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“Assessing the impact of long-term international volunteering”

Dear Friends,

That the impact of international volunteering goes well beyond volunteers' contributions in their host communities is well known. There is also a growing body of information about the benefits of volunteering and its impacts on young volunteers. What is lacking though is evidence about the long-term impact of volunteering on its various stakeholders – volunteers, host organisations and their beneficiaries and local communities. The 36th issue of the ICYE newsletter focuses on “Assessing the impact of long-term international youth volunteering”. In doing so, we wish to advance the discussion on how volunteering in its many forms impacts on young people's life choices, ambitions, aspirations and offer pathways for their active engagement to improve societies.

Volunteers Voices presents seven articles that describe the impacts of long-term volunteering on the volunteers through a range of personal experiences in the diverse local realities that they have encountered. For the Colombian volunteer in Switzerland, it was an exchange of ideas that enabled new interpretations and new discoveries of himself and the world around him. For the German volunteer in India, it is about transitory experiences through which struggles change and shift to make new headlines. For the Mexican volunteer in Switzerland, volunteering abroad makes you think in two separate timetables, and its the going back that she finds the real challenge. Short and succinct, for the German volunteer in South Africa, volunteering is about change, about learning from one another and accepting differences. For the Indian volunteer in Finland, volunteering has been a journey that has led to a change in her mind-set. For the Austrian volunteer, her volunteering in South Africa has been a time to reinvent herself through her many enriching interactions in the country. The volunteer from the UK in Uganda sums it up for us: Volunteering has lifelong impacts, “life experiences” that shapes lives and life choices - in the next seven or even seventy years to come.

News from International Organisations, amongst others, feature: the winners of the UNAOC global PEACEApp contest; youth speaking up at the UN on their role in promoting the SDGs; the UN Decade Dedicated to People of African Descent; the Asia-Pacific Forum on youth volunteering and the meeting on African youth policies.

News from NGOs report on: Action/2015; Democracy Watchdogs: youth-driven monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda; Human Rights Watch 2015 World Report; Amnesty International's 2014-15 Annual report; and the EUCIS-LLL's call to prioritise civic education and diversity – Education Matters!

ICYE Programme News include: the ICYE ASIA-Pacific and African Regional workshops and the Erasmus+ funded new project on “Communicating Human Rights in Diversity”.

Wishing you an interesting reading, we would like to encourage readers to send us articles and pictures for the next issue of “Worlds of Experience”, dedicated to “Volunteering for Community Cohesion”. Please send your contributions to icye@icye.org, before 31 May 2015.

Warmest regards!
ICYE International Office

This and previous issues of “Worlds of Experience” can be viewed and downloaded from: www.icye.org.

“Assessing the impact of long-term international volunteering”

VOLUNTEERS VOICES

Taking the next step to live my life

For the last 10 years, Colombia has been known for its critical political situation and its ongoing battle with violence and illegal activities. Although this situation is better now, some people are still victims of violence. Our indigenous Colombians have fought to keep their identity, and farmers must also contend with violence every day from armed guerilla groups that infiltrate their territory. Colombian citizens are globalized, but our history still plays a big part in shaping our identity.

My name is Miller Ruiz from Bogota, Colombia and I have my Bachelor's degree in psychology. When I was studying at the university, I gained new perspectives on human understanding, but I wasn't satisfied. I realized that my way of thinking was quite similar to that of my colleagues, and sometimes I felt that I needed to expand my horizons. Our vocabulary never changed, and I felt we all used the same words for different human problems. In one personal reflection, I wondered whether my mentality would change if I were to leave Colombia. Could my understanding of human nature change? Would it change my personal life?



I decided to embark on a long-term programme with the organisation called International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) in Switzerland. When I came to Switzerland I was concerned about the language because I wasn't able to speak good English and didn't know any German. I decided to forget about my life in Colombia and just think about making a new life in Switzerland. I tried to expose myself to different people and approached them in different ways to learn more about them and for them to get to know me. So it was a shared exchange of ideas where new interpretations and discoveries could emerge. I know that suffering is part of life, but I could not have survived without my Swiss family and friends in Switzerland.

They tried to understand my perspective and to help me to face several challenges. All of this required energy and passion as I opened myself to others. I was expanding my horizons and I also recognized my limits of understanding while approaching new and different situations. What I bring with me is my experience, which has been extremely valuable for my professional and private life. I'm still wondering how to figure out and to truly understand the problems that afflict others. But the shared memories that I experienced in Switzerland will surely take me back there one day. However, I'm aware that things will not be the same as when I was a volunteer there.

Miller Ruiz, Colombian volunteer in Switzerland

Experiences

When I stood up the first morning in my host family everything was new - the food, the language, the people, the surroundings, the first time I took the bus to my project. There again - new people, a new language, a classroom with 80 children and me, a 19 year old girl who was supposed to work in a project with women and was now placed in front of a class of children from 1-21 years with the task - "teach them whatever you like". Everything was overwhelming and seemed impossible.



In the first month, I washed my clothes by hand for the first time, started to learn how to cook Indian dishes, started to learn the language, I learned how to bargain in the market, I tried to become familiar with the bus system, tried to make my new room into a new home and noticed all the differences between my new home country, India, and my old home country, Germany.

At my project I got to know the children, my duties and responsibilities and tried to find a place to use my own capabilities. I started to teach smaller batches of children how to play the recorder, organised some singing classes, made activity classes in which the children had the possibility to make crafts, do sports, or we cleaned up the school ground, etc. Still everything seemed very unorganised and hard for me to accept. Now, after five months, I can call this my daily life routine. The things I have to struggle with have changed, the challenges shifted to make other headlines. Some things which were new are now normal.

Every morning of the week I get up, take shower with a bucket of water, help my amma (mother in Tamil) to prepare the breakfast and the chai, then we eat together, and I take the bus to my project. At the project, I am used to the "chaotic" way of handling the timetable and it doesn't seem unorganised to me anymore. My relationship with the children is growing and now I can't think about leaving in summer. Also my way of teaching them has changed a lot but I still try to accept that I can't change everything and that this isn't my task. After my work I started dancing, three times a week, a traditional Indian dance. I got to know more people, but still have no strong friendship with Indians my age. I found places where I feel comfortable and got close to the other volunteers. Sometimes I still notice differences between Germany and India. Now I am looking forward to see what the year will bring up.

Carla Aziza Kentouche, German volunteer in India

Coming back to your own country, that's the real challenge.

Taking the decision of spending a year abroad is quite difficult. However, it is an adventure you will remember for the rest of your life - getting to know new customs, new food, new languages, new ways of seeing life, new ways to love and having fun. All of that makes every single experience turn into a new discovery, a challenge that drives you to get to the end, but when that end comes, it is your heart the one filled with all of those wonderful new things and, above all, filled with those emotions, and it is then when the real hard part begins.

I arrived in Mexico City on August 10th, 2014; after spending a year in Switzerland. The emotion that I felt coming back to my country was somehow weird. I had no idea how I was supposed to feel; it was an entire year that I had not seen my family. I was speaking to some Mexican people on the plane just trying to find some sense of belonging among them, seeking for something that would make me feel that I was doing the right thing, and indeed, I found it immediately.

It was then that I realized that Mexicans are just like that, we find each other, we laugh about everything whether good or bad, pretty or ugly, happy or sad, we always smile. I had missed my country so much and I did not know that.



The first month was exciting, meeting old friends, family, my grandma's old house, laughing about Mexican jokes, enjoying the typical food - mmm so delicious!; everything seemed just like meeting an old good friend. But after that "first month", everything turned difficult, facing reality. I found out that Mexico was not in the best condition, there was social and political discomfort everywhere, protests, bad news every day. So I started to feel as part of the problem, as a person and as a citizen. In addition, I also started to miss that other country, which had opened its arms to me. It gave me a beautiful family, new and great friends, and above all, it showed me to see life in a different way and to work in a team. I have missed Switzerland a lot, its landscapes, its people, its democracy, and its way of doing everything correctly.

Living in a different country, it is not only about learning many things, but also about the experiences and the new friends; it also divides your heart and makes you think in two separate timetables, and as a friend of mine once said: "It is very difficult, but living in two worlds is wonderful, and not everyone has the chance to enjoy that".

Today, after six months in my own country, I have started feeling at home; I try to help foreigners who live in my city at every chance I get, and give back some of what I was given once. Part of my heart is still on the other side of the world, and I guess it will always be, as I now have two homes.

Grace Gonzalez, Mexican volunteer in Switzerland

Volunteering is changing

My name is Gonca Karahan and I am volunteering in a shelter for abused women and children in Cape Town, South Africa. Our main task is to prepare a daily program for the kids. I and my roommate are leading a crèche in the shelter, where the children can find time for themselves. From my point of view our work is important for the kids and our volunteering in the shelter has a sense of purpose. The kids love to spend time with us, we can see their progress and their growing trust. I think they get the feeling of having a break from the hard reality of life during their time in the crèche.



But volunteering is not just giving for the kids; it's also a rewarding experience for me. The time in the shelter and the work with the children is changing me. I learned to take things easier because problems from the past seem so small now. I realize that I see things differently, that I am growing. Volunteering is not just influencing, it's changing. It opens new doors, brings people together and let them learn from each other. It supports tolerance and acceptance of differences.

Gonca Karahamn, German volunteer in South Africa.

My journey to Finland

This article is about my journey to Finland where I worked as a volunteer for a year. My name is Sharon Elizabeth Chittem. I come from India. My home city is called Hyderabad. It is located in the Southern part of India. I wanted to volunteer in Finland because I wanted to learn about the Finnish social system.



My journey started at a folk high school in Finland called Haapaveden Opisto, where I first volunteered for about six months. It was very hard in the beginning; the food there was very different from the food I was used to and I come from a much more populated place than Haapavesi. There are almost eight million people living in my home town - in Haapavesi there are around seven thousand. In the beginning, I felt very lonely but after a while I slowly started to adapt to the city and the school with the help from my mentors and a very lovely friend. My job in Haapaveden Opisto was to assist the teachers and the dormitory manager. Through the different tasks and experiences at the school, I got to learn about different ways of living and different cultures.

Then my project changed to Vanhamäki, a well-being centre situated in a place called Suonenjoki in the central part of Finland. There I started to learn how to live on my own. Vanhamäki was a great place. I carried out different tasks, such as picking berries and vegetables and packing herbs. I had never done this kind of work before but I loved it. My mind-set started to change.

After having spent a month in Vanhamäki, my journey went on to Suomen Kristillinen Yhteiskoulu, Toivonlinna: an educational institute that provides teaching for primary, secondary and upper secondary school pupils, where I stayed for the rest of my year in Finland. I worked as a dean at the school for a few days a week, and went to check the students' rooms every morning to see if anyone was sick and needed help. In case someone was sick, it was my task to message their class teacher about it. I learned a lot in Toivonlinna and I grew a lot, spiritually: I bonded very well with the students, got to know many lovely persons, and learned to be more loving and caring towards others.

Overall my journey in Finland was great, enriching, lovely, awesome, and memorable. This volunteering experience changed my way of living, and I have become a changed person who is able to make decisions on my own.

I want to thank everyone who came into my life in Finland. You taught me a new meaning of life. I learned to live by myself and learned to live in a different kind of everyday life. I learned to be systematic, and to live and survive on my own. My support persons in Haapaveden Opisto and Toivonlinna were great, and I am still in contact with Annukka, my Toivonlinna mentor.

The impact of long term volunteering is very interesting. I came to know people from different countries, their languages and their cultures. The important thing is international exposure. I learned about the Finnish social system, as well as the way of working on policies and laws and acts in Finland. It was very enriching experience for me as I wanted to learn about these things. The Finnish social system seems much focused on their citizens. As a social worker in my country, I am going to do lobbying and advocacy with my government officials. I will show them the Finnish social system as an example.

Sharon Elizabeth Chittem, Indian volunteer in Finland

Time to invent yourself

Before I arrived in South Africa eleven months ago, I clearly had no idea of what I was about to experience in the following year. Without too many expectations or even a clear image of what was going to happen to me I started my journey as a volunteer abroad...

Looking back now, trying to reflect on the past months, I have to admit that I am overwhelmed by the things I was able to learn and the experiences I have made. By going abroad and committing my time and myself I got an insight into how other people live, work and even cook. I was able to see how things could be done differently and with joy. I was picking up several lessons that I could use for my future life which I learned from the diverse people I have met so far. From my point of view, volunteering is not something that could leave anybody cold or distant; it is something very emotional and complex.

It is a child's smile, a stranger's welcoming nature, the appreciation from people back home or my host mother's way of asking me every evening to set the table that gives me the strength and the motivation to get up every day and to know that what I am doing is appreciated.

The people who I got so close to at my project, who I love and hug every single day, my host family who would always treat me as if I was their own daughter – these are the people who I couldn't thank enough for what they have done for me and for what I was able to gain from them by working and living with them.

Last week I met a guy from a township in Cape Town who is so passionate about wine that he travels several hours each day to and from a wine farm outside of Cape Town. "It is easy to travel so long every day when I get to do what I love" he said, while my mother and I gave him a ride to the nearest taxi rank of the wine farm. "I'd love to go to America to study more in the field of a sommelier and one day, I want to have my own wine farm", he revealed when he got out of our car.



I realised that only abroad and only by being open to the world and the unknown of other countries would I be meeting such amazing people with these kinds of stories. Those kinds of people are the ones we should look up to, to inspire us to keep going for what we want in our lives and to never stop fighting. After spending eleven months working with children of a difficult background I decided that I want to study social work or social science and I also came to the conclusion of studying abroad because by being out of my typical life and comfort zone, I always feel like I could do and be whoever I want.

Besides my personal growth and the experiences I have had, I believe that the people I have worked with were also able to gain knowledge about how things are done in my home country and get a tiny insight into my culture, which is so far away from here. Nevertheless it is also the impact on the children that I have been with for almost a year. Growing up in a home without a mother figure is something that the children have to deal with at such a young age, and I still cannot imagine how they can do it – but I try my best to be there for them in situations in which additional help in the home is needed. It is certainly not an easy thing to do, but I get my energy and motivation by knowing that they benefit from me being there.



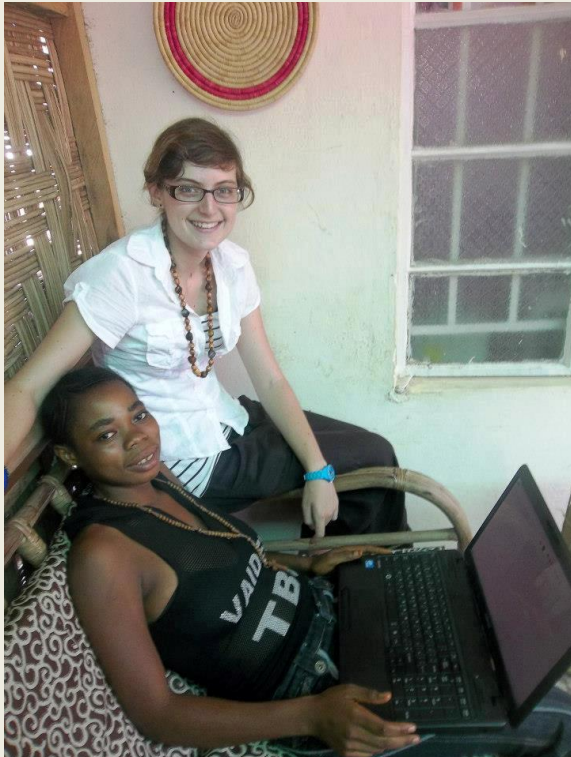
Volunteering is simply something I wish everybody could be doing as it enhances the understanding of another culture and its people, and it gives you the opportunity to try something new and completely different. As a conclusion, I would like to define volunteering as something that enriches your life in so many ways and is most definitely something that you will never learn from a book.

Magdalena Pöll, Austrian volunteer in South Africa

Long-term Volunteering, Lifelong Impacts

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does." - William James

All international volunteers make an impact during their placement - sometimes negative but mostly positive - on their host family, project, community and on their own lives. However, it is assessing these impacts that is the difficult part, and the reason why international volunteering is often negatively represented in the media. In my experience, volunteers contribute and gain two broad sets of skills: hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are teachable abilities or skill sets that are easy to quantify, such as IT proficiency (e.g. setting up e-mail accounts and basic websites) or language ability. As a long-term volunteer in Uganda, I learnt the basics of the local language, Luganda, whilst helping others to improve their English. This was done very informally and mostly within my host home, where the children were eager to teach me new words in their language and correct my pronunciation. Through regular interaction and conversation with me, their English progressed significantly, whether they realised it or not.



Soft skills, on the other hand, are much more difficult to measure. Also known as "people skills" or "interpersonal skills," soft skills refer to the way you relate to and interact with other people. I gained a great deal of soft skills during my volunteer placement, including teamwork, communication, flexibility, creativity and patience (a much needed attribute when working on "Africa time"!). I also recognised that I promoted and shared other soft skills with my host family, workplace and community, such as motivation and respect for the diverse needs, feelings and views of others.

My Christian friends, for example, were amazed at my willingness to join my host family in the mosque for the celebration of Eid, yet I found it an honour and privilege to be asked.

Soft skills are not only difficult to quantify, but also to measure and evaluate the impact of, as they manifest themselves over time in the lives of the volunteer and their host community. When I arrived at my host home for the very first time,

I remember my host mother, Madina, recounting how each of the volunteers she had received annually since 2007, and the particular impact each one had made on her family and the small nursery school which she owned.

The skills they had imparted ranged from teaching swimming and first aid, to establishing a reading culture and the importance of learning through play. However, the common element of all of them was their overall impact on Madina's attitude to life and decision-making. Despite the age difference, she was very open to learning from the young volunteers, believing strongly in collaboration and asking the opinions of others.

To look back, seven years on, and see the difference that these young volunteers played in her life, and no doubt she in theirs, it is not an exaggeration to say that volunteering changes lives. Although many volunteers will pass on hard skills and soft skills, and pick up others, the overwhelming impact of long-term volunteering can be labelled as simply 'life experience'. For although life experience is very difficult to measure in terms of its impact and outcomes, volunteering experiences **do** make a difference in shaping people's lives and life choices, in the next seven or even seventy years to come.

Emma Baker, volunteer from the UK in Uganda

NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Global innovators build apps for peace

New York, 21 February 2015 - A range of new mobile apps and digital games have been hailed by international experts as world-beating examples of how technology can boost peace, break barriers and smash damaging cultural and religious stereotypes.

The five winning entries of the global PEACEapp competition included a worldwide conflict simulation from Germany, a mobile phone game called "the choice is yours" to educate voters and inspire a commitment to peace around the 2013 Kenyan elections and a pioneering mobile app from Australia that lets users walk in the shoes of people who suffer from racism in their daily life.

The two other winning entries were prototypes, namely a virtual game from Canada which fosters a sense of community and collaboration as well as ethical values, and a digital game from Brazil which helps players develop empathy skills to end conflicts. [Learn more.](#)



PEACEapp



UNAOC
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

Road to Dignity by 2030: Blueprint towards sustainable development



Calling for inclusive, agile and coordinated action to usher in an era of sustainable development for all, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 4 December presented the United Nations General Assembly with an advance unedited version of his synthesis report, which will guide negotiations for a new global agenda centred on people and the planet, and underpinned by human rights. The report was formally issued in the six official UN languages on 31 December. [Read More](#)

Giving young people a voice in development



Transitioning from MDGs to SDGs:
Engaging Youth

United Nations Headquarters
2-3 February
#YOUTH2015

Youth took centre stage at the United Nations on 2 and 3 February during the annual Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, exploring the role of young people in the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also addressed ways to ensure that the needs and priorities of all youth are at the centre of the future development agenda and its implementation. . A session focusing on the "youngest continent" looked at youth participation in local and national governance processes in Africa. There was also a panel discussion that looked into the status of young women and girls and how engagement by young people can generate new opportunities to promote rights and opportunities for girls. This two-day event featured brainstorming sessions, interactive speaker panels and discussions with Member States, providing youth representatives with an opportunity to voice their opinions, share ideas, and think together about specific issues of relevance to youth as well as the broader role of young women and men in enabling and promoting sustainable development. [Read More](#)

A Decade Dedicated to People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice and Development



In proclaiming this Decade, the international community is recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected. Around 200 million people identifying themselves as being of African descent live in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world, outside of the African continent. [Read more.](#)

ESCAP Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Volunteerism breaks new ground

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Global Peace Foundation and the Global Young Leaders Academy, convened the Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Volunteerism to Promote Participation, Development and Peace on 28 October 2014, in Bangkok. At the Forum, 300 participants, mostly youth, from over 40 nations launched the Asia-Pacific Peace Service Alliance. Participants succeeded in working together to distil the presentations and discussions that took place in the eleven break-out sessions and agreeing upon a youth statement that concluded the Forum. [More](#)



UNDESA: African youth and government officials meet on youth policies



Youth and government officials from 10 African countries participated in a three-day workshop on “Evidence-Informed Policies on Youth Development in Africa” at the UN in Nairobi on 3-5 December 2014. Organized by [UNDESA](#), [UN-Habitat](#), UNESCO and The Commonwealth, the workshop aimed at building momentum for youth development in the region, bringing together African youth, ministry officials, civil society and academia to discuss youth indicators and effective ways of policy formulation, implementation and monitoring towards youth development.

. ILO: Launch of new learning modules for Model ILO

At the occasion of the 10th International Conference of the Americas, the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched a series of learning modules for participants of the Model ILO. The learning modules have been incorporated into the [Decent Work for Youth platform](#) and can now be accessed online by young people who are participating in a Model ILO or simply want to learn more about the ILO's decision-making mechanism: the International Labour Conference.



NEWS FROM NGOS

Action/2015



Action/2015 is a movement made up of many individuals and organisations united in the common belief that the decisions taken in 2015 are critical for our future. Together as a global movement we will raise our voices today for the generations of tomorrow. The campaign seeks to build public pressure on our leaders to commit to ambitious and transformative action to end poverty, address inequality and ensure sustainable development in the intergovernmental negotiations that will conclude in 2015.

In 2015 global leaders will hold two remarkable summits for both people and planet...



In September the Millennium Development Goals will be replaced by a new set of global goals – the Sustainable Development Goals – an opportunity to end all forms of poverty and inequality and tackle environmental destruction.

In December Leaders will meet to adopt a new global agreement on climate change – a crucial step towards a safer planet.

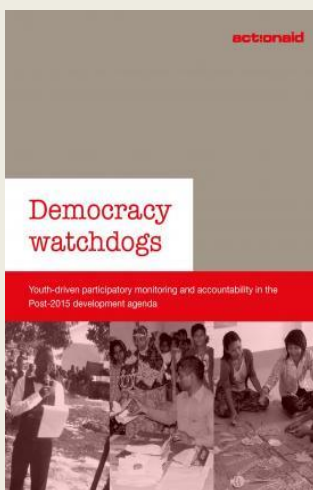


Learn more at: www.action2015.org / <https://www.facebook.com/action2015Global?fref=ts>

14-22 March 2015 - European-wide Action Week Against Racism



Join 100.000's of people actively engaging for tolerance, equal rights and celebrating the diversity of Europe. The key to successfully deal with diversity is to make use of all dynamics stemming from differences between people. Using all our different qualities, talents, and perspectives requests an inclusive approach. Allow space for diversity and there will be a lot to explore, to understand, and to learn from each other. Being open for diversity - within Europe, your society, and yourself - strengthens society. [Learn More!](#)



Democracy watchdogs: Youth-driven participatory monitoring and accountability in the Post-2015 development agenda

ActionAid's recent publication aims to strengthen the argument for why young people should be engaged in holding their governments to account on the delivery of the Post-2015 development agenda. It does this by providing ideas and approaches on how youth-driven participatory monitoring and tracking at community level can ensure the Post-2015 agenda is rooted in processes that actually empower communities. [Read more.](#)

Partners for Change: Young People and Governance in a post-2015 world

Plan UK, Restless Development and the Overseas Development Institute have worked with young people to develop clear recommendations on governance and accountability issues in the post-2015 development agenda. Their recent report demonstrates how youth participation at all levels of decision making can build and strengthen good governance structures. The report explores the opportunities and barriers that exist for young people engaging in governance processes, and supports a stand-alone goal for governance in the post-2015 development agenda, with the role of young people a clearly defined part of this goal. [Read more.](#)



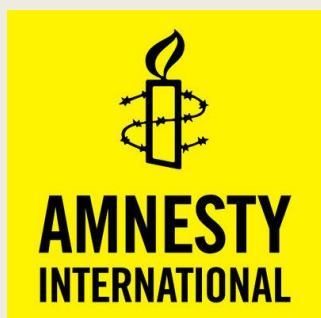
Human Rights Watch: 2015 World Report

World Report 2015 is Human Rights Watch's 25th annual review of human rights practices around the globe. It summarizes key human rights issues in more than 90 countries and territories worldwide. [Read more](#)



Amnesty International Annual Report 2014/2015

The state of the world's human rights



"This has been a devastating year for those seeking to stand up for human rights and for those caught up in the suffering of war zones. We must hope that, looking backward to 2014 in the years to come, what we lived through will be seen as an ultimate low point from which we rose up and created a better future." By Salil Shetty, Secretary General at Amnesty International
Governments pay lip service to the importance of protecting civilians. And yet the world's politicians have miserably failed to protect those in greatest need. Amnesty International believes that this can and must finally change. [Read more](#). [Watch video](#).

Education Matters!



Plateforme européenne de la société civile pour l'éducation tout au long de la vie
European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning – EUCIS-LLL

At the extraordinary European Council meeting in Brussels this month EU leaders discussed the EU's counter-terrorism measures in the wake of the attacks in Paris. The state of democracy in Europe indeed does not look promising. As a consequence of the social and economic crisis and rising inequalities, there is a rise of far-right, nationalist and xenophobic parties all over Europe. EUCIS-LLL calls on EU institutions and EU leaders **to prioritise civic education and diversity in its education and training cooperation, in order to provide a long-term, sustainable response to the "contagion of hate"** - democratic, cohesive and learning societies in the true sense of these words. EUCIS-LLL proposes that civic education and diversity, including intercultural and interreligious dialogue, become priority areas of EU cooperation in education and training, with clear roadmaps. "Focus on the acquisition and assessment of transversal competences and on the implementation of inclusive, flexible and affordable learning pathways are an important asset to these policies", said David Lopez, President of EUCIS-LLL. [Read more](#).



ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS



ICYE-Pacific Regional Workshop

From the 10th to the 15th of November 2014, the ICYE representatives from India, Japan, Indonesia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and the ICYE International Office, took part in the Asia-Pacific regional workshop, which was organised by ICYE Korea and the ICYE I.O. and took place in Seoul, RoK. The regional workshop has taken further discussions and work done in the previous meeting held in 2012, and assessed the extent to which inter- and intra-organizational challenges were met. Besides reporting on programme and financial changes and developments, each National Committee was able to chart out its short and long-term programme development. Furthermore, it has comprised a session on impact assessment of the ICYE long-term volunteering programme, and one on risk management and crisis response.



ICYE African Regional Workshop

The African Regional Workshop, held in Maputo, Mozambique, on 26-30 November 2014, was attended by representatives from Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and the ICYE I.O. The main aim of the workshop was to build the capacity of the African NCs on selected topics, such as Impact Assessment of the ICYE long-term programme, Risk and Volunteer Management, Marketing and Fundraising. The workshop gave also an opportunity to discuss the ways in which African National Committees can increase both their sending and receiving exchange quotas, and to explore and brainstorm about the possibility of running/implementing new programs with external partners in the region.

Communicating Human Rights in Diversity

The ICYE “Communicating Human Rights in Diversity” – an approved KA2/ Erasmus+ project aims to develop sustainable strategies to assist youth and volunteering NGOs to infuse a culture of human rights in their diverse local contexts. The project centres on a learner-centred educational approach that acknowledges the value of personal action and personal change taking into account the social context in which learners are situated.

This will happen through a human rights in diversity training that lays emphasis on interpersonal, intercultural communication, a key factor for conflicts in the fast-paced globalized world we inhabit. A culture of human rights in diversity will be infused in volunteering NGOs by examining instances when the human rights of vulnerable groups, e.g. people with disability, LGBT, women, street children, etc. are not respected.

This long-term project, involving 19 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America consists of a Training Seminar for Human Rights Education (HRE) Multipliers, which will take place on 19-23 March 2015, in Copenhagen, Denmark. It will be followed by an eight-month EVS project for 14 volunteers, during which HRE modules will be implemented by HRE multipliers with volunteers and host organisations. After a qualitative study testing socio-cultural and personal impact of volunteering and the human rights in diversity approach on the 14 EVS volunteers, a final 'Gauging Impact Seminar' will take place in April 2016 in Colombia.



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