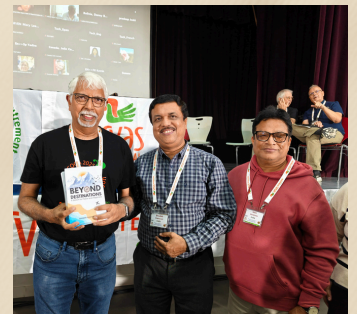
no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well

your neighbors running faster than you
breath bloody in their throats
the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.

no one leaves home unless home chases you
fire under feet
hot blood in your belly
it's not something you ever thought of doing
until the blade burnt threats into
your neck
and even then you carried the anthem under
your breath
only tearing up your passport in an airport toilets
sobbing as each mouthful of paper
made it clear that you wouldn't be going back.

The opening ceremony at the art gallery and Dijon's mayor appeared in the local newspaper.

Photo Gallery



SICOGA 2025 News Bulletins is produced by a team of volunteers

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