

# Worlds of experience



**No. 3 ( October 2003 )**

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#### ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

Dear Friends,

We have the pleasure to introduce the third issue of "Worlds of Experiences", focussing on "Disability and Youth".

We are very grateful to the ICYE and EVS volunteers for their inspiring and eye-opening testimonies about their past and current experiences in working with and for persons with disabilities. In spite of the different contexts in which they take place, these experiences are equally intense and enriching for all the persons and communities involved.

"Volunteers Voices" is complemented with useful references on 2003 The European Year of People with Disability, the UN Persons with Disabilities Web Site, and the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN).

Following the highlights of the Newsletter of the UN Year of Freshwater, information is provided about the European Youth Week and the 3rd UNESCO Youth Forum. A summary report of a Nigerian ICYE volunteer on the 9th Council of Europe North-South Training Course closes the section of news from international organisations.

NGOs news, besides updates on NGOs activities around the UN Year and the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace, draws your attention to an international research on volunteering recently launched by Service Enquiry and the Global Service Institute. Last but not least, the publication "Volunteers over 55!" elaborates on the importance to enhance a more all-age inclusive and inter-generational approach to international volunteering.

After the first trial year, please note that "Worlds of Experiences" will be published every four months, the next issue being due on 27 February 2004. It will be dedicated to "The Elderly and Youth".

Please send your contributions to [icye@icye.org](mailto:icye@icye.org) by the 31st of January 2004.

"Worlds of Experience" can also be found in the ICYE Federation's web site: [www.icye.org](http://www.icye.org)

With best regards

ICYE International Office

## “DISABILITY AND YOUTH”

### VOLUNTEERS VOICES

#### “My First Experiences with Roth-Hous”

So far I have been working in Roth-Hous for almost 3 weeks. It's a sweet home for mentally disabled elder people. I work with a team and we take care of four disabled on the fourth floor. It's not an easy job for me because I've never had this kind of experience and I can hardly speak High-German nor Swiss-German. I'm still learning, and the grateful response of the disabled the best rewards.

Most of the colleagues are very kind and patient with me. They would repeat the words I don't understand or explain them by actions. First I watched several times what and how they did it, and then they gave me a chance to practice. Now I can help some of the disabled in taking a bath, cutting their fingernails, drying their hair, brushing their teeth, etc., which give me a lot of self-confidence and a sense of being helpful. Now what bothers me the most is the LANGUAGE. It's hard to understand what my colleagues are trying to tell me. Sometimes I'm afraid to ask so many questions because I don't want to make them impatient. I think patience, love, understanding and communication are what my colleagues and me need at the moment. I should also learn German the best I can.

I love walking and playing with the disabled. They are just like normal people, except that they can't express themselves properly. It takes time and patience to know them. I felt a little bit depressed at the very first days of work. I spent time with them and there seemed to be no response from them. I was also homesick. However, after a few weeks we got along better and better. They recognize me as a friend instead of a stranger. I love Martin, one of the disabled, when he started to talk to me he tried to teach me Swiss-German and how to clean the floor! He knows that I can't speak Swiss-German. The disabled people are really sweet.

I think there are always disabilities in our characteristic as long as we are human beings. And working with the disabled teaches me how to be patient and caring for other people. I feel very happy to work with them. It's much better than the editing job I had in my home country.



**I-Ju Chen**  
**Taiwanese volunteer in Switzerland**

#### “My social year in Mexico”

After I passed my a-levels in the summer 2002 I went with ICYE from Germany to Mexico. After having worked for a few months in a centre for little children with Down syndrome in Mexico City, I moved to Puebla to work at CREDEN (Centro de la Creatividad para el Desarrollo Neuropsicomotriz), a rehabilitation centre where I helped the teachers. I worked in the teaching classes, where the children learned for example to write, read, count and do puzzles. Also I helped two physical Therapists when they worked with the disabled children. All of them were disabled in more than one way. On the first day at the project the director asked me if I would like to accompany the team on a trip to Oaxaca which is the poorest federal state in Mexico.

Surely I wanted to follow them! In Oaxaca we worked with disabled children and their families who don't have (enough) money to go to the doctor or any therapists. Therefore we showed the family how to work and rehabilitate the children. For me the 8 days in Oaxaca were interesting, exciting and horrible. It was interesting because I could do my favourite work. (I want to study physical therapist for disabled children), exciting because I got to know another part of the country, and horrible at the same time because I saw all the problems poor people in Mexico have. So I wrote a letter to my family when I was back in Toluca. I told my parents, all my friends and

the people I know about what I had seen. And I asked them, if we could help with something. I was not sure how or with what we could create a better life for the children but I wanted to help. My mother wanted to have more information about the children and the work we had done in Oaxaca. If we wanted to support CREDEN we had to tell people in Germany, what they need in Mexico and what is the purpose of the fundraising. We also needed a German organisation which could help us to organise that. (Because of taxes, papers and so on.)

Before I went to Mexico I was a very involved member of the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in my hometown Velbert. So they decided to support us. Getting the information from CREDEN, what would help most, we decided to raise money for a little bus, with which the children should be transported to doctors, specialists or classes with horses in Mexico City. Approximately 8.000,- Euro had to be raised. The YMCA, my family and my friends made an event twice in the streets of Velbert for collecting money. The street events did not bring so much money. So we searched for other possibilities to get money. One idea was to make an auction. We asked unknown German artists (friends and hobby-painters) if they could give us some of their pictures. Then we wrote many, many emails to well known German stars. We asked Comedians, sport groups, politicians and actors if they would sign the art. With this undersigned presents (art, CDs and shirts) we made an auction one day. The newspaper was informed about our activities and wrote an article about my social year and activities in Mexico. Because of the article the regional radio station contacted us and asked my mother and the YCMA for an interview.

After 4 months of many activities my mother visited me. With the help of British Airways she brought a lot of clothes, three wheelchairs, ten pairs of crutches and the most important: enough money to buy a Pick Up truck for the project. The director and the founder of the project were very happy about all that we had done for them. At this point I want to thank all the people who helped making the life of poor and disabled children in Mexico a little bit brighter.

Thank you very much!

In my social year in Mexico I learned that we can make the world a better place. We only have to belief in our (and God's) possibilities.



**Jana Bierwas  
German volunteer in Mexico**

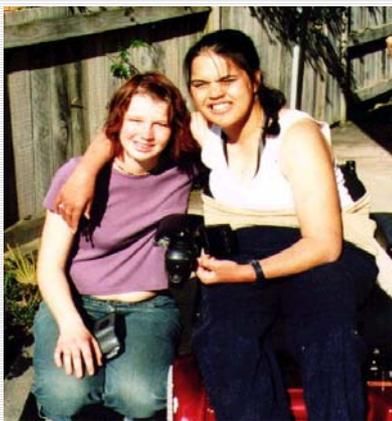
### **“Working with disabled people in New Zealand”**

I wanted to work with disabled people because I wanted to have new experiences and a new understanding of life through contact with people who have a difficult life. I wanted to do something good by helping them in their life and do things for them that they are not able to do. I am doing that now. I am working with disabled people in a placement in Tauranga, New Zealand and I am enjoying the work. But it was hard at the beginning. One thing is that disabled people look strange when you see them for the first time. Their bodies are "unusual" and the way they move and eat and their behaviour is a little bit scary. Now, after nearly 6 weeks I am used to that and it is not a problem any more. But the first days I spent in the place I just had a look and tried to get to know the people and their disabilities. I am working for a company, which is called "Supported Individual Living" and the name includes their aim. They want to support disabled people so that they can live their life as normal as possible. They offer an alternative rather than a hospital and the disabled people, who are supported by this company, are living in normal houses or flats.

I spent my time in one of these houses, where 4 men are living. Only one of them can speak and move on his own with the help of an electric wheelchair. The other three can only move their head and eyes and cannot speak. It is very interesting because one of them has a "communication book". He opens his mouth for "yes" and closes it for "no". There are pages in the book with different colours and you have to say: "Blue, Black, Red, Green" and so on and when he opens his mouth at green, you know that you are on the green page. There are squares on every page with numbers on the top and side and by counting this numbers you

can find out in which square you are and then there is a word or sentence like "May I have a drink please" or "I would like to have noodles for lunch". With the help of this book, he can talk to you. When you start to work with the book it takes very long to find out, what he wants to say, but now I can talk with him very well and its really funny, because he has a really good sense of humour.

There are many other things that I have learnt in the last weeks. Now I am assisting the guys with their meals or with a drink, giving them massages, lifting them from one chair in another and many more. But it takes time until you feel comfortable to do such things and they can trust you. I looked at some photos with them to get to know every person and their lives. It is very nice to go out with them and do some activities like visiting a wildlife park or going shopping. They also need support in cleaning and washing, because they cannot do that on their own. I like the work in that house very much and I like the people. They are also enjoying that I am working there because I have time to hang some posters on the wall or give them a massage for 30 instead of 10 minutes. Or I can just hang around with them. They are so happy with small things such as a massage or a walk or when you assist them with eating chips. Small things make them happy although their life is not easy. Other people, who have many more possibilities than they have, are complaining about everything. I think they should have a look at these people and learn how you can enjoy life. That's only one of the things I am learning and it's great to have this experience.



**Lisa Bunselmeyer**  
**German exchangee in New Zealand**

**"They respect us, we respect them"**

Irina (18 years) and Estelle (23 years) have worked for a month in the Ruskeasuo special comprehensive school in Helsinki, Finland.

Irina comes from Samara in Russia and Elena comes from Luxembourg. Irina and Estelle work as voluntary assistants in a small group of young disabled people. Students in the group have already completed their studies in the comprehensive school. The purpose of this group of extended guidance is to give the students skills and better self-esteem for their independent lives.

The students in the group, Estelle and Irina are almost of the same age. So even though Estelle and Irina are assisting the students, they think that they all are on the same level, almost like friends. Sometimes they even tell about their private lives. A small group gives you time to talk. "They respect us, we respect them", says Estelle. Being the same age was problematic because she had to go to help a student of opposite sex in the toilet. This happened only in the beginning.

The language can be a problem or a benefit. This difference is solved in very many ways. Estelle and Irina are learning Finnish from the students and the students are leaning English from Estelle and Irina as well. Estelle and Irina are learning sign language from the students who are not speaking so clearly, one student is even refreshing her Russian from Irina. However speaking always in a foreign language can be very hard. One of the students once said after dinner which Estelle assisted that it was "so hard to eat in English"!

Kati Tolvanen, the leader of the group, thinks that it is very beneficial for the young students to have foreign assistants. Besides learning English, they learn to cope with new people and to ask for help, which is very important but at the same time hard for some disabled people. Estelle and Irina agree that the students are very independent, open and friendly to their assistants.



**Riita Muikku**  
**Ruskeasuo special comprehensive school**

### Interview with volunteers at the Fürst Donnersmarck Haus (Berlin)

Michael Imathiu from Kenya (ICYE), Alen Murga from Bosnia Herzegovina (EVS), Andrea Raho from Italy (EVS) and Juan Cruz Yupanqui from Bolivia (EVS) are this year's volunteers in Fürst Donnersmarck Haus, Berlin Germany, since the beginning of September. They work and live with disabled people, together they are more than 150 people. Their work starts early in the morning and some of their tasks include with the disabled include waking them up, helping them to take a bath, dress, have breakfast, also taking them outside for a walk in the street, in a park, through the city.

I asked them the following questions:

1. Did you work with disabled people before coming to Germany?
2. What was your idea of the work with disabled?
3. What is your idea after this few weeks of work?
4. Is the language a limiting? In what way?
5. Do you think you can use this knowledge you have gained here when you return to your country?

No one had worked before with disabled, Juan worked with street children in Bolivia. To the next question, their idea was vague, they were afraid, they felt naïve towards this new experience. Andrea added that at the arrival to the project, his co-workers, and all the people working there were very friendly. Their ideas of voluntary work with disabled changed after this few weeks, and they answered very positively to the third question, where, all of them agreed that their concept of work with disabled changed, working with disabled is hard but fulfilling.

At the beginning, Michael felt uncomfortable because "taking care of a disabled person it's not an easy task to do, it's not only helping them in their daily tasks but also living with them, including early morning wake up and also helping them going to bed, also this work has a lot to do with human relationships". The language has been a problem these starting weeks and, for all, except for Alen who speaks German fluently, the language has become a barrier for their work, as "I can not communicate with the disabled, thus, I don't understand what they need" said Andrea. Juan thinks also that the language is a barrier, but "I can offer my friendship and a walk in the park. When we go out they feel very happy". To the last question, Juan added that the people in his town in Bolivia admire him for what he is doing

in this moment here in Germany. And he has become a motivation in his neighbourhood for the others of his same age.



**Interviewed by Natalia Cortés,  
Colombian volunteer at the ICYE IO in  
Berlin**

### "Working with Disabled Children in Kenya"

My name is Claudia and I just finished my education as "Sozialpaedagogin" before I came to Kenya. When I decided to come to Kenya, it was important for me to gain new experiences in working with children.

I work now at Toi Primary school at Special Unit, a class for mentally disabled children. In our class there are about 20 children between 6 and 21 years. The older children go to the school's workshop, while the younger ones stay in class, I'm working with the younger ones.

This is my 3rd week and I experienced already a lot. My work here started at September 8th with a school assembly. I've never seen something like this before. We don't have this in Switzerland. The children had to line up. Then they got all important information about how to behave. Then one class sang a song

and then they prayed all together. That day I was also introduced to the whole school.

After that assembly, we went to class. Already for the first hours I was left alone with the children and some plastiline.

So, what to do? I wanted them to make something that they like, so that afterwards they can tell me their names and what they have done. But already after a few minutes I've seen that most didn't understand and that they just did what they knew. Yes, there were a lot of new impressions that first day. Now I'm quite used to it. I know more or less what the children are able to do and what they like. And I also learn Swahili with them, which helps a lot. We often work in small groups, because the children have different levels. Some are able to copy the whole alphabet and to write numbers from 1 up to 10. Others are not even able to concentrate on one thing. So it's really important to see where the children are and make things with them they are able to do. We normally start by writing numbers and letters or colouring pictures. Afterwards they have a break and tea. After this break it's already quite difficult for them to really concentrate. So we often go out for Physical education, which they really like!

In the afternoon, after lunch at the centre, since the children are really tired, we often let them play whatever they want or we sing and dance together with them.

After this three weeks I can really say that I love the work with those children. They can give you so much. And it's so nice to see that they are happy when you come to work and do something with them.

I know already now that I will go back to Switzerland with a lot of beautiful, new experiences.

**Claudia Leibundgut**  
**Swiss volunteer in Kenya**

### **MORE ON DISABILITY AND YOUTH**

#### **2003: the European Year of People with Disabilities**



There are 37 million people with disabilities in the European Union. This year is the European Year of People with Disabilities. It is organised by the European Commission in collaboration with the European Disability Forum (EDF). The EDF is a European umbrella organisation representing more than 37 million disabled people in Europe. The year's objective is to

drive progress towards achieving equal rights for people with disabilities. Through the official website, people can find out about festivals, debates, partnerships, conferences, protests, parties, lobbying and more. Thousands of activities and events are happening this year at national and local level. On the next upcoming event is the **5. European Song Festival**: 16 October 2003 Bielefeld, Germany - the biggest song contest for people with mental disabilities. Web site: <http://www.songfestival2003.de>

For more information please visit <http://www.eypd2003.org>

#### **United Nations Persons with Disabilities Website**

The mission of the United Nations Persons with Disabilities Website is to assist in the promotion of effective measures for prevention of disability, rehabilitation, and the realization of the goals of full participation of disabled persons in social life and development, and of equality. This web site comprises many issues such as the global programme on disability, the disabilities group database, expert group meetings and On-line discussions and forums. After the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities - New York, June 2003 - the UN approved the Disability Rights Convention.

For more information visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable>

#### **WCC Programme on Persons with Disabilities**

The World Council of Churches Programme on Persons with Disabilities publishes the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) Newsletter. The last issues reports on the Disability African Consultative Conference held in South Africa in May 2003, the action plan for the Africa Decade of Disabled People and the participation of Persons with Disabilities in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It also features highlights on the West Africa Consultation on Church and Disability, and the Launching of the Arab Decade for people with Disabilities (2003-2012) - more than 4000 newly disabled persons are the outcome of violence in Palestine since the outbreak of the last Intifada in September 2000, and this number multiplied by ten due to the war in Iraq.

For more information please write to: [info@edan.or.ke](mailto:info@edan.or.ke)

## AROUND THE WORLD

### NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

#### Newsletter of the UN Year of Freshwater: "SPLASH": ISSUE JULY 2003

The last issue of UNESCO's newsletter of the Year of Freshwater 2003, "SPLASH" features news on:

- International Day of the World's Indigenous People on the 9th of August. The Indigenous People are denominated as the guardians of biological diversity. Many of the areas of highest biological diversity on the planet are inhabited by indigenous peoples. It also invites you to take action on several projects such as Canada- Indigenous Youth to youth project, USA-Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council (YRITWC).

In the Water Library you can find online publications, books, reports and videos classified by theme, some of the new acquisitions are: Ideas Book for Local Action in Water Management, Indigenous Perspectives on Water and Development and some videos

For more information visit:  
[www.wateryear2003.org](http://www.wateryear2003.org)

#### European Youth Week

From the 29th of September till the 5th October, the European Commission organised the "European Youth Week", comprising a week of activities to showcase the results of the EU's YOUTH programme since its launch in 2000. Numerous events and activities were organised for and by young people in more than 30 participating countries in Europe. Moreover about 150 young people were invited to come to Brussels where they got the opportunity to partake in the local European Youth Week.

The three main themes were: **Initiative, Intercultural Dialogue and Inclusion**. The YOUTH programme offers young people opportunities for voluntary activities abroad, and is open to all young people aged 15-25.

For more information visit the website:  
[www.training-youth.net/site/online\\_flipchart/youth\\_week](http://www.training-youth.net/site/online_flipchart/youth_week)

#### 3rd UNESCO Youth Forum 26-28 September 2003 UNESCO, Paris

Ms Anne Renaerd, and Mr Gabriel Tunde Shokoya, ICYE co-workers respectively of ICYE France and Nigeria attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum.

The 3rd Youth Forum, organised by the UNESCO Youth Coordination Unit, was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 26 to 28 September 2003, prior to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of UNESCO General Conference. Delegates from 104 Member States and Observer States and 22 youth NGOs discussed issues of critical concern for youth at the global level. These included HIV/AIDS, sustainable development and UNESCO and youth, as well as other critical issues under these general themes.

The theme of the Forum, "UNESCO and Youth: a mutual commitment", reflected UNESCO's desire not only to develop programmes for youth, but forge partnerships to actively support the initiatives of young people themselves. The Forum created a unique opportunity for youth to discuss issues of critical concern and provide tangible inputs which were then fed-back to the discussions of the General Conference.

For more information on the report please visit:  
<http://www.unesco.org/youth/#3rdYF>

#### Summary Report of the 9th COUNCIL OF EUROPE North-South Training Course for Youth Organisations

Mr Gabriel Tunde Shokoya, ICYE Nigeria long-standing co-worker, currently volunteering in Belgium, sent us a comprehensive report on the 9th CoE North-South Training Course for Youth Organisations.

Hereafter a brief summary of the report:

The course was attended by 35 representatives of youth organisations from both Europe and the continental South. It trained multipliers in youth organisations in developing and implementing programmes for their organisations aimed at North – South co-operation, as well as awareness raising on global interdependence between organisations

and the N – S centre and among organisations themselves.

Highlights of the working sessions included workshops focussing on; building capacity of multipliers in youth organisations with the necessary skills to develop and run N-S co-operation training programmes; developing an informal network of youth leaders and organisations with keen interest in developing modes of co-operation and who are and will be actively committed to the strengthening of the civil society;

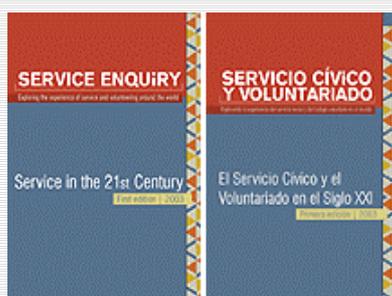
bringing out a series of co-operation and exchange programmes among youth organisations in the regions; and increasing the understanding and dialogue between young people and their organisations.

The Training Course ended with the adoption of suggested solutions and drawing up of follow-up strategy to monitor any adopted projects and exchanging contact. A Football Tournament – kicking the war away – was later played to round up the Training course.

Gabriel Tunde Shokoya

### NEWS FROM NGOs

#### **SERVICE ENQUIRY “Exploring the experience of service and volunteering around the world”**



The 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2003 marked the launch of the first edition of Service Enquiry. The first edition focuses on the latest developments in service policy and programmes, and the impact of service on democratic values and civic engagement. Contributions originate from eight countries: Argentina, Austria, France, Mexico, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

#### **PART 1: Service and Volunteerism in the Global Context**

Chapter 1 : Civic Service Worldwide: A preliminary Assessment

Chapter 2 : The Post–Cold War Environment for National Service Policy: Developments in Germany, Italy, Russia and China

Chapter 3 : National Youth Policy and National Youth Service: Toward Concerted Action

Chapter 4 : Rethinking Community-Based Learning in the Context of Globalisation

Chapter 5 : Taking People Out of Boxes and Categories: Voluntary Service and Social Cohesion

Chapter 6: Senior Volunteers: Solutions Waiting to Happen

#### **PART 2: Service and Development**

Chapter 7: Theoretical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Civic Service

Chapter 8: University–Based Community Service and Foreign Debt Relief: New Perspectives on Sustainable Development

Chapter 9: The Impact of Service Projects on Micro–Enterprises in Mexican Marginalized Communities

This highly useful and recommended publication can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.service-enquiry.org.za>

#### **Global Junior Challenge**

The Global Junior Challenge is a global award promoted by the Digital Youth Consortium, a non-profit organization founded by the Municipality of Rome and six major ICT companies. The intention of the award, dedicated to young people and to schools, is to identify and reward best practices on the use of new technologies in education and training of youngsters. An international jury selects the finalists and the winners are announced during the award ceremony that takes place in Rome, at the Campidoglio City Hall, in Autumn 2004. To present a project fill a form and send it to the email address: [projects@gjc.it](mailto:projects@gjc.it) or post it to Consorzio Gioventù Digitale, Via Umbria 7, 00187 Roma, Italy

For more information visit: <http://www.gjc.it>

### **Development Innovations and Networks**

Founded in 1981, IRED is a global network of partners who are seeking to achieve social and economic justice through economic and social initiatives, participation in governance and in policy processes. Its members range from peasant and urban groups, associations of handicraftsmen, women and co-operatives, to national and international NGOs. Through its forum the organisations can act together at local, regional and global level to exchange ideas and experiences in order to break out their state of isolation and constitute an organised force to bring about change.

Within the framework of the International year of Freshwater launched by UN, on 12th December 2002, it decided to set up a Forum on Water and Development.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.ired.org>

### **CCIVS promoting the UN Decade of Culture for Peace and the UN Year of Freshwater**

The Coordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service, with over 140 member organizations is ACTIVATING the project of culture of peace on the UNESCO web site. This is very good opportunity for NGOs to be part of a network between organizations, which allows you to exchange information, and share needs on either the local level or the international one.

All the projects stemming from this campaign will constitute a network called upon to interact at international level and will give rise to a particular event at the half-way point of the Decade (2005) that will feature the most remarkable initiatives to serve as "good practices."

Go to [www.unesco.org/cp](http://www.unesco.org/cp): section "how to take part" to find out how to participate and section "who is involved" to discover and contribute to what is already going on in your country and in the rest of the world.

With regard to the International Year of Freshwater, the CCIVS secretariat together with its member organisations made "The Freshwater Guide", is an new tool which can be used during the work camps. The main contents are: Basic information on Freshwater, How to save Freshwater, Group discussion and games, Work camps on Freshwater.

For more information on CCIVS programmes and activities visit:

<http://www.unesco.org/ccivs/>

For more information on "The Fresh Water Guide" please write to: [ccivs@unesco.org](mailto:ccivs@unesco.org)

### **Covalence Ethical Quote**

A software that measures ethics?

Covalence runs an information system measuring the ethical performance of multinational companies (as perceived). Since 2001, Covalence has been developing an information system measuring multinational companies' ethical performance, with a focus on countries of low and middle revenue per capita. The system consists of: a database with thousands of documents drawn from the Internet and a growing network of informers and tools interpreting raw data, such as the "ethical quote" and volume of information. It is also a tool for ethical investing and reputation analysis. Covalence information system and its ethical quote will be publicly available online by fall 2003.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.covalence.ch>

### **VOLUNTEERS OVER 55!**

#### **International voluntary service proposals for senior citizens- "Over 55 volunteers programme"**

This project is called "Mobility 55". Persons over 55 can have an international voluntary service experience, to test their interest in using their skills and knowledge in volunteering activities for the common good. The project involved 30 senior volunteers from 5 different countries and aimed at checking the interest of people aged over 55 towards mobility and voluntary service activities in Europe. The fields of action included social or cultural work, local development actions, anti-racism, reconciliation, education, environmental protection, etc. The project has been co-financed in the framework of the Socrates Programme of the European Commission, and several associations and local authorities in Italy, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, and the UK.

For more information please visit:

Lunaria: [www.lunaria.org](http://www.lunaria.org)

### **International Youth Parliament**

The International Youth Parliament 2004 (IYP 2004), will be held from 5 to 12 July 2004 in Sidney, Australia. The applications are opened for young people aged between 18 and 25. IYP2004 will assemble 250 young activists from around the world, to work together to effect positive social change. Applications close 12 January 2004.

For more information, please contact them at:

[info@iyp.oxfam.org](mailto:info@iyp.oxfam.org)

## ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS

### **ICYE Volunteer with the S.A.R. Príncipe de Asturias, D. Felipe de Borbón y Grecia**

Zoran Misovski from Macedonia (on the right of the Prince), an EVS volunteer in Murcia, Spain, under the ICYE Multilateral Project with Southeast European Countries was invited to take part in a youth exchange on Environmental Awareness. This youth exchange was carried out by his host organization "Plan Jóven" of the Municipality of Murcia, and was honoured with a visit by the Prince of Asturias.



### **EVS and ICYE Volunteers contributions**

Anna, from Bulgaria, and Sophie, from France, EVS volunteers in the ICYE SEE Multilateral projects send us the following feed-back on their voluntary service, respectively in Italy and Bosnia Herzegovina:

#### Anna

"The point is that whatever you expect, it comes differently. I am volunteering in a centre for currently about 80 people who have come to Italy expecting to be recognised as refugees. The work is easier than I expected. But even so I have already learned so many things about the spirit of Italy, about Italians, about volunteering. And about the pain of being a foreigner. Because there is always pain. You can see it on the faces of the people who are sleeping here in the refugee centre. On the faces of the people working here, also foreigners. I feel it. But I know that I will go back home. But what about them...?"

Now I am thinking about what home means. Probably it is not a place, but a person, somebody important for you."

#### Sophie

"The project was also primordial in my decision. My project in Banja Luka is helping in the making of two short documentary movies about two main activities of the Youth Communication Centre. It is important for me to work as a volunteer for a non-profit purpose. I really think that you don't have the same relationship towards your job when the main

purpose is not to earn money. I think that the EVS is a great opportunity for young people to live a challenging experience, to discover a new culture, to learn a new language, to meet new people and experience the exchange of cultures.

We have been very welcomed here. We spent the first days visiting the city and settling in our new "home". Up to now, I am really enjoying my new life in Banja Luka."

### **My first days in Nigeria**

My name is Ingrid Larsson. I'm 20 years old and come from the southeast of Sweden. I have spent about two months in Nigeria with the ICYE programme and it has been worth every second of it. The first couple of weeks were extremely tough, but now I feel more and more comfortable in this new environment.

However, I'm now in Lagos, the biggest city in Nigeria, with a population about 13 million people. It's a very busy city, and the traffic is crazy! I live and work in my project, "Little Saints Orphanage". It is about 85 children and youths living there together with about 8 nannies.

I live in a room together with two three months old twins and their nanny. I help her to bath, feed and change them every morning and evening and also feed and change them two times during the night (so now I know how to change and make food in completely dark because it's not often we have light!). During the days I help out in the kitchen, clean, wash

clothes, play with the other children etc. There is always something to do!

As I mentioned before, the first two weeks were very hard and I struggled to show that I could do some use in the orphanage, I was very tired... But as time went on I have found some kind of balance in my work and I now really start to enjoy my project. I also start to get to know the staff and orphans much better and I learn so much every day. It's amazing; I don't think I have learned so much in my entire life as I have these two months in Nigeria.

ICYE-Nigeria has and is doing a great job to help us now in the beginning, to adjust to everything new! I now understand how important the arrival-camp actually is, before you go out in your project and host-family.

I got about 9 months left here in Nigeria now and I will try to use that time and learn as much as I can and at the same time have a lot of fun!

Ingrid Larsson  
Swedish volunteer in Nigeria

### **Preparation Meeting EUROPEWIDE ON REFUGEES**

Between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2003 the Preparation Meeting of EVS Europe Wide on Refugees Project took place in Berlin.

This meeting was attended by 10 EVS volunteers from several European countries who take part in an 10 month voluntary service project. Host organisations are Caritas, Austria; Finnish Red Cross, Finland; Jugendwerkstatt Bauhof, Germany; Red Cross, Iceland; Volontarios, Italy and Refugee's Reception Centre, Lithuania. Training/preparation activities, among others included key note speakers provided an insight into the situation of refugees in Berlin, and an Anti-racism workshop, run by an intercultural trainer and social worker.



### **Training Meeting for National Focal Points and Local Antennas Struga, FYR Macedonia / 18-21 Sept. 2003**

In the frame of the ICYE – Eastlinks SEE Information Project, co-funded by the European Commission, 25 representatives of youth organisations from EU and SEE countries, together with representative of UNV Bosnia Herzegovina, the SEE Resource Centre and other regional youth networks met to assess the progress of this one-year project and to provide additional training on the setting up of an information system about the YOUTH programme of the European Commission.

The activities included: info sharing on opportunities for young people in SEE and EU countries; update on project activities; presentation of the SEE Resource Centre activities / plans / new developments; and brainstorming and presentation of future cooperation- follow up to the INFORMATION project and new project proposals.



### **Follow Up/ Evaluation Meeting of the HIV- AIDSEVS Multilateral Project**

During the final evaluation which took place from June 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> in Berlin, Germany, young volunteers from Austria, Estonia, Germany, Russia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, who volunteered in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support projects in Berlin, Birmingham, London, Odessa, Samara and Tallinn, shared and contrasted the experiences gained during their stay in distinct EU and CEE countries.

Together with the project evaluation team the volunteers assessed the overall impact of the project, drawing lessons from this pilot experience. Furthermore the returnees shared ideas on possible follow-up activities and were provided with background information regarding the EC Future Capital / of the Youth Programme as well as thematic

input regarding the difference of Disease Prevention methods in Eastern and Western Europe.

Everyone felt that the project has been successful also in enhancing volunteers involvement in HIV/AIDS related follow-up activities, be it through the Future Capital, further studies or the organization of a new HIV/AIDS prevention project.



#### **Youth and European Solidarity EU-SEE Training Course on Refugees, Human Rights and Reconciliation**

Even though over the past couple of years important progress has been made in achieving peace and stability in the countries of Former Yugoslavia over the past couple of years, ethnic prejudice and division as well as unresolved refugee and Internally displaced persons (IDP) issues still present a serious challenge for the development of civil society.

Against this background, youth mobility and voluntary service can contribute a great deal to confidence and capacity-building and to strengthening the role of young people as “agents of change” in civil society.

To this end, a training course, for representatives of host organisations working with refugees, and promoting human rights and reconciliation will take place in Berlin in February 2004. This training seminar, supported by the European Commission, will aim at preparing host organisations for an EU-SEE EVS multilateral in these areas of work.

### **News from ICYE National Committees and Regions**

#### **Finland**

Maailmanvaihto/ICYE Finland coordinates, together with 4 other NGOs, a voluntary service program to 9 Asian, African and Latin American countries - altogether 80 Finnish people participate the program annually.

#### **Germany**

ICJA/ICYE Germany will start a program for Civil Servants beginning in January 2004. ICJA is planning to send 7 participants for January and 15 for August.

ICJA is working together with other German voluntary service organisations towards setting up a certification system for voluntary service activities. In addition, it cooperates with a German umbrella organization to assess the feasibility of applying/adapting the concept of “global education” to the ICYE program.

#### **Mozambique**

AJUDE/ICYE Mozambique has recently started cooperating with Canada World Youth in a youth exchange program which allows AUJDE to send to Canada eleven Mozambican young volunteers who will be paired with an equal number of young Canadians for three and half months. AJUDE will offer a similar reciprocal program for young Canadians in Mozambique.

#### **Sweden**

IKU/ICYE Sweden is working towards establishing local IKU groups in different regions of the country. The local groups will focus on school projects, short-term group exchanges, photo exhibitions etc. The theme that cuts across all projects is intercultural learning.

#### **Asia Pacific Region**

Future plans include: the preparation of a handbook on commonality and practices of Asian and Pacific cultures from ICYE countries in the A/P Region, and the development of a bi-country program between Nepal and Thailand.

### **ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS**

#### **New ICYE National Correspondents:**

- ICYE Austria- Elisabeth Mertl
- ICYE New Zealand- Sissi Bourignon