

Worlds of experience



No. 13 (February/March 2007)

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 13th issue of the ICYE Federation's Newsletter, focussing on "Youth Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue".

Anticipating 2008, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, "Worlds of Experience" presents testimonials of ICYE volunteers that illustrate how intercultural dialogue can contribute to "better living" among people of different cultures. The ever-increasing cultural diversity of our societies demands renewed and more targeted efforts to introduce intercultural dialogue where it matters most, that is in schools and (non-formal) education programmes, at work but also in leisure, cultural, and civil society organisations.

Volunteers' voices bring in a refreshing perspective on how dialogues between cultures and the living together in "the spaces in between" cultures can be a unique learning, eye-opening and life changing experience. "I have wanted to be a sponge absorbing as much information and perspective in the Moroccan way of life" says a British volunteer; a Costa Rican volunteer in Finland realises that "it is in a foreign country that you really start to value more your own culture, and want to know more about it". Or as put by a German volunteer in Costa Rica, in a more introspective mode: "Intercultural learning is not just related to particular cultural expressions, but more to oneself as you go through the difficult learning process of adapting to a different culture"

News from International Organisations features, among others: UNICEF Voices of Youth on every girl's right to be protected and empowered; the new website for the "2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All", and the UNESCO – Fight For Peace Dossier. NGOs News reports on the: Peace It Together News by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders; Small Grants for young people through the "Be the Change!" Programme (BTC!) of Peace Child International; and CIVICUS Youth Assembly 2007.

ICYE news reports on the participation of: ICYE Brazil at the "World Tourism Forum-Destinations 2006"; ICYE Kenya at the World Social Forum 2007; and of the ICYE International Office at the celebration of EVS' 10th Anniversary. These are followed by reports on Training Courses on Active Citizenship in Youth Work, Volunteers Management and Youth Against Violence, held respectively in Georgia, Moldova and Guatemala. This issues ends with a tribute to the late Rev. Sim-Kian Lim, founder of ICYE Taiwan.

In the hope that you will enjoy the reading, please note that the next issue of "Worlds of Experience", to be published at the end of June 2007, will focus on "Youth Active Citizenship". Please email your contributions, in form of articles/pictures, to icye@icye.org before 31 May 2007.

Warmest regards!
ICYE International Office

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

VOLUNTEERS VOICES



A French speaking English girl in Morocco

As a French speaking English girl that eats with her hands, fasts during Ramadan and scrubs alongside the best of them at the local hammam (public baths) I have started to define a different mould that is perceived to be the white European in Morocco. I have so far spent two months in Rabat in the north of Morocco and am now at my project in an orphanage in Agadir in the South. I concentrate my efforts with the children giving them English and French support lessons, individual homework and open discussions usually leading to the question whether I am a Madame or Mademoiselle. I participate in organising and executing activities and outings, usually to the beach for the youngest abandoned children and have enjoyed immensely the times when the children run to me in search for a kiss or a cuddle.

Being able to live in a host family in Rabat has allowed me to learn and continue to learn so much about the culture from a fly on the wall perspective and also as being able to become part of a community where people have grown to know me and accept me, well nearly, as one of them. My invitation to rejoin the family for the Eid Kabir, the Muslim equivalent of Christmas has been one of my best experiences. This is where Moroccans gorge a sheep on the terrace and spend three days with the family eating various parts, including the eyes, intestines and other parts ‘hanging’ around as well as dancing, singing and generally have a jolly good time.

If I am frankly honest I have tried to immerge myself in the life here as completely as I can. I have wanted to be a sponge absorbing as much information and perspective in the Moroccan way of life that I have to admit that the cultural exchange at times has been mostly one-sided.

I have to often question myself about how certain things would be done in England and equally how other things like transporting a sheep in the luggage section of a coach would never be done in England, nor would six in a normal taxi or the head of a camel hanging outside the local kebab house.

At times I succeed in communicating in Arabic and actually feel like I actually know what’s going on, but often outside the work or family environment Morocco has a different side. Life on the street sees children left to sniff glue and beg for food at the ages as young as six. Some people still believe that the female role is fixed firmly in the home leaving any lone female subject to verbal hassle which has discouraged me from travelling alone. On the other hand the Moroccan people, in general, are some of the warmest and most hospitable people that I have ever met. They welcome you into their homes with arms wide open, feed and water you with copious amounts of mint tea and are always willing to help if ever there is a problem. I hope that my time here continues to be as eye-opening, exciting and adventurous as the journey so far has been.

Sian Johnson, British volunteer in Morocco.



Sian with the family during Eid Kabir

Having tea in Azerbaijan

We are Tiina Ynnilä and Jvan Yadzani, EVS Volunteers from Finland and Italy with ICYE in Baku, Azerbaijan, the country of fire, on the coast of the Caspian Sea.

Why did we chose Azerbaijan? Mainly because we knew very little about this country and we wanted to find out about the Muslim religion and its Turkish related language.



Since September 2006, we work at the UNHCR Refugee Women and Youth Centre, teach English, arts, computer skills, and carry out activities with refugee children, young people and women, mostly from Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan. The refugees live around in Baku and at he to attend language lessons, vocational training, use internet and the library, and to meet others.

Azerbaijan is a country of contrasts: big Hummers and a lot of small Ladas; big Caucasian mountains, and dry and plain semi-desert areas. Azerbaijan is an oil-rich Post-Soviet country, which is heading to the West. High amount of corruption and the un-solved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are bothering the State. Azerbaijan is a Muslim country, but quite lax one. Azerbaijan is an exotic mixture of east and west.

At the mid-term evaluation with other EVS volunteers in Tbilisi, Georgia, I was surprised that I started feeling homesick, homesick of Azerbaijan! What did we miss: 1. the Azeri language, which we started to learn; 2. our kind Azeri friends, who are very warm and hospitable, and continuously keep on asking how we are doing; 3. drinking tea. Azeris drink a lot of tea! 4. the pictures of the presidents! In Azerbaijan you can find a picture of former or current president everywhere; on the streets, in the offices, and even in the desert.

The best thing we have experienced has been meeting the refugees, sharing humanity, and the feeling that the work that we are doing can really be important. It has offered us a unique opportunity to understand why these refugees have left their home, how they are living now, and what their prospects are for the future. This project has given us a great and concrete opportunity to try to make things better.

Tiina Ynnilä, Finnish - Jvan Yadzani, Italian.
Volunteers in Azerbaijan



Moi! Hola!

My name is Suvi Autiosaari, I'm a volunteer from Finland. I'm 19 years old and I have been working in Puebla, Mexico for six months. Although I lived with a host family, and I really liked living there, I prefer to write about my voluntary work placement, because that's where I have had my most important intercultural learning experiences. That's also where I've experienced the strongest feelings I've had here and where I have my best memories.

My project is called Fundación JUCONI, and I was working in one of their "houses" called Centro Juconi with children at risk of being street children. The project is behind one of the biggest (and poorest) market places here in Puebla called Mercado Hidalgo and my children were kids from this market place: their families sell things in the market place and can bring their children to the project so that they aren't in the street all the time. All this families have some kind of problems: alcoholism, young/teenage parents, single moms, families with more than 10 children, etc. I was taking care of kids between 3 and 6 years old with one teacher and another volunteer worker. Our job was to play with them, teach them numbers and to some of the older ones letters, help them to work with different kinds of material, give them breakfast or lunch and also all the care that they were not receiving at home.



In the beginning everything was rather difficult for me: I hardly knew any Spanish and could not understand what the kids were saying, and to get them to respect me. But little by little I learned how to handle the kids, what strings to pull, to be patient with them, to try to understand them and basically just to learn how to talk to them and to be around them. The most important thing I learned was that they were kids just like any other I had met from rich families in Mexico, Finland, and that I shouldn't try to behave any different and just be myself.

Learning the language was one of the exhausting and frustrating things I experienced in the beginning. I felt like a child not being able to express my feelings or participate in "serious conversations". I couldn't even talk in past tense! Not being able to communicate with people made me sometimes so frustrated that I wanted to cry! But that was my first lesson here: having to be patient and not to be too hard with myself.

I'm so grateful to the teacher with whom I was working: she was always ready to answer my questions about the kids, Mexican culture, and was always there to support me when the job sometimes got too hard.



I became very sensitive, and on a bad day even the smallest thing could make me cry. Also, occasional home-sickness and problems with the foreign culture made some days harder than the others. On my last day we were both crying saying Good bye.

The kids, who in the beginning were the most difficult ones, became the ones that, in the end, I loved the most and will always remember. Seeing them grow more confident and emotionally mature made me feel so good and proud of them and myself too. And even though they might not know it, they helped me grow enormously. So when it comes to learning, I've done a lot of it here.

Having to leave the culture you've worked so much to adapt to is really difficult, but an equally important part of intercultural learning. And perhaps one of the hardest lessons I still have to learn. I'm still not able to accept that I have to leave this country that I've learned to love so much.

Suvi Autosaari, Finnish volunteer in Mexico

The key to Costa Rica

My name is Silja Dögg Baldursdóttir, Icelandic volunteer in Costa Rica. I want to go back home!! My first reaction to the culture shock I experienced when I arrived at my new home. It hit me that the clean and bug-free kitchens in Iceland should not be taken for granted. This was my first experience but after that it only got better and better each day.

The Costa Rican people are very nice. They always greet each other with a kiss and families are very important to them. They still have traditions such as no sex before marriage, and it was a real shock to my host mother when I told her that I have been living with my boyfriend in our own apartment. But my experience here has shown me that this only applies to the older generation, since it seems that the young people here are not as innocent as they claim.

I am very fortunate to be living with such a nice family, consisting of a host mother, father and one sister - being included in everything they plan really makes me feel like a family member.

I work in a kinder garden for poor children. I like my work, the people that I work with are great and the children are nice, most of them at least.

Getting spit on or beaten is just a normal thing and after a month it does not surprise you any more. But when a child walks to you, hugs you and says I love you, runs up to your arms as soon as you arrive, or gives you a big kiss goodbye when they leave, then it gives you a whole other meaning and it makes you feel that maybe you've done something good for humanity.



Silja with her host family

Being a volunteer in a foreign country, is without a doubt the best school to learn about different cultures. It is not always easy. Often you feel like a little child since you are learning new things everyday. Almost everything is different from what you are used to, even cleaning the laundry and doing the dishes is done differently from what I am used to in Iceland. But the three months I have been here are certainly the best times of my life and I am looking forward to the next three. As I tend to say: "Don't get lost in Iceland, or your own country, get lost in a foreign countryJ"

Silja Dögg Baldursdóttir, Icelander volunteer in Costa Rica



Hey, what about intercultural learning?

After my arrival in August 2006 in Costa Rica I had four weeks of orientation during which I got to know all other new exchangeees with whom we could exchange first fears and could talk excitedly about our coming twelve months in the natural paradise of Costa Rica.

First impressions of cultural shock spread in our heads from the chaos in the streets of San José, shouting vendors, beggars, different smells, parrots nibbling on telephone cables, ice cream dripping down the hand of a fascinated kid that watched street musicians playing traditional Costa Rican rhythms.

After the first four weeks finally my project was about to begin. Mine was a kindergarten, which provides education and nutritional support to kids from poor families. I spent my first days making friends with the children. With time, I learned to manage the difficult edge of being there for many kids and different wishes at one time. In spite of the vicious circle of poverty in which they live, their parents are hopeful and look for the best for their children, good education and a chance for a better life.

I am glad that I had the chance also to find out about the conditions in which their families live.

Besides working with the children, I also have household tasks, such as cleaning tables and plates, painting rooms & doors, installing hooks, toilets, repairing fences, etc. My work is recognized with grateful thanks by the staff.

I have constant interaction with the staff. The intensity of the intercultural dialogue depends very much on the interest and the openness of the persons I deal with. For example, Ana-Maria, our great cook, is very fond of Germany and we often talk about the difference between the two countries.

Others are less interested and do not bother to recognize the differences between cultures and peoples. Yet, they, unknowingly, also take part in my process of intercultural learning, by mentioning their feelings, their fears with regard to the big changes the country has been going through in the last twenty years.

The process of intercultural learning is not just related to particular cultural expressions, but more to oneself as you go through the difficult learning process of adapting to a different culture. In Germany I thought I was open minded, tolerant, patient, and believed that I would easily adapt to a new culture. But when I got here at first I thought that there were not so many differences, and sometimes I even wondered if Costa Rica actually had an own culture.

Everything you see on the streets seems to be strongly influenced by other cultures, particularly the North-American.

I thus began to question myself, and realized that I had to move beyond judgment and accept people for what they are, with all the differences and similarities between Costa Rica and Germany.

I learned, that even if it seems that there is no distinct culture, exactly this can be the culture of a country. I think that is the most important recognition for me was to discover the many different cultural influences in Costa Rican society.

Intercultural dialogue is not obvious, and at first sight hard to find. What helps is being able to speak the language, to be patient, and to accept that unconsciously, all we do and say is connected to our culture and to our own life and past. If we can keep this in mind, the dialogue between two or more worlds can begin and last for ever.

Felix Engler, German volunteer in Costa Rica



From sandy beaches to ice-cold Lakes

My name is Andrea Ruiz Velasco Garcia. I am a ICYE Costa Rican exchange student attending high school in Finland. I am really enjoying this experience, which I greatly value and will never forget. I live in Hollola, a small nice town.

The beginning was a bit difficult because Finnish people don't really come up and talk to you, but if you make the first step and approach them, then they are really receptive. In general they are very nice, and in spite of communication problems - Finnish is a difficult language to learn - they try to explain things using their hands and body language.

I am learning a lot about the Finnish culture in my school and host family. I like it because it is very different for my culture, like the food, or taking off your shoes when you enter the house, or taking the sauna with all whole family, something that, to be honest, at the beginning made me feel very insecure. Now I go with my friends, my host mother and sister to the sauna together every night.

I am happy that my host family and friends are interested in how life is in my country. Sometimes I wish I knew more about my own culture because I would like to share it with other people. But I have experienced that it is in a foreign country that you really start to value more your culture, and want to know more about it.

I had many nice and unforgettable experiences but one of the striking one was when, at the mid-term evaluation camp, while in the sauna, a Finnish girl, asked who wanted to join her to swim in the lake? It was in the night and was so cold outside. I don't know how and why I agreed to that. The water temperature was 4°C, and it felt like ice, but the feeling I had when I came out was unbelievable – I felt the body warming up quickly and it felt great.



Time goes by so fast... I am enjoying really the winter, the people and the nature covered with snow - an amazing landscape. I enjoy every moment. I am learning a lot from my experiences and am growing up as a person.

Andrea Ruiz Velasco Garcia, Costa-rican student in Finland

News From International Organizations



A new generation of EU programmes - YOUTH IN ACTION programme

More opportunities for young people with the new YOUTH IN ACTION programme (EN)

On 25th October 2006, the European Parliament adopted the new "Youth in Action" programme. During 2007 - 2013, funding support will be given to projects under the following five headings:

- Youth for Europe.
- European Voluntary Service
- Youth of the world
- Youth workers and support systems
- Support for policy cooperation in the field of youth

The participation is open to a wide range of young people, (between 15 and 28 years and, in some cases, between 13 and 30), from European Union and beyond.

For detailed information about this programme, please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/newprog/index_en.html



REGISTER FOR ACT! SPEAK! BUILD! WEEK 2007 : 16-22 April

Act! Speak! Build! Week is Habitat for Humanity's international, student-initiated week of advocacy. It empowers young people to educate themselves and their communities and move people to social action. Young people, ages 5 to 25, work in partnership with local affiliates to plan and host events focused on ending poverty housing. To learn more, visit:

<http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/actspeakbuild>

Voices of Youth



UNICEF Voices of Youth: GIRLS: PROTECTED AND EMPOWERED

The 25th issue of What Young People are Saying (www.unicef.org/voy/news), mentions that the upcoming State of the World's Children Report 2007, which UNICEF will launch on 11 December on UNICEF's 60th anniversary, will explore the impact that violence and discrimination against women has on children. This issue complements the report by discussing young people's experiences with and perceptions of violence and discrimination against girls, and their ideas for making sure every girl's right to be protected and to develop and grow to their greatest potential is fulfilled. Young people speak out about discrimination against girls, girls in vulnerable situations, and ideas for protecting and empowering girls.

For additional information, please contact Voices of Youth : Tel: +212-326-7050, e-mail: voy@unicef.org



New website for European Year 2007

A new website for the "2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All" is now online. It includes information on the themes and objectives of the Year, and a wealth of practical information on how the Year will be organised. For those who want to get involved, the site provides contact details of the National Implementing Bodies. These organisations can provide official endorsement for events and activities ('moral support') and the right to use the Year's logo. For more information, please visit: [2007 European Year website](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?cat_id=SPLASH)

or
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?cat_id=SPLASH



UNESCO - FIGHT FOR PEACE DOSSIER

Building peace for the world is a struggle. Unesco's Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS) renews that fight each day in striving to build a culture of peace. From human rights education to conflict prevention, through the Organization's activities for the promotion of democracy and local governance, UNESCO's fight for peace is laid down in the preamble to its Constitution: "building the defences of peace in the minds of men".

The Dossiers critically looks at crucial questions such: Is democracy the only model for conflict resolution? What is human security? Why prizes? What culture of peace in a world at war? For more information, please go to: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001489/148922E.pdf#12>

For more information on the Social and Human Sciences Sector, and in particular the initiatives in the fields of human rights, peace and democracy, please consult the website: www.unesco.org/human_rights

News From NGOs



Peace It Together NEWS United Network of Young Peacebuilders

UNOY Peacebuilders is a global network of young people and youth organisations active in the field of peace building. Our main areas of action are networking, training, empowerment for action/support to youth projects, campaigning and advocacy and practical research on the role of youth in peace building. UNOY Peacebuilders welcomes youth peace initiatives/ organisations and young peace builders regardless of gender, ethnicity, social class, religion, or any other distinction. UNOY Peacebuilders' core activities are: Networking; Training; Empowerment for Action; Advocacy and Campaigning; and Practical Research. For more information please visit: www.unoy.org or write to: campaign@unoy.org

Interactive theatre, when used correctly, can be a very powerful tool for behaviour change. This toolkit was designed for youth groups and is largely based on a workshop held in Uganda and organized by the Eastern African Work Camps Association (EWACA) that brought together approximately 30 youth volunteers from several African countries, Canada and India to learn about the use of interactive theatre in response to HIV and AIDS in English-speaking African countries. The toolkit includes a manual, CD-ROM and posters and is available to download. For more information on this project including similar theatre manuals developed for other regions in Arabic, French and Spanish, click here

(http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12918&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

or contact Ms. h.drobna@unesco.org.

safe passages to adulthood

'Safe Passages to Adulthood' Programme

Across the world, young people experience a disproportionate share of unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS, and other sexual and reproductive health problems. Over the past five years, the 'Safe Passages to Adulthood' programme (SPA), an initiative of the University of London and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), has investigated new ways of understanding and meeting the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people in poorer country settings.



Toolkit : AIDS and theatre: How can theatre be used in response to HIV/AIDS?

UNESCO and the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) have developed and released a toolkit for youth in Africa on how to use theatre in HIV and AIDS education.

SPA has developed a series of programme development resources aimed at increasing the capacity of policy-makers, practitioners and researchers working to promote young people's sexual health. Available publications and toolkits include:

- A framework for action - HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care among especially vulnerable young people
- HIV prevention with especially vulnerable young people - case studies of success and innovation
- Learning from what young people say...about sex, relationships and health
- Promoting young people's sexual and reproductive health; stigma, discrimination and human rights

These are free to download from the research programme's website at www.safepassages.soton.ac.uk



"Be the Change!" Programme (BTC!)

Peace Child International has created the "Be the Change!" Programme (BTC!) to support young people under 25 years of age with small grants of US\$500 - US\$1,000 to get involved in local community action and development projects. Projects must be genuinely youth-led with two experienced and committed adult mentors, and benefit the community rather than an individual need. All projects must have measures of achievement (indicators) by which projects may be evaluated. Projects may be either income-generating (funds to start up a small business and creating jobs) or non-income generating (for health, education, environmental clean-up or community improvement) social projects.

To apply, download the application form from the website www.peacechild.org and send proposals to the appropriate desk officer at Peace Child International before the deadline. Deadline for applications is March 31 2007.

Our World Global Citizenship Education

What are the greatest problems faced by the world today?

How do you relate to people from different countries and cultures who may have beliefs that are different from yours?

How can youth interested in community service and citizenship be better supported? Our World, an alliance of organisations working on youth and global citizenship education in different countries, has developed the World Youth Identity and Citizenship Survey, which aims to capture young people's thoughts and feelings regarding their communities, their sense of belonging, their political and economic beliefs, as well as their social and cultural experiences.

2006 saw 3300 young people all over the world participate in the survey, and the results from last years' survey have gone towards developing the 2007 version, which is being conducted now. It is open to all those aged between 15 and 24. To complete the questionnaire and help the Our World Project better understand the views of youth in different countries, go to:

<http://www.ourworldqce.net/currentactivities.htm>



Global Third Way: Becoming One with the Environment

Third Annual Global Forum – United Nations, New York June 6-8, 2007

The Third Annual Global Forum will convene at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA, June 6-8, 2007, and will involve 400 young professionals and college age students from various national and international Universities, Colleges, and Civic Organizations. The three-day event will focus on Global Warming and Climate Change. The participants will examine the problem of global warming while focusing on existing countermeasures, implementation strategies, and accomplishments. The program will also include discussions about the weaknesses and the strengths of these measures and their implementation strategies. For more information, please visit: www.athgo.org

CIVICUS Youth Assembly 2007

"Building youth participation in international justice debates..."

Glasgow, Scotland, from 23 - 27 May 2007 . The Youth Assembly will offer a unique opportunity to meet and work with other young women and men who are really making changes to things that matter.



It will also give young people a program and a space to develop and commit to action internationally.

Youth Assembly delegates will also go on to attend, as full delegates, the CIVICUS World Assembly where they will have a voice and opportunity to meet and influence some of the world's leading NGOs, groups and individuals who are committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world.

For more information, please visit www.civicyouth.org

ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS



" World Tourism Forum-Destinations 2006 "

The third World Tourism Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development (Destinations 2006) took place in Porto Alegre, from November 29th to December 2nd, 2006. The main aim of the World Tourism Forum is to improve life conditions of people, communities, regions and nations through sustainable tourism. As in previous editions of the Forum, youth played an important role - 150 youngsters from various organizations and associations from Brazil and many other countries attend the four-day summit. ICYE Brazil staff together with local and foreign volunteers participated in the four days of the Summit, particularly in the work shop in charge of preparing the final declaration, and enhancing the Forum's visibility through graffiti, blogs, and video coverage.

The main themes were: biodiversity preservation, social and economic development, valuing cultural diversity, creation of conditions for world peace and the fight against sexual exploitation of children and teenagers.

Mr. Gilberto Gil, Minister of Culture, and a well known Brazilian singer, composer and poet closed Destinations 2006 by saying: "Tourism exists only because of culture. People travel because they want to communicate and interact with other peoples".

For more information, please visit: <http://www.desti-nations.net/destinations2006>



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY AND WALK FOR PEACE 2006

On the International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2006, ABIC/ICYE Brazil, together with UNESCO, local and regional authorities, and a number of NGOs from Rio Grande do Sul, celebrated with a Walk for Peace.

The Walk aimed to promote every aspect of voluntarism, based on the conviction that voluntary actions enhance universal values promoting: respect of all human rights; respect of life and dignity without any types of prejudice and discrimination; rejection of any type of violence; respect of freedom of expression and cultural diversity; sustainable development; and tolerance and solidarity among people.

ICYE KENYA at World Social Forum (WSF)

'Another World is Possible!' – Youth Participation at the WSF 2007 (20 to 25 January 2007, Nairobi, Kenya)
The 7th edition of the WSF will brought the world to Africa as activists, social movements, networks, coalitions and young people from all over the world and all corners of the African continent gather in Nairobi, Kenya for five days of discussions and celebration.

ICYE Kenya participated at the WSF as a member of Voluntary Associations Consortium of Kenya (VASCO), umbrella body for voluntary organizations in Kenya.

During the Forum we focused on showing the role of voluntary organizations in promoting sustainable development in Kenya. ICYE Kenya used this opportunity to showcase and promote its different programs and how they continue to help the communities where they are based.

VASCO held a workshop on the 23rd January 2007, where all its members got an opportunity to present what each organization is involved in. During the workshop we sensitised the people present about the project we are undertaking of rehabilitating Nairobi River Basin.



"10 years of solidarity and active citizenship"

Under this motto, on 26-27 November 2007, 180 guests celebrated the 10th anniversary of the European voluntary Service in Brussels, organized by the European Commission (DG Education and Culture).

The event had a marked political profile, and was attended by almost 100 former volunteers, EVS sending, host and coordinating organisations, national ministries, YOUTH National Agencies, many more stakeholders. Members of the European Parliament, Commissioner Ján Figel, and Commission Vice President Margot Wallström.

The programme included a solemn plenary meeting with welcome speech of Commissioner Figel and panel discussions between former volunteers, organisations and politicians as well as table discussion on different EVS aspects. The ICYE International Office participated in a round table discussion and presented "The EVS experience of a European network", focusing on the impact that EVS had for ICYE in expanding the geographic scope of ICYE's activities, building up new partnerships, launching thematic campaigns across Europe, and reaching out to young people with fewer opportunities.



Intercultural Dialogue Conference and Exhibition

22-23 November 2006 - Brussels. The project "Youth and European Solidarity – EU SEE multilateral EVS project on Refugees, Human Rights and Reconciliation", coordinated by the ICYE International Office (June 2004 -March 2005) was chosen as an example of best practice in the field of intercultural dialogue, and was presented at the above mentioned events organised by the DG for Education and Culture (DG-EAC) of the European Commission.

Andreas Schwab, representative of the ICYE International Office and Neda Ahchieva, former EVS volunteer from Macedonia who participated in this project, attend both in the conference and the exhibition. The conference provided a platform for discussions on the best ways to integrate intercultural dialogue into actions at national, regional and European level, for policy makers, education and training practitioners, and, in particular, young people.

From 21 to 24 November, an exhibition of 29 models of best practice supported by the programmes/initiatives of DG EAC showed how intercultural dialogue can be integrated throughout society. These events were also seen as introduction to the preparations of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008).

TC Active Citizenship in Youth Work

My name is Marie Elisa Almeida, an ICYE volunteer from Brazil working at the ICYE International Office. I had the pleasure to attend a training course on "European Citizenship", organized by AFSAI/ICYE Italy and the Georgina Youth Organisation ERTOBA in Tbilisi, Georgia, from the 11th to the 19th of November 2007.

The objective of the course was to discuss the meanings of citizenship in different countries and the various concepts and understanding of what would European Citizenship is,

from the perspective of European Union member countries and those that may join it in the future. The participants also had the opportunity to experience and learn a lot about the local culture, for, besides the several presentations and excursions, there were activities that encouraged the participants to go out and make contact with local people, inquiring about what were their thoughts on human rights. Participants could also plan new Action 2 projects, to be submitted in the National Agencies in February 2007.



Group picture of Training Course in Tbilisi

The seminar was also an opportunity to assess the impact of voluntary service programmes in the respective host communities and develop strategies for raising their status by promoting visibility and recognition of volunteer work.

The programme included transfer of know-how, workshops as well as project visits to two EVS host organisations: a child care centre (Small Group Home) and to a refugee centre (Main Direction of Refugees), providing first hand information by the respective volunteers and hosts and multiple learning opportunities for the participants.

The rich cultural and social programme organized by ADVIT included an intercultural evening with cultural presentations by all participants, a visit to the famous Moldovan Milestii Mici wine cellar and a visit to a charity Christmas' Bazar where a charming group of EVS volunteers (hosted currently by ADVIT) had their own stand, offering information about their volunteering activities in Moldova, presenting their home countries (France, Sweden, and Poland), and offering self-made sweets, drinks and jewellery to the international visitors and to the local community.



Training course on Volunteer Management in International Youth Organisations"

Chisinau, Moldova / 07-13 December 2006. The aims of this training organized by the ICYE International Office in cooperation with the Moldovan partner organisation ADVIT were twofold: 1) to enable partner organisations in EU and in EECA countries to improve the quality of management of volunteers under the EVS programme scheme, and 2) to share knowledge and expertise on how to recruit, retain and recognize volunteers within their distinct national/local structures and contexts.



"Youth United Against Violence"

The ICYE International Office, the Central American Alliance for prevention of youth violence – CCPVJ and APREDE - Asociacion para la prevention del delito, jointly ran a training course entitled "Youth United against violence" for youth workers in 5 EU and 5 Central American/Carribbean countries from 9th to 15th February 2007, in Antigua Guatemala. The course was supported by the Youth Programme of the European Union.

It aimed at building up the capacity of youth organisations and of agencies/networks specialized on youth violence prevention and to enable them to cooperate with each others in providing volunteering and non-formal learning opportunities to young people, with particular focus on the European Voluntary Service programme.

The programme included inputs by experts, transfer of know-how, discussion groups and workshops as well as a project visit to a youth centre involved in violence prevention campaigns in Guatemala City and testimonies by former youth gang members. An official reception at the Ministry of Culture in the National Palace was followed by a field excursion to "La Linea" a neighbourhood badly affected by youth gang violence.

Participants from EU and Latin American countries expressed their concern regarding the increase of violence particularly in Central America, and their motivation to cooperate with each others in providing challenging and meaningful non-formal learning opportunities to socially excluded young people by implementing EVS projects related to this field of work.

"ICYE and EVS Program 2007-2013"

From 28th February to March 2nd 15 representatives of European National Committees met in Brussels, Belgium, to take stock of the past implementation of EVS and to share information and plans about the new 7 years cycle of EVS and the Youth in Action Programme. Very informative meetings were also held with Mr. Jens Mester, Ms Peggy Geneve of the European Commission and Ms Cecilia Lo Piparo-Liljegren of the Education & Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

"In Memoriam of Rev. Sim-Kian Lim"

Rev. Robert (Sim-Kian) Lim, the founder of ICYE Taiwan passed away on December 14, 2006 in a hospital in Tai-Dong city, Taiwan. Rev. Lim devoted a great part of his life to ICYE Taiwan and helped hundreds of young people to realise their dream to discover the wide world. Thanks to Rev. Lim many young people's lives are forever changed. Pastor Lim, you'll be greatly missed for a long long time.

ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

New ICYE National Correspondents

- United Kingdom: Cat UDAL (Ms)

ICYE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

16 - 18 March 2007: Preparation Meeting of EVS Project "Exploring the potential of young volunteers in HIV/Aids Education and Prevention in EU and SEE countries" , Berlin, Germany

18 - 24 March 2007: International Training Seminar on Intergenerational Programmes, organised by ICJA/ICYE Germany and the ICYE International Office, Berlin, Germany. Supported by the YOUTH Programme of the European Union.

24 – 30 March 2007: ICYE European Association seminar on "M³ - Management, Marketing and Money for International Youth Exchange Organisations" Thessaloniki, Greece.

20 thru 22 April 2007: ICYE European Association seminar on „Developing Organisational Management to Ensure Multicultural Understanding and Promote Inclusion“, Aarhus, Denmark.

18 – 21 May 2007: Final Evaluation for Volunteers of the EVS Multilateral Project in EU and SEE Countries "Youth Dialogue and Local Development", Berlin, Germany. Supported by the YOUTH Programme of the European Union

1 - 4 June 2007: Final Evaluation for Volunteers of the EVS Multilateral Project in EU and EECA countries "Europe and Human Rights – Young People Volunteering in Sensitive Contexts", Berlin, Germany. Supported by the YOUTH Programme of the European Union