



# ITEMS FOR ACTION

COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE &amp; ACTION

## New *INVEST YOURSELF* Catalogue Connects Member Organizations with the 2030 SDGs



Photo: CVSA

CVSA volunteers (right to left) Joselyn Hernandez, CVSA Membership Coordinator Jennifer Perez, Hanna Kamaric, Andrea Jones with her daughter, prepare the mailout of the new *INVEST YOURSELF* to each organization featured in the catalogue.

"After many months of phoning to contact the hundreds of organizations already associated with CVSA as well as many new contacts met during the pandemic, and with the participation of dozens of volunteers involved in copy editing, proofreading, page designing and indexing, we are really proud to have this edition of *INVEST YOURSELF* in print. We now need volunteers at CVSA to expand the distribution to more schools, colleges, libraries, professional associations and individuals across the country," explained Jennifer Perez, CVSA Membership Coordinator, in a presentation to a University of California Los Angeles Community Engagement class in March.

As the only catalogue published in the U.S. of nongovernmental and community-based organizations that rely on full-time and part-time volunteers to fill important roles in their work

Continued on page 3

See the 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS on page 9.

## Northern Idaho Community Fights for Health, Clean Water, Non-toxic Land and Accountability



Silver Valley Community Resource Center (SVCRC) in Kellogg, Idaho (in the northern panhandle of the state) has been fighting since 1986 for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials of Region Ten to do the job they were given responsibility for in 1980: clean up what is now a 1500 square mile Bunker Hill Mining and Metallurgical Complex Superfund (BHMMS), the second largest Superfund in the country.

Once known as the Silver Capital of the world, home of 100 years of highly profitable mining with the largest smelting operation in the world, the now closed mining operations have been releasing lead and other toxic pollutants such as arsenic, cadmium, antimony and mercury into the rivers, air, homes and schools of Silver Valley and neighboring areas for six generations. Over 300,000 people and countless others who visit for recreation are directly affected.

Lake Coeur d'Alene continues to be a major repository for mine wastes as more heavy metals flow into the lake with every heavy rain or flood. The lake's pollution puts at risk the Spokane River, which partially supplies the Spokane River Aquifer that is the sole source of drinking water for 450,000 people.

Barbara Miller, director of SVCRC, whose father worked in the mines, recognizes that, with over 40,000 Superfund sites around the country, demanding responsible government cleanup of

Continued on page 5



Photo: SVCRC

Barbara Miller, (center), Director of Silver Valley Community Resource Center, with other leaders of the Children Run Better Unleaded program, Betty Belisle (left) and Gail Rowe (right).

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial: Local Leadership Fights for Solutions to Climate Change, the Pandemic and Poverty .....	2
Campaign for the 2030 SDGs Updates: ClearTech Partners with CVSA for implementation of the SDGs .....	11
What Really Happened at the COP26 Climate Summit?.....	12

**Editorial:**

# Local Leadership Fights for Solutions to Climate Change, the Pandemic and Poverty



The worldwide effects of global warming and the pandemic have made it abundantly clear that none of us can afford not to know what is going on around the world, because it affects our daily lives and future. A COVID-19 variant that occurs in one place soon appears in many other places. The CO<sub>2</sub> emission from wealthy industrialized countries in the north causes death and destruction in the countries of the global south. No country stands alone.

In the U.S., instead of doing the hard work of solving the major economic and environmental problems, politicians and corporate media look for convenient scapegoats, who's to blame or what's to blame, or just stop talking about it altogether, while offering distractions. You don't get the full story unless you take the time to dig, find alternative sources of information, look beyond the stories in mainstream media and beyond popular corporate-owned websites, apps and social media.

Let's take the COVID-19 pandemic as an example. As of March 2022, the number of cases was going up in 48 countries

and in many states in the U.S., while most U.S. states and cities are lifting protective practices and the media presents the pandemic as over, or at least the "new normal" we have to learn to live with.

We must not forget that despite the wealth, scientific know-how and technical capabilities that exist in this country, over 1 million people have died of the disease in the U.S. in the last two years. The U.S. suffered the most COVID-attributed deaths of any country, total and per capita. Those with poverty-related health conditions, the elderly and workers with jobs that cannot be done in isolation were hit the hardest. Surviving from paycheck to paycheck and not having even the most basic rights of healthcare and paid sick leave, many even lacked access to testing to know if they were infected, and the virus kept spreading and killing. This was preventable.

Our government closed thousands of rural and urban public hospitals over the last 20 years; rendered itself incapable of manufacturing and mass distributing simple products such as face masks and hand sanitizer, let alone ventilators;

Continued on page 10



## ITEMS FOR ACTION

COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION

**ITEMS FOR ACTION** is published quarterly by **Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA)**. CVSA's mission is to promote, interpret, coordinate and extend the field of independent voluntary service and action programs serving people and communities in need of systemic solutions to economic, social and environmental problems.

**CVSA** is a consultative and coordinating body of nongovernmental, voluntary service organizations based primarily in North America as well as around the world. **CVSA** publishes **INVEST YOURSELF — The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities**; works to expand the ability of individuals to donate their time and services to people in need through organizations and free of government restraint; and promotes full-time volunteer service as a vocational choice toward achieving social change.

**CVSA** holds Special NGO Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN, thus provides a voice for independent, nongovernmental voluntary service and action organizations and the constituencies they serve, bringing local needs into global context and global context to local efforts. **CVSA** affirms the tenets of the UN Charter and is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the U.S. and around the world. **CVSA** mobilizes involvement of U.S.-based volunteer organizations and their allies for the achievement of the universal, transformative and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals in the U.S., in order to end all poverty in all its forms everywhere.

**ITEMS FOR ACTION** is **CVSA's** newsletter information service for organizational members. **ITEMS FOR ACTION** reports and provides analysis of news related to the voluntary service field on a national and international level, as well as political and economic developments relevant to the independent voluntary service sector.

Your submissions to **ITEMS FOR ACTION** of information, news, advice, photographs and graphics depicting your work or simply your comments and concerns are instrumental to the process of growth and advancement of voluntary service as a whole. We always look forward to receiving them.

**ITEMS FOR ACTION** is free to **CVSA** members. Subscription rate for U.S. residents is \$20/year. Canadians and those abroad please add \$20 for additional mailing costs. Send your order and submissions of articles for publication to **CVSA**.

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Founded in 1945, **CVSA** is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable corporation with an all-volunteer staff. Volunteers are needed in all aspects of **CVSA's** work. Your financial contributions are also urgently needed and tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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## INVEST YOURSELF and the SDGs

Continued from page 1

addressing the most critical social, economic and environmental problems of our time throughout North America and around the rest of the world, this new edition of *INVEST YOURSELF* also connects the organizations across the U.S. and internationally with the pursuit to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Over the last three years, the problems and needs of each of the organizations featured in *INVEST YOURSELF* have increased. “These organizations need volunteers now more than ever. There is more poverty, inequality, homelessness, lack of access to adequate healthcare, hunger, *and* the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases have not decreased. We’ve had the hottest years on record, more extreme fires, storms and disasters displacing more people,” explained Perez.

*INVEST YOURSELF* makes information available about grassroots organizations that bring people together and build solutions to these problems — providing more options than relying on word of mouth referrals from personal contacts alone. The 270 page catalogue contains information and photos about volunteer opportunities with 175 different independent organizations.

“However, none of these organizations can solve the problems by themselves,” explained Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director. “The function of *INVEST YOURSELF* is not only to be a resource to individuals looking for organizations where they can put their concerns into action, but also to bring the organizations in the catalogue together through the 2030 SDGs and strengthen their ability to pursue systemic solutions — the transformative systemic change needed to get at the root of the social, economic and environmental problems they are each addressing.”

Here is how: The story on page one about Silver Valley Community Resource Center (SVCRC) in Northern Idaho is one example of the need for organizations that are fighting the same fight in other parts of the country to band together to increase their strength. Even if they succeed in getting the EPA to do its job to clean up the toxic Superfund sites that are sickening the communities near them, unless the policies that allowed the irresponsible toxic pollution in our air, water and soil to accumulate in the first place are not permanently changed, there will be more toxins appearing in our water, air and soil in more places. These systemic problems need systemic solutions, and that is what the 2030 SDGs demand.

Take Goal 12 of the SDGs: “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.” This includes “...achieve sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources,” and “achieve environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes through their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce



Photo: CVSA

Jennifer Perez, CVSA Membership Coordinator (left) and Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director (center) talk with UCLA students in the nearby Farmers Market about opportunities found in *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action to organize for solutions to the critical social, economic and environmental problems our communities, country and world are facing.*

their release to air, water, and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.”

U.S. policy currently is very far removed from being consistent with Goal 12. Yet, despite the U.S. government’s 2015 adoption of the SDGs, little action has been taken to achieve this or any of the 17 Goals.

“This is why the impetus must come from the ground up. We can assist every organization in *INVEST YOURSELF*, as well as any church group, business or professional association with tools and tactics for building the implementation of the SDGs into the work they are already doing, and building awareness and demand for accountability in their community,” explained Angus at the December 5, 2021 launching of the new *INVEST YOURSELF*.

“With the publication of *INVEST YOURSELF*, CVSA volunteers are now contacting each group listed, to offer organizing tools they can use to promote the 2030 SDGs and to put more power behind the work they already do, while providing an additional platform for building alliances towards the Goals most pertinent to their work.”

Christina De Bono, member of CVSA’s Executive Committee and president of a local Los Angeles area business that has adopted the 2030 SDGs, explained, “Building partnerships and alliances between the business community and the academic community with organizations that are on the ground dealing with poverty, lack of access to healthcare, legal justice and affordable housing, and the causes of climate change and toxic pollution in our communities is critically important right now. Small businesses across the country need the 2030 SDGs as much as the volunteer organizations that represent the people and communities suffering from these problems, and we must build alliances to work together to make government accountable.”

Continued on page 4

## INVEST YOURSELF and the SDGs

Continued from page 3

CVSA volunteers can assist member organizations with methods and approaches for building alliances with academic institutions, faith congregations and businesses to strengthen their efforts.

### Expand *INVEST YOURSELF*'s Distribution

*INVEST YOURSELF* has traditionally been distributed through CVSA volunteers contacting hundreds of colleges, high schools, faith-based organizations, public libraries and civic organizations across the country, as well as other grassroots direct contact events such as tables and speaking engagements at conferences, after church services and on college campuses.

This year, in order to distribute *INVEST YOURSELF* as quickly as possible to people looking for meaningful involvement in volunteer work that utilizes their skills, teaches new ones and makes a real difference, CVSA is calling on all the organizations featured in *INVEST YOURSELF* to expand the networks and avenues for distribution.

"With the increased isolation so many people have struggled with over the last two years, it is in the interest of every organization listed in the catalogue that more people have the opportunity to be involved with the organizations listed in the catalogue, including theirs, and to connect people with organization for real solutions," explained Angus at a CVSA staff meeting on February 20.

More than ever, community-based nongovernmental organizations must develop more ways to work together to build alliances, and help each other get more volunteers involved in ways that increase their strength and abilities. "In addition to volunteers at CVSA's office, we are calling on each organization in the catalogue, in the spirit of mutual benefit, to aid in promoting *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action* and help with its distribution. We can provide materials to promote the distribution," said Angus.

- CVSA has 6" x 9" promotional postcards about *INVEST YOURSELF* that include information on how to order copies and information on bulk ordering:

Perhaps you have mailing lists you can share with CVSA to receive our postcard mailing — or take a supply of the postcards to mail to your contacts directly.

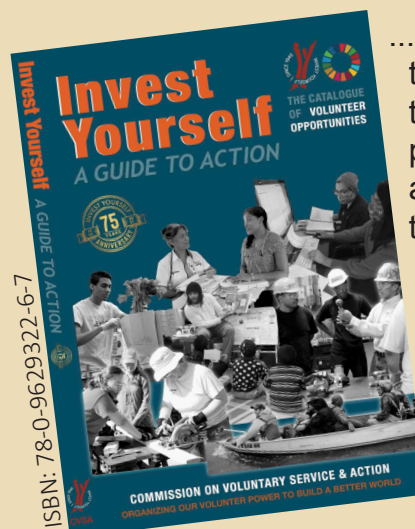
- We also have digital promotional displays that you can post on your website or in your newsletter.
- You can send a message with a graphic of the catalogue cover to everyone on your email lists, or make a bulk order of the catalogue to distribute yourself, locally from your office or on your outreach activities.
- You may know a friendly person with your local newspaper who could publish a free PSA or promotional display

for the catalogue. Students and professors you know could also promote the catalogue through their email lists, in their newsletters and on their bulletin boards. Churches in your area can also be asked to order copies and post the information about it.

Please contact CVSA, if we haven't already contacted you, about how you can help with this, and also how CVSA can help you promote the 2030 SDGs.



### Order *INVEST YOURSELF* today!



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A Guide to Action***



## Northern Idaho Community Fights for Health, Clean Water

Continued from page 1

contaminated toxic areas is not just a northern Idaho problem. She has called for other environmental organizations to coordinate their efforts for increased collective strength.

SVCRC encompasses church leaders, unions, social justice advocates, local people, social service groups and a network of health professionals and environmental justice representatives. Volunteers are urgently needed to go to Kellogg and join their effort in this remote northern area of Idaho. The roles and work that volunteers are needed for are described in SVCRC's listing in the new edition of *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action*.

In 1980, the U.S. Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), informally known as Superfund, which gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority — and the responsibility — to clean up toxic waste dumps and other contaminated sites across the country. In 1983, the National Priorities List (NPL) was created to focus EPA's efforts on the Superfund sites that should be considered top national priorities. Of the more than 40,000+ Superfund sites causing health problems and environmental degradation in the surrounding communities across the country, 1,600 qualify for NPL status.

In December 2021, the EPA announced that \$1 billion would be available to clean up over 40 Superfund sites. Despite its size and the fact that it has been on the "National Priority List" since 1983, the Bunker Hill site was not on this list. In the absence of effective EPA action to clean up the site, the Idaho Bunker Hill Superfund Site (BHSS) has only grown — expanding from the original 21 square mile epicenter to 1500 square miles stretching beyond the Idaho-Montana state border into



Photo: Cascadia Times

Barbara Miller of the Silver Valley Community Resource Center looks over the area around the East Mission Flats Repository near Cataldo, Idaho.

eastern Washington, near the city of Spokane. The BHSS is filled with lead and other heavy metal pollution contaminates affecting the health of the men, women, children and wildlife living in the area.

Many politicians and business people who rely on tourism in the region have downplayed the toxic waste in the area, discouraging any publicity. Barbara Miller and the SVCRC have been vilified by some local media over the years for continuing to fight for the cleanup, testing and healthcare for children and the working and unemployed families who live there.

### Lead Poisoning in Children Known Since 1970

In 1970, the National Health and Human Services agency tested children in the site's neighboring areas for blood lead levels and found that 99% of the children living within a mile of BHSS had blood lead levels indicating lead poisoning. The people of Kellogg, Idaho and neighboring communities of Page, Smelterville and Wardner continue to experience the

Continued on page 6



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## Northern Idaho Community Fights for Health, Clean Water

Continued from page 5

health ramifications of steady exposure to toxic contaminants, primarily lead — from mental disabilities to cancers in the kidneys, liver and bones. The communities have received none of the federally mandated services needed for ongoing testing and provision of health services to help remedy this public health crisis.

In the late 1990s, due to the constant communications with and reports sent to the Agency for Toxic Substance Disease Registry (ATSDR) by SVCRC, Dr. Barry Johnson, then head of ATSDR, traveled to the Silver Valley to announce a \$250,000 five year project to address the problem, with the funds going to the Idaho Department of Health (DOH). However, the 2021 ATSDR and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) investigation called for by SVCRC found no record of those funds being received or spent by the DOH. SVCRC has found no families who reported receiving information from the DOH about the dangers of lead poisoning or being tested, despite the ongoing good faith of SVCRC members offering to assist the state with the task.

This past year, the SVCRC called on ATSDR and CDC to find out why, in 35 years and though mandated by federal law, there are no records of children in the BHSS being tested for lead poisoning or the existence of any records documenting the required follow-up with families of children with elevated lead levels. For over three decades SVCRC has provided ATSDR with data and research on the contamination, the health problems and the need for testing and healthcare. In December 2021 both agencies reported that they could not locate such data, and made no statement addressing the clear fact that there has been no testing.

“As long as there is no testing, the EPA gets away with reporting low levels of lead poisoning,” explained Miller. “This is nothing less than criminal; it is a gross civil and human rights violation, but it goes on and we are the ones that get vilified for organizing to get testing and get the contamination cleaned up.”

### Children Run Better Unleaded

According to Dr. Stephen Gilbert, Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders, Seattle, Washington, during an October 2020 “*Children Run Better Unleaded*” webinar conducted through the University of Washington Superfund Research Project with SVCRC, “EPA Region 10 staff have failed their mission to clean up and protect human health in the Bunker Hill Superfund Site.” When consulted by an Idaho Congressional delegation in 2005, experts from the National Academy of Science (NAS) were brought in and produced a report stating that they held “serious concerns about the



Ominous sign near a popular camping ground and river in Kellogg, Idaho.

feasibility and potential effectiveness of the proposed remedial actions for environmental protection” put forth by EPA’s Region 10 officials. These plans included establishing several toxic waste repositories throughout the Superfund site for the relocation of toxic materials. Despite the 2005 warnings of the NAS experts, several repositories have been established in the Superfund site within a flood basin, where the relocated toxic waste contaminates existing water sources and soils when water passes through the sites, making matters worse.

The 2005 NAS report on the Coeur d’Alene Basin Superfund Site also recommended ways the EPA should protect and improve human health and the environment there: 1) provide universal blood lead testing for children from one to four, 2) increase long-term funding for human health intervention, and 3) assess the contribution of dissolved metals in ground water. None of this has been done.

The area’s historical lack of health services had even greater ramifications during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the effects of lead poisoning count as a co-morbidity factor and warrant increased provision of COVID tests and vaccinations. In the absence of ongoing blood lead level testing, individuals are not aware if they are at increased risk or have conditions that would compound the effects of the virus.

At present, SVCRC is working to achieve four goals essential to improving the well-being of their community’s residents and completing the cleanup of the Superfund site.

First, the closure of the toxic waste dump illegally located in the Old Mission State Park that has spread tons of toxic waste downstream of Coeur d’Alene river, Chain Lakes and the Spokane River. More toxic dumps are planned and being constructed in the Rose Lake, Harrison area and Wallace, Idaho and must be stopped as they are not a cleanup solution.

Second, obtain funding the EPA has that could be used to establish a Community Lead Health Center, a place where lead poisoned children, former workers and other residents can easily get diagnosis and treatment.

Thirdly, effective cleanup of the toxins in the area with permanent waste technology. Permanent waste technology





Photo: Silver Valley Community Resource Center

Members and volunteers of Silver Valley Community Resource Center meet on what their next steps will be in the fight for EPA to carry out its legal responsibilities.

includes burying soundly encapsulated contaminated soil through use of vitrification. The process involves heating the contaminants at very high temperatures, forming a liquid glass-like substance which is then cooled to become a stable solid mass. This mass subsequently can be permanently buried in stainless steel containers. Waste technology can also include the washing of the soil and planting vegetation, such as iris bulbs or certain non-edible mushrooms that absorb the pollution.

Fourth, employ local community people in all of this.

### The Solutions and Resources Exist, Government Agencies are Blocking Them

Miller further explained that the Basin Commission is supposed to represent the 300,000 people living within the boundaries of the Superfund site and hold community meetings to inform community members of cleanup progress. The Commission has scheduled meetings. However, due to the unwelcoming treatment concerned community members receive and the Commission's own history of ignoring the input from community members, attendance is usually very low. Yet, the Basin Commission continues to receive an annual budget of \$1,000,000 of which a significant portion is used for advertising. "This money could more effectively be used to better address the health and safety needs of the community the commission is intended to serve," explained Miller.

### Call for Coordinated National Action

Miller told CVSA volunteers by phone conference, "In my years of organizing and through our network of similarly-oriented grassroots groups, I have yet to hear of a Superfund site being successfully cleaned up by the EPA."

Miller and the members of SVCRC are not deterred in their pursuit for environmental justice. They are proud of their community and how they have remained resilient through the injustices committed by the mining companies that dominated the economy of their towns and the inaction of the EPA in

remedying the toxic conditions they now face. But Miller says, "Lack of action on the part of the government is literally killing people and we cannot win this fight alone."

Miller explains SVCRC will continue to fight for the rehabilitation of the Silver Valley because "Access to clean water and clean air is a human right, and the protection of the environment is of utmost importance. But we need more people organizing with us, and we need environmental organizations across the country to coordinate more powerful actions together. There is not more time to hope the EPA will eventually do its job by just putting on some more pressure locally. We have been doing this for decades now."

Contact CVSA for more information about how you can assist SVCRC to increase the strength of this fight.



### Is your organization a member of CVSA?

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# Transform Our World: The 2030

## What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

On September 25, 2015, all 193 member nations of the UN, including the United States, voted unanimously to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and strive to achieve these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 in every country — developing and developed — as national domestic and international policy priority.

Each country, including the U.S., signed on, stating: “... *We can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty; just as we may be the last to have a chance of saving the planet.*”

## Who wrote it?

Millions of people were involved. The Rio+20 Summit held in 2012 (20 years after the first Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro) was attended by 172 governments and over 2,400 representatives of NonGovernment Organizations (NGOs), indigenous groups and other stakeholders from all continents. A major outcome was the establishment of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development to launch the process to write the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals (SDGs) that would address the systemic transformations needed to both end poverty and save the planet.

Through this framework, the UN coordinated the largest, most inclusive and transparent international consultation program in its history over a three-year period. Input was received from thousands of local and regional consultations and surveys held in communities of all sizes in most countries around the world.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda with the 17 interrelated Goals and 169 Targets is a voluntary, is nonbinding agreement that each nation pledged to carry out, and requires the participation of the people of each country to ensure it is achieved. It says:

*“It is ‘we the peoples’ who are embarking today on the road to 2030. Our journey will involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community — and all people. Millions have already engaged with, and will own, this Agenda. It is an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people — and this, we believe, will ensure its success.”*

## CVSA’s Call for the Implementation of the SDGs in the U.S.:

CVSA calls on the U.S. government to carry out its pledge to implement the 2030 SDGs in the U.S. and form a national SDG Coordinating Council. State and local councils should also be set up to oversee data collection, draw up implementation plans, coordinate policies and monitor the progress or implementation in their state and submit those to the national coordinating body. Make the process public and open.

Members on the councils at all levels should include representatives from nongovernment volunteer organizations, faith-based service organizations, social service administrators, educators, labor leaders, scientists, low-income people’s representatives, family farm leaders, health advocates, legal justice specialists, environmental specialists, religious leaders, credit unions and community banks, small business representatives and other stakeholders.

In the absence of U.S. governmental action to date towards this promise, we call on CVSA member organizations to “take ownership” of the SDGs in your work and seek partnerships with others on the local level for the 2030 SDGs. CVSA can provide consultation, coordination and tools to:

- Promote the SDGs in your community through the work your organization is already doing, bring more stakeholders into this discussion and build alliances.
- Raise the demand for the 2030 SDGs to your local government, demanding involvement and accountability
- Contribute information to include in CVSA’s reports to the UN on status of implementation of the Goals in the U.S. based on your organization’s direct experience.
- Join CVSA in building this movement to increase our collective strength and transform our world while insuring no one is left behind.



# Sustainable Development Goals



**Goal 1.** End poverty in all its forms everywhere



**Goal 2.** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



**Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



**Goal 4.** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



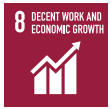
**Goal 5.** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



**Goal 6.** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



**Goal 7.** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



**Goal 8.** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



**Goal 9.** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



**Goal 10.** Reduce inequality within and among countries



**Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



**Goal 12.** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



**Goal 13.** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts\*



**Goal 14.** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



**Goal 15.** Protect, restore, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss



**Goal 16.** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



**Goal 17.** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

\* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

Read the whole 35-page document: *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, in the Appendix of *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action*, or at: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

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## Leadership Fights for Solutions

Continued from page 2

made it impossible for low-income families living in crowded spaces due to high housing costs to isolate when someone was sick. In addition, from the beginning, it refused to follow World Health Organization (WHO) instructions to make mass testing available, or to conduct contact tracing and make isolation and treatment available and affordable to everyone who had the virus. The virus could have been stopped within the first year and the death toll greatly reduced, if our government had invested the resources and the political will.

On the global scale, although scientists developed vaccines against the virus in record time — less than a year after the start of the pandemic — the majority of the supply was bought up by a relative handful of the richest countries in the north, leaving the rest of the world wanting.

More than 10 billion vaccines have been administered around the world so far — enough to inoculate every person on the planet. But less than half of one percent of doses went to low-income countries in the first year, and by end of 2021 some 83% of the population of Africa had yet to receive a single dose. There are still 27 countries worldwide that have only been able to vaccinate less than 10% of their populations, while wealthy countries have rolled out boosters (third shots), and now boosters to boosters.

Vaccination was one of the most successful health advances in human history, and has led to a massive reduction in infant and child mortality around the world, the eradication of smallpox and the near eradication of polio. It has saved millions of lives from diseases such as measles and pneumonia.

As of this March, almost 500 million people worldwide have been infected with the corona virus since March 2020, and new variants are still a threat. Without COVID-19 vaccines made available to everyone everywhere, COVID-19 variants will continue to develop.

### Private Profit over Public Good

The U.S. and European governments, bowing to the large pharmaceutical companies' demands to maintain their highly profitable monopoly control of the vaccines they developed, have blocked the enactment of an intellectual property waiver at the World Trade Organization (WTO) that would allow any qualified manufacturer in any country to produce the vaccines, after paying a fair royalty, without legal repercussions.

Over 100 countries have been pressing for this waiver to be enacted for over a year. The WTO, which otherwise enforces intellectual property rights agreements, maintains this waiver mechanism so that it can be activated in cases of global emergencies such as this pandemic. But the waiver continues to be blocked, and Pfizer, Moderna and other major manufacturers based in the U.S. and Europe continue to charge hugely

profitable prices that are many times the cost of production.

Pfizer made nearly \$37 billion in sales from its COVID-19 vaccine last year and expects to make more this year. Moderna expects to end the fiscal year with a revenue of \$15-18 billion from the sales of their vaccine.

Most of the original research and development money and the cost of their initial productive capacity, was publicly financed — yes, our tax money. The vaccines should be public property in the face of a public health crisis.

The head of WHO, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has warned against describing the Omicron variant of COVID-19 as mild. As of March 2022, 3.2 million people are estimated to have died in the period since Omicron was detected — 16% of all total deaths since the start of the pandemic — with over half of them among largely unvaccinated people in low- and lower middle-income countries.

The U.S. federal government just eliminated all the funding that covers the cost of COVID-19 expenses for the uninsured. As of March 25, uninsured and underinsured Americans no longer receive free COVID-19 tests and treatments. Vaccination coverage for the uninsured ended April 5. Few working people in the U.S. can afford to pay \$70 for a test, or hundreds for the vaccine. Subsidies to oil companies and increased military spending were prioritized over protecting our health.

### Only a Sustainable Development Approach Will Work

During the pandemic, 100 million people worldwide fell below the poverty line. There is now more extreme inequality within the U.S. and between developed and developing countries.

And we must not forget that a major cause of these new diseases entering our lives is due to ecosystem collapse and loss of biodiversity, as the destruction of animal habitats by global warming, clear-cutting of forests, massive forest fires, extreme heat waves, drought and floods, cause closer contact by species not normally in human habitats, resulting in viruses we are not immune to jumping from animals to humans.

Only through striving for all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as priority policy in all countries will there be an end to the ongoing health, economic, social and environmental problems. It is all interrelated. The solutions exist, but we must organize and force our government to make the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda the basis and framework for all domestic policy and framework for international solidarity and cooperation.

You can make all the difference in the world. Through your local or regional work promote the 2030 SDGs in your community and demand their implementation by the U.S. government. Demand the attention of your local elected officials who are responsible for involving you in planning, implementation and monitoring their achievements and calling for the federal government to live up to its pledges to the 2030 SDGs. Contact CVSA for more information, organizing tools and assistance.







## SDG Campaign Updates:

## ClearTech Partners with CVSA, Adapts Business Model to the 2030 SDGs

Christina De Bono, founder and President of ClearTech, an audio visual (AV) integration company located in Altadena, California, has partnered her business with CVSA's Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the United States.

A sponsor of CVSA's *INVEST YOURSELF: A Guide to Action*, De Bono invited CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus to give a presentation to the company's staff about the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. At this presentation, ClearTech Operations Manager Thuy To immediately raised the issues of lack of sustainable practices in their own industry such as: the intentionally short life spans of audio visual equipment in order to increase consumption which produces substantial waste and the absence of end-use disposal plans to recycle, resulting in toxin dumps of equipment in developing countries. She expressed interest in exploring how they could promote the 2030 SDGs in their own industry and effect real change.

"The fact is," explained De Bono, "threats to the sustainability of our planet and society have been ignored and minimized for too long. We can no longer treat 'sustainability' as an option or an add-on to how we normally run our businesses. The good news is that the 2030 SDGs provide a detailed road map for moving forward."

After studying the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, De Bono and the ClearTech leadership team identified four Goals and targets that most apply to what they can address through their business, and incorporated them into their strategic planning: Goal 4, "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"; Goal 5, "Achieve gender equality and empower


all women and girls"; Goal 12, "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns"; and Goal 17, "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development."

De Bono further explained that "Every sector of industry in the United States has a responsibility to take the initiative and advance sustainable development policies, especially in the absence of any meaningful, coordinated action by the U.S. government. The AV industry is no exception. It is essential that we focus on responsible manufacturing, as well as reuse, repurposing, recycling, and reduction of energy use at every stage of the product life cycle beginning with how materials are sourced for manufacturing and concluding with how we dispose of the products at the end of their useful life."

As a women-owned business (WBE), De Bono said they understand that "The SDGs are about strengthening the very foundations of the economy: planet, people, prosperity, peace and partnership. That includes ensuring equality of compensation and opportunity for all employees regardless of their gender, and empowering more women to take on leadership roles in the industry."

CVSA can assist member volunteer organizations with the process of building partnerships with local businesses who support your work to mutually assist each other in promoting the 2030 SDGs.

Business owners interested in more information about ClearTech's SDG plan, call CVSA and see [www.cleartechav.com/embracing-sustainability-a-platform-for-progress](http://www.cleartechav.com/embracing-sustainability-a-platform-for-progress).

Call CVSA about how your company can become a partner with CVSA for the achievement of the SDGs in the U.S. 



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# What Really Happened at the 2021 COP26 Climate Change Summit?



The goal of this summit, known as COP26, (see blue box below) which took place from October 31 to November 13, 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland, was for all nations to come to agreement on plans to reduce carbon emissions sufficiently and fast enough to prevent global warming exceeding the 1.5° Celsius limit to prevent further disruption to the world's weather patterns, causing biodiversity loss, historic droughts, devastating fires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting polar ice and increasingly catastrophic storms.

After the five-year review cycle since the 2015 Paris Agreement, delegates were expected to review overall progress at a conference in 2020 to reset their actions on climate change which was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Issues high on the agenda included review of the national pledges to cut emissions, and wealthy countries' unmet finance pledges to developing countries to help them tackle climate-related challenges.

All countries were to submit in advance their updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that form the basis for countries to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. They contain information on targets, policies and measures to reduce national emissions and adapting to climate change impacts. NDCs also contain information on either the need for, or the provision of finance, technologies and capacity building for these actions.

The World Meteorological Organization issued a State of the Global Climate report prior to the conference stating that the global average temperature in 2020 was about 1.2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This made it clear that the window of time to prevent exceeding the 1.5° limit is closing fast.

A full synthesis report by the UN of all NDCs submitted between July 31 and October 12, 2021, published on October 25, 2021 showed that unless commitments to cut harmful greenhouse gas emissions were improved, the world is on track to warm by 2.7° this century, even if nations carried out these pre-COP26 pledges. Commitments had to be increased at the Summit.

After two weeks of negotiations, plus a one-day extension, delegates from the over 190 countries participating in COP26 adopted an outcome document that, according to the UN Secretary-General, "reflects the interests, the contradictions and the state of political will in the world today."

UN Secretary António Guterres said, "[The outcome] is an important step, but is not enough." He added that it is time to go "into emergency mode, ending fossil fuel subsidies, phasing out coal, putting a price on carbon, protecting vulnerable communities and delivering the \$100 billion climate finance commitment. We did not achieve these goals at this conference. But we have some building blocks for progress."



*Demonstrators outside the venue on the last day of the summit as negotiators went overtime to push through agreements on key issues.*

Photo: Scott Heppell/AP

Strong objections from many developing nations were raised about issues deleted from the final document and new concepts inserted that had a "watering down" effect. "We are extremely disappointed," said the representative from Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and G77 + China. But he added that the group "will move ahead in spirit of compromise".

Guterres also had a message to young people, indigenous communities, women leaders and all those leading the charge on climate action. "I know you are disappointed. But the path of progress is not always a straight line. Sometimes there are detours. Sometimes there are ditches. But I know we can get there. We are in the fight of our lives, and this fight must be won. Never give up. Never retreat. Keep pushing forward."

## What Was Agreed to in Glasgow?

All countries, for the first time, did acknowledge the science "...that limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius requires

## What is the COP26?

In 1992, the UN organized a major event in Rio de Janeiro called the Earth Summit, in which the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted.

In this treaty, nations agreed to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere" to prevent dangerous interference from human activity on the climate system. The treaty has 197 signatories. Since 1994 when the treaty entered into force, every year the UN has been bringing together almost every country on earth for global climate summits of "COPS" which stands for Conference of Parties.

The next summit, COP27, will be held in November 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.



rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, including reducing global carbon dioxide emissions by 45% by 2030 relative to the 2010 level, as well as deep reductions in other greenhouse gases.”

For the first time, new country pledges were announced at a “leaders summit” at the start of COP26, plus deals covering coal, deforestation and methane, among other things. These pledges, if fully implemented, will tweak the curve of emissions and shave **another 0.1° Celsius** off the increase in temperatures that are expected.

There was an explicit plan to reduce the use of coal, which is responsible for 40% of annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. More than 40 countries, including major coal users such as Poland, Vietnam and Chile, agreed to shift away from coal. China reported how they canceled 103 coal-fired power projects across 13 provinces this year and have shut down hundreds of older, existing plants that cannot meet the nation’s increasingly tight emissions regulations. However, in the final document agreement, “phase out” coal was changed to “phase down” coal.

Leaders from over 120 countries, representing about 90% of the world’s forests, pledged to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030.

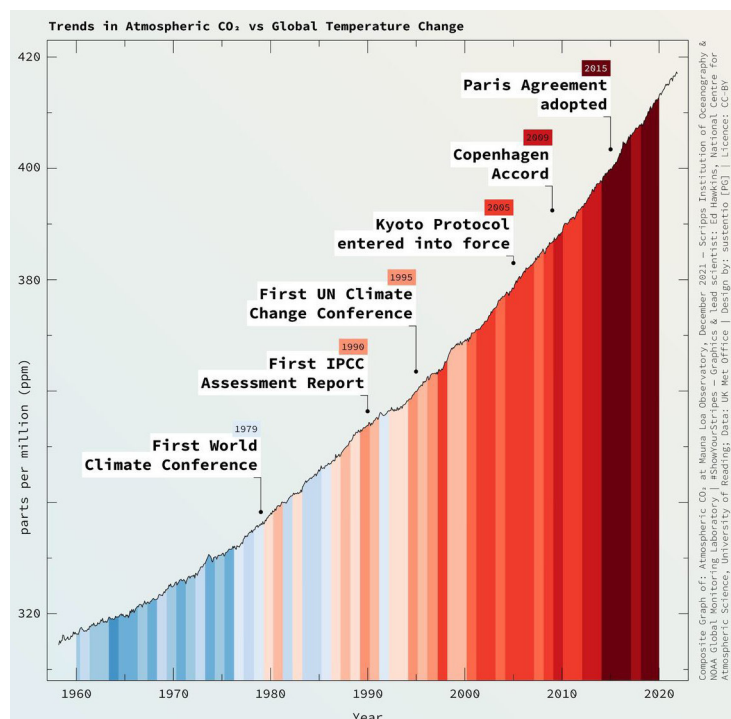
In a bilateral agreement, the United States and China pledged to increase their climate cooperation over the next decade. In a joint declaration they said they had agreed to take steps on a range of issues, including methane emissions, transitioning to clean energy and decarbonization.

More than 100 national governments, cities, states and major car companies signed the Glasgow Declaration on Zero Emission Cars and Vans to end the sale of internal combustion engines by 2035 in leading markets, and by 2040 worldwide. At least 13 nations also committed to end the sale of fossil fuel-powered heavy duty vehicles by 2040.

Ireland, France, Denmark and Costa Rica were among 11 countries, as well as some sub-national governments, who launched the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, a first-of-its kind alliance to set an end date for national oil and gas exploration and extraction.



Delegates from hundreds of organizations staged a mass walkout on the last official day of COP26, expressing dissatisfaction with lack of action on key issues such as finances for loss and damage.



The Climate Stripes chart by Professor Ed Hawkins of University of Reading, UK, visualizes how temperatures have changed over the years in relation to CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Blue colors indicate how much temperatures were lower than average; red colors indicate how much warmer the temperatures were on average.

### What Was Not Accomplished

Despite the now unanimous agreement that we must prevent an increase beyond 1.5° Celsius, most industrialized countries did not come prepared with plans that meet that goal. The final outcome document “requests” that countries “revisit and strengthen” their climate pledges by the end of 2022 with stronger commitments to put the world on track for 1.5° Celsius for the next round of climate talks in November 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

Developing countries representing six billion of the 7.9 billion people in the world, lost the battle to ensure a loss and damage funding mechanism due to very strong opposition from developed countries, especially the United States. In 2009, developed countries pledged an annual amount of \$100 billion by 2020 to help developing nations adapt to climate change and build resilient infrastructure, but have yet to meet that goal. The separate fund to account for the historic responsibility of richer nations driving global warming and subsequent losses of land, ecosystems, and culture is also now not forthcoming. Instead, a “dialog” on the matter over the next few years was offered.

Developing nations and environmental NGOs criticized the inserting of the phrase “global goal for net zero” in the final document. It is not in the Paris agreement and Friends of the Earth International explains the problem with this concept: “Net zero emissions” does not mean “zero emissions” and

Continued on page 14

## What Really Happened at the COP26 Climate Summit?

Continued from page 13

should not be accepted at face value. Collectively, “net zero” climate targets allow for continued rising levels of greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions, while hoping that new technologies or tree plantations will be able to suck enough carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) out of the air in the future. Many governments and corporations have pledged to achieve “net zero” by a distant date, but “net zero by 2050” is too little, too late.

Another complaint from the developing nations was against language introduced about “nature based solutions.” This was lobbied for by Shell and other oil companies, basically calling for helping nature fix the problem without cutting emissions. Friends of the Earth International describes this as a dangerous concept because nature cannot possibly compensate fast enough without also ending the emissions. Reference to “nature based solutions” occurs three times in the outcome document, a phrase not found in the 2015 Paris agreement.

More than 500 fossil fuel company lobbyists were allowed to participate in the conference, which was more than the total number of delegates from eight of the top ten countries most affected by global warming — including Japan, India, Kenya, Rwanda, Philippines and Madagascar.

### What Next?

Without greatly decreasing or eliminating CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy production, industry, agriculture and food production, forests and land use, transportation, buildings and cities — the world will grow hotter in the next five years. “We are on the verge of the abyss,” Guterres said at a press conference announcing the findings. “Global emissions must be reduced by 45% by the end of the decade (2030) to reach carbon neutrality by mid-century, which requires an avalanche of action in 2022,” Guterres said during a press conference in January.

During the Climate Change Summit/COP26 over 800 demonstrations took place around the world, and over 100,000 people were in the streets in Glasgow, calling for bold action.

CVSA calls on member organizations and volunteers to join with CVSA to develop webinars and other venues for sharing information and coordinating for more effective ways to keep our government at all levels accountable to the climate crisis-mandated action. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 interrelated Goals (see pages 8-9) provides a plan of action that the U.S. government agreed to implement in 2015, then buried. The people most affected by global warming and the failure to achieve these Goals must be involved in the decision making, planning and monitoring of the Goals. That takes organization. The outcome of COP27 will not be different if we do not act on this *now!*

## Some Good News at the COP26 from the Caribbean

By Caryn Maxim, CVSA Executive Committee member

In spite of the overall disappointment from the developed countries’ failure to reach meaningful agreements on key issues, there was good news at the COP26 in many of the side presentations. One example was the presentation that Cuba made to share its progress, successes and lessons learned that are useful particularly for other island countries who suffer enormous consequences from climate change.

My interest in their presentation stemmed from my visit to Cuba in the spring of 2019 with the CVSA delegation that participated in the Conference on Science and Conscience organized by the Universidad de Oriente in Santiago. I learned how Cuba approaches challenges — by integrating science, education, and the whole community.

Cuba’s presentation at COP26 reflected this same collaborative approach. As an island nation Cuba is experiencing sea level rise, an increase in temperature, and extreme weather events such as hurricanes and droughts. Although Cuba’s share of the world’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is 0.1%, its population of 11 million is disproportionately threatened by climate change. Cuba has been developing solutions since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and they have included the concept of “sustainable development” in their constitution as a right.

Cuba’s Science, Technology and Environmental Secretary, Elba Perez, participated in the UN Climate Change Summit (COP26) to urge the world’s richest countries to transform their economies to contain global warming; also to share some of her nation’s experiences in dealing with climate change.

They premiered a film titled “*Cuba’s Life Task, Combating Climate Change*,” about the Tarea Vida/Project Life program initiated in 2017, a multipronged, multidisciplinary 100-year national program based on science to mitigate the effects of climate change. The film producer, Helen Yaffe from the University of Glasgow, said, “The Tarea Vida is not just another law, it is a new development paradigm, a long-term strategy

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design by Cuba to combat climate change on the planet.” Tarea Vida/Project Life includes sector strategies, e.g. agriculture, tourism, construction. Everything is prioritized by the hazards and vulnerabilities in case of natural disasters.

They gave a panel presentation about Cuba’s efforts to transition its energy sector to renewable energies. They presented their work in three different areas that have been partially funded by the UN: Resilience, Energy Efficiency and Conservation, and Sustainable Urban Mobility.

Resilience focuses on the coastal areas with the objectives of strengthening each community’s resilience through the Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EBA) approach, which in this case is based on improving the health of the mangroves. Mangroves serve as natural sea barriers but had been disappearing, which meant the rise in sea levels caused saltwater surges and flooding that impacted vital farm irrigation and drinking water, as well as making the coast more vulnerable to the intense tropical storms. Led by a mangrove researcher the communities are planting mangroves and fostering their natural regeneration. Many of the workers are youth who are involved as volunteers as part of their studies.

The work has resulted in the community knowledge about the link between the health of the environment and their economic survival. Although mangroves take 10 – 15 years to mature, the community has already seen benefits. Wildlife, including fish and shrimp, are returning and there are new sources of income from medicinal mud and beekeeping.

**Energy Efficiency and Conservation:** The objective of this project is reducing emissions with a multipronged approach including energy savings through more efficient utilization, increased use of renewable sources, and transformations in the National Electric system. Their presentation focused on progress to date along with explaining a sample project. The initial work developed the necessary tools and infrastructure to implement improvements that were then used to identify businesses with high energy consumption

**Sustainable Urban Mobility:** The objectives of this project are to create the plan for Sustainable Urban Mobility in Havana that will include improving traffic, public transport,



Photo: Yamil Lage /AFP/Getty Images

*Residents of Havana, Cuba wade through flooded streets the day after Hurricane Irma battered the country in September 2017. The Caribbean island nations have been hit with more frequent and stronger storms each year.*

cycling, and pedestrian mobility. They explained the findings from their diagnostic, the first step in the plan, and multiple projects related to urban mobility under way in Havana that they will be coordinating and consolidating to achieve a higher level of results.

What slows Cuba down in its achievements is the lack of financial resources due to the U.S. economic blockade on the island nation, which is in violation of the UN Charter and has been condemned by 189 nations at the General Assembly for 29 years in a row.

Despite the blockade, the Cubans share what they have with universities and countries around the world for the benefit of humanity. There is much to learn from their work and accomplishments, and the U.S. blockade must be ended so that more initiatives of cooperation and mutual benefit can be developed in order to save our planet and the people from catastrophe. For more information, see the documentary “Cuba’s Life TASK, Combating Climate Change,” available now on YouTube.



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## Volunteer with CVSA

### Organizing Our Volunteer Power to Build a Better World!

#### Organizer Training & Education

All CVSA volunteers and staff of CVSA member organizations are welcome to participate in our organizer training programs which include on-the-job practical training as well as classes in history, strategy and methods of organizing and current world affairs.

#### INVEST YOURSELF Publications Production

On-the-job training is provided in publications work sessions. If you have skills in writing, editing, proofreading, desktop publishing or Photoshop, you can become one of the trainers!

#### Community Outreach Events and INVEST YOURSELF Distribution

Volunteers participate in information tables and speaking engagements. This is CVSA's most valuable means of connecting with people from all walks of life looking for meaningful and productive volunteer opportunities.

#### Membership Organization Communications, Consultations and Training

Volunteers participate in our site visits, consultations and training workshops with member organizations of CVSA, help maintain and build more arenas of communication with member organizations around the country and collect news for the newsletter.

#### Nationwide Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

Volunteers learn to give presentations to community groups, coordinate the collection of reports to be submitted to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at the UN, do research and develop tools for CVSA member organizations, mobilize community groups, businesses and faith-based groups to build a groundswell of involvement for implementation of the 2030 SDGs in the U.S. On-the-job training provided.

Volunteers are needed at CVSA's headquarters in Los Angeles. You can also volunteer from wherever you are by being an *INVEST YOURSELF* representative, or taking on other special projects and roles. Call us at (323) 933-2872 for more information or to schedule a time to come in or to take an assignment from wherever you are.