

# Worlds of experience



**No. 5 (June 2004)**

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the fifth issue of “Worlds of Experience”, dedicated to “Human Rights, Refugees and Youth“.

As stated by the United Nation High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) on 20<sup>th</sup> of June, the International Refugees Day, last year 17 millions people, many of whom children and youth, live as refugees and displaced persons, often in life-threatening and very precarious conditions.

In order to help young people understand the root causes of the refugees’ phenomenon, as well as to engage them in linderer the consequences of their situations, ICYE offers placements to young volunteers through its regular programme and EVS (European Voluntary Service) thematic multilateral exchanges (see pages 2 thru 7).

Testimonies of volunteers demonstrate how motivated young people, mainly through their presence, understanding and support, can make a difference in the lives of refugees and people whose human rights have been violated. In return, as one volunteer says: “they taught me many things, they let me share their lives and especially offered me a true friendship!”

News from “Around The World” feature, among others: publications and tools to measure the impact, and enhance the promotion of civil service and volunteering across the board; how NGOs actively contribute to achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals; and new youth policies and programmes of intergovernmental organisations and NGOs.

ICYE programme news refers to recent international seminars on the different manifestations and implications of international youth volunteering, i.e. for young women and representatives of minorities in Euro Mediterranean projects, for volunteers working in HIV-AIDS prevention projects, and for co-workers of ICYE National Committees. “The Dreams concludes... “, is a moving and encouraging contribution by a British volunteer who just ended her ICYE experience in Uganda.

Hoping that you will find this issue of interest and use, please note that the next Issue of “Worlds of Experience”, to be published on 31 October 2004, will focus on “Youth and the Environment”. If you would like to contribute, please send articles, pictures, links or other information resources related to volunteering and environmental protection to [icye@icye.org](mailto:icye@icye.org) before 30 September 2004.

With best regards

ICYE International Office

“Worlds of Experience” can be viewed and downloaded from:  
[www.icye.org](http://www.icye.org)

# “HUMAN RIGHTS, REFUGEES AND YOUTH”

## VOLUNTEERS' VOICES

### CIAO AMICI!

We are Elisabeth (Austria) and Katja (Germany) and are doing our European Voluntary Service in Bolzano (North of Italy) through ICYE.

We work in a project with refugees. It's a center providing places for 45 people. The refugees are mostly from Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Albania, and Macedonia and come to ask for political asylum. They left their home country because they have no future there (war, no possibility of education...).

At the beginning it was a bit difficult because we couldn't speak with the people in the center. A lot of them don't speak English, only Italian because they have been living in the center for two years. After six weeks though, after having learned basic Italian it was possible to talk with them. It was a very nice experience for us to see how important communication is, and to get to know the people at the center.

It's been very interesting to learn things about their countries, their problems and their culture. But not only to hear it, but also feel it when we are invited to eat “their” food or when we learn “their” dances. So we not only get to know the “life as a refugee”, but also the life in other countries.

What are our tasks in the center?

Our tasks are very different and we have a lot of freedom to decide what we want to do. Mostly we organize activities with the children (games, help to do the homework...), animation (going to the park, swimming...) or we accompany them to the football field.

Of course we also support the daily life in the center (cleaning, giving meals, doing the shopping...).

For us it's been a very nice experience to be able to carry out our EVS project in this center, and are very happy and thankful that we got this possibility from the European Union!

*Katja Felber (Germany) and Elisabeth Csandl (Austria) from Italy*



### REFUGEES IN HAMBURG

My name is Jorge Fallas and I am from Costa Rica. Before I arrived to Germany I had no real expectations about what I was going to do in my project. Eventually, I “landed” in Hamburg, and without much certainty, time or even clear reasons I decided that I was going to spend the next 10 months in a home for under-aged unaccompanied refugees.

My first week in this house, a really big house I might add, was a bit confusing. At that moment there were about 30 to 35 young guys living there.

They came from all over the world: Afghanistan, Rumania, Turkey, Russia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Vietnam. They all had different reasons to leave their homelands. Some, like the Afghans, wanted to escape an oppressive regime, others like the Rumanians, were brought by organized crime, but they all had something in common, they tried to leave poverty behind and came to a new land in search of a better future.

They are divided in two groups. The first one is called the “Open-group” and are the ones who speak only little German, need more attention from the social workers and eat in the kitchen of the house. The other one is the “Living-group”, they cook for themselves and have a little bit less to do with social workers to do, although they do have someone assigned as a contact person, in case of a problem.

In the beginning, my tasks in the house were really simple. Mostly I had to open and close doors, because in such a home, there is a complex system of keys and locks, so that the guys who live there don't have access to their neighbour's room, to the kitchen or the offices. So I spent about one or two months, pretty much lost, trying to figure out what door led to which room and what "Tuch" or "Staubsauger" meant.



As time went by and I learned a little bit more German and started to communicate better with the people at the centre. In the free time activities, like billiard, going to the movies or ice-skating, little by little I got to know them well. I also got to know some of the problems that plague such a place and in general the lives of these young men.

The uncertainty of not knowing how much longer they're allowed to stay here – they have to go almost every month to the Foreign Office to have their permit extended - or unwillingly attending school, as they can't see a reason for it if they probably have to go back to their countries, is part of these refugees' everyday life.

The environment of the house changes constantly. Some young men get reassigned to smaller places because they cause simply too much trouble, and they need a stricter surrounding, while others get deported. New ones come to take the empty places and now, eight months later only 1 guy from the ones I met in the beginning is still in the "open-group".

The number of people who live there has also drastically changed, in the beginning it was about 35, now it's more like 18, with a tendency to decline.

In the meantime, I got to share the life of the ones who stayed and with that I've had the opportunity to see very different sides of life. I have to say that I'm glad to have known these people, who otherwise I would have never had the chance to meet, because they taught me many things, they let me share their lives and especially offered me a true friendship.

*Jorge Fallas, Costarrican Volunteer in Germany*

## PRISONS & HUMAN RIGHTS IN BOLIVIA

I am Frank Lambrechts, I come from Belgium, and I am a volunteer in Bolivia. When I was asked to write about human rights in Bolivia, my first reaction was that this was going to be a very short story. Since the universal declaration of human rights is not only about torture and political prisoners, but also about free access to education, food and health care for everyone, human working conditions, one can say that lots of people in Bolivia do not enjoy basic human rights: the majority of the population is still illiterate, poverty affects large sections of the population, primary health care is very poor, and life expectancy is so low that the average Bolivian miner dies in his early thirties. Hey, if I had been born in a Bolivian family of miners, I'd be counting the days now.

If we add corruption and the political and social influence of a catholic church which encourages discrimination and exclusion of homosexuals, divorced women, pregnant singles, aids patients, unmarried couples, ... then we get a pretty complex cocktail of violations of human rights. It is very difficult to pinpoint the actual causes and thus to find solutions.

Violation of human rights in Bolivia can't just be connected to the government; problems are also linked to society, religion, culture, history, international politics and economics.

Let me tell you now talk about the prison where I work as a volunteer; la Cárcel de San Roque, the prison of Sucre is rather small. There are approximately 120 male and 15 female prisoners.

Some of these women have their child living with them in the prison. 40% of the prison population consists of men who didn't pay alimony for a period of time. It is a good thing that divorced women can actually sue their ex-husbands in order to force them to pay for their children, but of course imprisonment is not a solution.

When these men leave the prison, they will not suddenly have the money to pay up. The only thing that their prison sentence gives them is depression, alcoholism and the knowledge how to make money illegally from the contact with real criminals.

Another 40% of the prisoners are doing time for drug related crimes, which comes down to one single US dictated law: law 1008. This means that it makes no difference whether you get caught with 10 grams of weed or with 5 kilos of pure cocaine. Whether you're a user, a "carrier", a producer or a dealer makes no difference. The standard sentence is 8 years.



The remaining 20% are the real criminals: armed robbers, rapists, paedophiles, and murderers... all these people live together; there is no separate area for violent criminals.

A few things in the prison law are positive though. Prisoners are being motivated to work towards their reintegration in society through working or studying. For every 8-hour day of work, they get one day off their sentence, and a full day of study even gives them 2 days less sentence.

So if a prisoner works hard, he can get a release on probation after completing half of his sentence. But that is all theory. Strangely enough, there is no such thing as a parole commission. It is the judge himself who decides when a prisoner gets out. And that can take a looong time.

In addition, the guards in the prison are mostly policemen who did something bad, and were "punished" by being sent to work in a prison, which means that some guards can be quite corrupt and violent.

One of the main problems in Bolivia: no one seems to be ever responsible for anything!

*Frank Lambrechts  
Belgian volunteer in Bolivia*

### **RED CROSS ICELAND**

My name is Nicole Schwarz Blum and I am a volunteer from Austria. I work at the Red Cross in Iceland, in which I have many different tasks!

I'm also helping out in the Intercultural Centre in Reykjavik which is a public limited company owned by the Reykjavik Section of the Icelandic Red Cross Society, that has taken over the functions and responsibilities of The Information and Cultural Centre for Foreigners. Here I have been translating an Information Pack - from English to Spanish- produced by the Intercultural centre in which you can find all the information about work and residence permits, taxes, schools, housing, migration policies and many more....

The days I'm in the Red Cross office, the activities are different and there is where I got to meet and talk with all the asylum seekers placed in Reykjavik. I think I'm really lucky to be in this beautiful island. Because of its geographical location, not many people come here seeking for asylum or for a refugee status; this gives me the advantage to be in real and direct contact with them. I had the opportunity to spend time with them and also to be present in more official and important moments, like obligatory doctor appointments, visits to the lawyers, pocket money payments, etc.

I also spent a lot of time with two young boys; I visited them, showed them the city and tried to find activities for them. They were allowed to attend some classes in school, they were for some weeks in a workshop with young Icelanders and they joined the open house group for foreigners and Icelanders that the Intercultural Centre organizes - they got fond of the Icelandic love for swimming pools and hot pots!!! For me it is a new way of looking at my life since all the people I mentioned before are younger than me...

Recently, I got the opportunity to take part of a seminar about refugees among people who really have a role to play when it comes to migration issues, people from the Ministry of Justice, Immigration Department, UNHCR, Border Police Officers, lawyers and many others.

It was a great opportunity for me to be in the middle of people who deal with this issue every day. As you see, my experience has been much deeper, enriching and surprising than I expected and I am really happy with what I do here.

*Nicole Schwarz  
Austrian EVS volunteer in Iceland*

### **A DAY IN VASTAANOTEKESKUS**

My name is Eva Wichmann and I am doing European Voluntary Service in Finland. I am right now on my way to work and I feel in the middle of a winter tale, I am only waiting for the horse sleigh...

But instead of this journey I am sitting in a Bus and I see again these grey houses: welcome to reality. I get off the bus and walk to „Vastaanotekeskus“, a centre for asylum seekers, where I work as a volunteer. Like always I have not the slightest idea of what I am doing today at my work. Later, Tom (a nickname I am using for confidentiality purposes), 8 years old, ... „Ohh Eeva“, he squeezed me and his dark brown eyes lighted, „would you play with me?“

Now we are playing, sometimes he runs with his woollen hat, sometimes I have to carry him and he laughs and tells me with his radiant eyes: „See ya, did you know today is my birthday, did you know?“ He is so happy and so excited that everything for him is sunshine, he even forgets that his family has to leave Finland and go to Germany, and probably also have to leave Germany and go back to Kosovo, a country which he merely remembers from what his family tells him. Their asylum application in Germany was eventually rejected – from there they had to go to Norway, from Norway to Sweden and from Sweden to Finland.

The day continues... In no time is two o'clock in the afternoon. From 2 till 4 normally I have to take care of the kids in the kindergarten, as their parents have to attend the OEV- course. This course belongs to a project, which is called „Becoming Visible“, where the asylum seekers get counselling.

A little bit later I find myself in the Kindergarten, with a large pack paper roll under my arm. I have taken Tom by the hand even if his parents do not attend the course. He enjoys when someone gives him attention. As his mother is not there, he is often depressed and ill. His father is also quite absent, behaving like a teenager, drinking too much and visiting his lovers.



The 4 children have to care for themselves, the 10 year-old cleans the room, the oldest (13 and 14 year-old) washes their clothes - and Tom himself is just a child, and looks for a mother substitute and wants only to play with someone.

When I paint with them, they enjoy it, laugh and shout: „minä ensinainen, minä ensinainen“ „me first, me first! However, harmony is quickly gone, the little ones start fighting – all I can do is try to separate them and hope that they calm down. No wonder, that I am happy when it's finally four pm. Today though I continue to work with older children, and realise how difficult it is to get things done when neither the kids nor I speak Finnish and among themselves they use so many different languages (i.e. Arabic, Faris etc.).

Luckily one of them can translate and I keep asking myself where this lively and bright young girl has learned to speak English. She tells them in Farsi that the clay we are using will be dry only after 24 hours and therefore today they cannot bring their sculptures home. Things can also be explained with gestures – I show them how to make a turtle by using a spoon. Etc. In the end the kids were very happy to have made something with their own hands.

Today I am really tired and the –15 degrees outside make it harder. Nonetheless I am happy that I had such an eventful day and that I have done something meaningful!

*Eva Wichmann,  
German EVS volunteer in Turku-Finland*

### **WORLD VISION FROM COSTA RICA**

My name is Alexandre Inacio – I am a British volunteer in Costa Rica working for an NGO called World Vision, which works, in over 90 countries worldwide.

I work at the regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean, which supervises the work of the 14 national offices spread around the region. I am part of the Advocacy team which including myself numbers 2 staff and one other volunteer.

The main areas of our work is the promotion of justice in each of its forms and in particular the rights of the child. Unfortunately within this region, issues such as child labour, domestic violence and gender inequality are still rife and fairly recent phenomena such as sex tourism is now becoming a huge problem not only here but on a global scale. These are the causes that we fight against and the issues of which we try and raise public awareness. The programmes are funded from or in conjunction with private foundations, governments, and other World Vision offices and also through child sponsorship programmes.

I do my part in all this in my capacity as a researcher. On an average day I research themes, political and legal situations amongst others. This aids my boss in planning field visits to the national offices, international conferences and seminars, planning region wide strategies and helping him in writing articles and books.

I was hoping to be involved in one of these field trips preferably somewhere hot but I am still waiting for the invite!

During this year we have published 2 books. Both cover case studies of children and adolescents from the Latin American and Caribbean countries that we work in, whose lives are affected by violence, sexual exploitation, poverty and their lack of access to universal rights such as education.

I have also been involved in the planning and design of tools to be used within World Vision such as producing a Region wide database of information of funding opportunities for their programme. I hasten to add that this has been a huge success! I also helped plan our departmental web page for the World Vision regional website. Apart from that like everyone else, administrative stuff has to be done in case you thought that this job is sounding too interesting.

On a social level our 5-a-side football team has been in action from time to time with mixed results we would argue because the refereeing sucks though others would say it's because we do.

The position has definitely met my expectations. My main purpose in working here is to get the necessary experience in an NGO within a developing country that development agencies back home require when employing staff. On a more personal level, the idealism disappears once the reality sinks in. The issues that I have dealt with make me determined that this is the career for me.

*Alexandre Inacio  
British volunteer in Costa Rica*

## REFUGEES IN LITHUANIA?

This is an interview with David Holbe, French EVS volunteer who worked in the Foreigners Registration Centre in Pabrade, Lithuania.

*David, tells us about the centre where you worked.*

All the foreigners who are caught inside Lithuania without a proper identification or visa for Lithuania must go to this centre. The centre consists of two similar buildings, one in which the illegal aliens lives, and the other one where the asylum seekers are.

The first building is surrounded by barbwire and only authorised people can enter. Some of the people in this building didn't even know they were in Lithuania – they wanted to go to Germany or France and were caught in Lithuania. Some of them are even Lithuanians who haven't got a passport or paper to prove their Lithuanian nationality as they were born in this area before it became an independent country from the Soviet Union. When someone asked them "Do you know where you are?" they would say Russia, Poland but never Lithuania...Some people stay for a couple of days up to 3 or 4 years, and 3 years is a long time to spend in this place".

*And how is Pabrade?*

Pabrade has 70.000 inhabitants, it is located very near the frontier with Belarus and you can "survive" speaking Russian without knowing Lithuanian. Pabrade has only one main street and the bars and cultural places are very few... but there were cinemas and theatres in the communist times...

*But what does a volunteer who speaks neither Lithuanian nor Russian in the Foreigners Registration Centre in Pabrade?*

"Nothing"

*"What do you mean by nothing?"*

Well, I just went there to be with them, social work is not like any other job, it does not count what you've done, my presence was my job, I was there to listen to the people, and some people didn't know why I was there and I said "I'm here to live with you". I stayed 8 months in this place and although it looks like I didn't do anything tangible, this experience has been very helpful. In the beginning it was difficult as no one told me what to do. I was free to choose what to do with the refugees, so that in the end mostly I was helping out in the library, and teaching French and English to my co-workers".

*And what did you learn in Lithuania?*

"I learnt Hindi, Russian and a little bit of Lithuanian, because the TV programmes are all from Russia, and Hindi because a lot of refugees are from India, Pakistan. I can say that this was truly an intercultural experience."

*Interviewed by Natalia Cortés,  
Colombian exchangee in Germany*



## MORE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, REFUGEES AND YOUTH

### FINAL EVALUATION OF THE EVS PROJECT: EUROPEWIDE ON REFUGEES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of June the Final Evaluation of the Europewide EVS project on Refugees took place in Berlin. 8 young volunteers from Austria, France, Germany, Iceland, and Lithuania worked for 9 months in the above countries, as well as in Finland and Italy, in projects dealing working with refugees. The seminar included the final evaluation and all the volunteers shared their experiences and discussed about the different situations in which refugees live in these countries. Some of their experiences feature in the above volunteers' voices section.



### PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING SEE-EU EVS PROJECT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION

Between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2004 the Preparation Meeting of EVS EU-SEE on Refugees, Human Rights and Reconciliation Project took place in Berlin. 15 EVS volunteers, who participate in a 10-month voluntary service project, attended this meeting from several European and South East European countries. The Volunteers will work in host organizations in the following countries: Austria, Italy, Spain, Lithuania, France, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.

The seminar included workshops on intercultural learning, dynamic problem solving, and each volunteer exposed briefly the situation of refugees, displaced persons and migrants in their respective countries as an introduction of what they will see in these 10 months in their host projects.



### AEGEE and the WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2004 (23.06.2004)

AEGEE Press Release to mark the World Refugee Day and related issues The Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) of AEGEE-Europe would like to commemorate June the 20<sup>th</sup> 2004, the World Refugee Day, by emphasising its continued commitment to the issue, both with regard to awareness-raising, as well as through lobbying for continued progress in the field with the main actors concerned. The HRWG has been active, especially recently, through a series of actions and events for such awareness-raising and lobbying, with personalities in the field invited and participating in the discussions focusing on issues such as Human Trafficking and Smuggling in Europe (Passau - November 2003) and Integration of Immigrants (Valletta - March 2004), while preparing to tackle other issues such as the Impact of Immigration on Local Society and Asylum Policy in the upcoming conferences in Genova and Budapest. A Case Study Trip on Immigration and the Future of Europe is also planned through Morocco, Spain and France.

The **Human Rights Working Group (HRWG)** of AEGEE is an independent working group within AEGEE, whose main activities are spreading information, organising and supporting projects within AEGEE on the subject of Human Rights. Its main aim is to bring human rights violations into public notice and to raise awareness of violations of human dignity in order to make sure that these crimes are not neglected or forgotten.

NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

**THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ADOPTS GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMES AFTER 2006**

The Commission just adopted two communications, "The new generation of education and training programmes" and "Citizenship in action", setting out the guidelines for future programmes intended to replace the current Community programmes Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Tempus, Youth, Culture 2000 and Media Plus from 2007. These documents follow on from the communication of 10 February on the financial outlook.

To see the communication on "*The new generation of education and training programmes*" please visit [http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education\\_culture/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm)

**EUROPEAN YOUTH PORTAL LAUNCHED!**



If you are thinking of going to another European country to study or work, or on holiday...

If you are looking for activities or opportunities in Europe... if you have something to say, or ask, about European issues, this portal could be a good place to start! It offers you information, news and discussions - all about Europe and relevant to young people. Viviane Reding, the EU Commissioner of Education and Culture launched the Portal officially on May 26.

Visit the portal at: <http://europa.eu.int/youth/>

**UNESCO YOUTH PUBLICATIONS**

The Youth Section of the Bureau of Strategic Planning recently issued two publications pertaining to UNESCO's policies vis-à-vis youth. The titles of the two publications are 'UNESCO's Commitment to Youth: The Youth Forum' and 'Empowering Youth through National Policies: UNESCO's Contribution'.

At present, these publications are only available in English, but they are currently in the process of preparing them also in French and Spanish. This material is part of UNESCO's strategy to strengthen our support to Member States in the area of youth policy.

To see the documents in PDF file, please visit: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001345/134502e.pdf> (The Youth Forum) <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001345/134501e.pdf> (Empowering Youth through National Policies)

**SUMMARY REPORT OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE: "EUROPE, YOUTH AND GLOBALISATION" EVENT STRASBOURG, FRANCE. 5 - 9 MAY 2004**



The Council of Europe organised a large-scale event on the themes of Europe, Youth and Globalisation under the slogan "How Big Is Your World" in Strasbourg. Kumi Naidoo, the Secretary General of CIVICUS, and Eveline Herfkens, the UN Secretary-General's Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals Campaign, addressed the opening. More than 400 young people aged between 18 and 30, representing diverse national, international organisations, non-governmental youth organisations, regional youth platforms and other associations, participated in this event.

Young people, who in their daily lives are affected by globalisation, need to better understand the mechanisms of this phenomenon in order not to suffer from its consequences.

The event took the form of an interactive space where participants were involved in the following activities: debates, thematic panels and smaller working groups, interactive workshops and cultural events. The programme covered six major topics: democratic governance and youth participation; human rights and responsibilities; Peace - culture and diversity (in particular, inter-religious dialogue); sustainable development; education and employment.

As representative of the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE), I took part in two workshops cum cluster group, which addresses two major topics - '**Culture and Diversity**' and '**Peace and Development**'.

The event has proved to be an eye opener for many of the participants particularly those having such international exposure for the first time, the magnitude of how big or how small the world can be has never been so unprecedented by the young people who broadly expressed themselves in an open and relaxed atmosphere of multi culture and interaction.

For the African participants, the event has proved to be not only an eye opener but a threshold and background of seeing such an event organised at the African level in order to catch the attention of the African leaders who the African youths believed are yet to really appreciate the roles of youth participation in governance and civil society. To this end, the ICYE Nigerian National Committee has volunteered to play the host of the 1st African Youth Summit on Globalisation, which should take place in April 2005.

*Gabriel Shokoya  
International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE)*

For further information, please refer to  
[www.coe.int/youth-May2004](http://www.coe.int/youth-May2004)  
[www.coe.int/EYG](http://www.coe.int/EYG)

### **UN TOOLKIT TO MEASURE YOUR COUNTRY'S NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY AND COMMITMENTS TO YOUTH**

Making Commitments Matter: A Toolkit for young people to evaluate national youth policy offers youth organizations and representatives a starting point for determining what has been done to better the lives of young people since 1995, when the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond was launched.

Take a look at this practical resource and put it to use in your community! The Toolkit is a resource for addressing the issues outlined in the recently launched World Youth Report.

Please visit:  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/index.html>

### **21 MARCH, DAY TO ELIMINATE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: MESSAGE BY UN SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Tolerance, inter-cultural dialogue, respect for diversity more essential than ever, Secretary-General says in message for Day to Eliminate Racial Discrimination

On 21 March 1960, a non-violent protest took place in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the "pass laws" - one of the most hated institutions of apartheid; it ended with the death of 69 demonstrators.

The Sharpeville massacre was a landmark in the history of the anti-apartheid movement. It also led the United Nations General Assembly to establish this annual observance, which is meant to draw attention to the fight against racism wherever and whenever it occurs.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, reminding us of the horrors that ethnic and racial hatred can cause. This year is also the bicentenary of the revolution in Haiti, which led to the liberation from slavery of the peoples of the Caribbean and Latin America.

On this international day for the elimination of racial discrimination, let us all be inspired anew by the fundamental principle, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of the equality of all human beings.

### **WORLD BANK**



After extensive consultations with young people worldwide, the World Bank has created a website to reach out to you with Youthink!

Explore the research, knowledge, and experience gathered by World Bank staff over the past 60 years. Share your stories and experience with them and other young people around the world.

Visit Youthink! [www.worldbank.org/youthink](http://www.worldbank.org/youthink)

## UNFPA



A group of young people from around the world will advise UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, on the best ways to recognize and promote the rights and needs of youth and will ensure that UNFPA's global initiatives are youth-friendly and adequately address young people's concerns, particularly regarding their sexual and reproductive lives, HIV/AIDS and gender issues and their link with issues of livelihood.

The Youth Advisory Committee was formulated during a two-day meeting in New York, where more than 20 representatives of national, regional and international youth networks voiced their opinions on how to better integrate adolescents and youth in UNFPA's programmes and initiatives.

The meeting, held from 15 to 16 April, also provided the participants with an opportunity to discuss the challenges they faced in implementing their projects, in working with adults and in dealing with other youth.

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Please visit: [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

## EUROMED PLATFORM



A year ago the EuroMed Platform launched their web site that to date has received over 52,000 hits. With the significant increase of its use and scope, it was high time to adapt it to current needs. You are welcome to have a look and send them your feedback.

In conjunction with this, they are inviting you to send them a photo/picture that captures the spirit of the Euro-Med Youth Platform: networking, youth and the Euro-Med region. The best entry will actually be placed in the home page:

<http://www.euromedp.org>

## COLLECTION OF RESOURCES ON YOUTH AND HIV/AIDS

The UNESCO Section for Youth is delighted to provide you with the first edition of its Collection of Resources on Youth and HIV/AIDS.

Far from being an exhaustive list, the document is meant simply as a "snapshot" of pertinent links in the area of young people and HIV/AIDS. They hope that the resources contained in this document will encourage a greater inclusion of young people in the fight against HIV/AIDS, both as targets, but more particularly as equal partners. We hope that you will find these resources useful, and that you will take the time to read some or all of them. As they are hoping to publish a second edition in the next 3 months or so, suggestions of relevant resources are welcome, particularly as regards the Middle East and Latin America.

Contact: Ms Rachel Miller - Section for Youth - Bureau of Strategic Planning  
email: [r.miller@unesco.org](mailto:r.miller@unesco.org)  
Website: [www.unesco.org/youth](http://www.unesco.org/youth)

## NEWS FROM NGOs

### WORLDWIDE YOUTH SERVICE POLICY SCAN

A Research project that ICP is currently undertaking. The name of the project is the "Worldwide Youth Service Policy Scan". The project will determine the status and configuration of policies that involve young people in community service and volunteerism in each country around the world. This research will hopefully uncover the factors that facilitate youth service policy where it exists, and the factors that prevent policy where there is none.

Right now, they have started collecting data in more than 20 countries in Latin America in partnership with three expert organizations in the field.

In other regions of the world, they are in the planning stage of the project and still forging partnerships with other organizations interested in youth service policy.

Please feel free to send along any questions about this research project.

More information on: <http://www.icicp.org>  
Or Luis Claret - BSP/Section of Youth - UNESCO Paris  
Tel. (0033) 01 45 68 14 60  
Fax. (0033) 01 45 68 57 90  
email: [l.claret@unesco.org](mailto:l.claret@unesco.org)

### IT'S THE SYSTEM, STUPID!

Open Democracy -- 5 February 2004  
John Elkington

After a third visit to the World Economic Forum, the author concluded that the divide between Davos and Mumbai (World Social Forum) can be over-dramatized and that both sides are in fact in the process of adjusting their mindsets. Read how he suggests "top down" changes to the market system to help social entrepreneurs bring "bottom up" activities into the global arena.

For more information please visit:  
[www.opendemocracy.net/](http://www.opendemocracy.net/)

### FEAR AND WANT: OBSTACLES TO HUMAN SECURITY: 2004 SOCIAL WATCH REPORT

"Frustrating the hopes of peoples and nations all around the globe will certainly not help make the world a more secure place for our children," says the Social Watch 2004 report. Read how Social Watch, which tracks progress and regression on eradicating poverty and achieving gender equity, considers the link between fear, want and human security.

Please visit: <http://www.socialwatch.org>

### YAN Youth Action Network



The newly redesigned YouthActionNet website is launched! Visit it at: [www.youthactionnet.org](http://www.youthactionnet.org). Over the past three years, YouthActionNet has evolved into a vibrant community of thousands of committed youth around the world. The new site is a reflection of feedback and suggestions from youth leaders in over 30 countries who seek greater visibility for their efforts and the ability to mobilize others in support of their work.

Among the new site's features are:

- A "make your own web page" function enabling youth leaders to publicize their work and launch action-oriented campaigns
- A global awards program through which accomplished youth leaders may apply for US\$500 grants
- A monthly quiz aimed at testing visitors' knowledge of current global issues
- A featured YouthActionNet visionary of the month
- An action toolkit including resources to help youth leaders raise money and work with the media.
- An interactive forum

## THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) IDENTIFIED BY THE UNITED NATIONS:



The MDGs commit the international community to an expanded vision of development, one that vigorously promotes human development as the key to sustaining social and economic progress in all countries, and recognizes the importance of creating a global partnership for development. They are listed below. Learn more here:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

The Annual NGO-DPI Conference, is going to be held at the United Nations in New York this September, under the theme "The Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society in Action". GYAN is collecting and will compile projects showcasing youth contributions to the campaign, which will be presented to the United Nations and other international institutions. Submissions should be no more than 700 words and be sent by email to GYAN HQ ([gyan@youthlink.org](mailto:gyan@youthlink.org))

## ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS

### CITIZENSHIP MATTERS: THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN EURO-MED YOUTH PROJECTS

My name is Diana Simkovich - as representative of Swallows/ICYE Russia I have attended the training seminar "Citizenship matters", organized by the Council of Europe and the European Commission in cooperation with the Swedish Institute of Alexandria. The seminar took place in Alexandria, Egypt, from the 19 to 29 April, and brought together 40 participants, trainers and resource persons from 20 European and Mediterranean countries.

In this framework, the seminar aimed at developing a common understanding about the challenges to the participation of women and minorities in youth projects and to identification of educational principles to promote global citizenship of young people in Euro-Med projects.

The training seminar addressed the situation and levels of participation of, and discrimination against, young women and minority youth in youth projects, as common challenges for all countries and societies in Europe and the Mediterranean area.



These are also themes that often lead themselves to the creation of stereotypical and ethnocentric views among those involved in European and Mediterranean countries.

One of the basic competencies of youth workers active in Euro-Med youth projects should be the ability to address these issues with young people and with others involved in youth projects. In this way, the youth workers can be multipliers and support young people in their own learning processes on these matters.

Through an intensive program of workshops and with the support of resource persons, the participants debated the issues in a Euro-Mediterranean perspective and developed ideas for further action and cooperation.

They still have needs for inclusive policies and approaches in Euro-Med youth projects that take into account the specific needs of young women and minority groups within a common framework of human rights, human rights education and intercultural learning.

*Diana Simkovich  
ICYE Russia*

### **TRAINING COURSE ON „YOUTH VOLUNTEERING IN HIV-AIDS PREVENTION PROJECT IN EU AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES“ JUNE 2004, BERLIN**

The 18 participants who took part in this seminar came from Russia, Estonia, UK, Ukraine and Germany. Seven of them had been volunteers in the „EVS multilateral project on HIV/AIDS prevention in EU and CEEC countries“ which took place from November 2002 to June 2003 – and they are still active in this field.



The other participants came from organizations that are dealing with HIV and AIDS prevention. During the five days of the seminar we were discussing different themes like fundraising; gay and lesbian issues in sex-health education; mass media; working with teenagers; drug use and more. On the third day we visited three projects in the morning we went to „Subway- Berlin“ a project for „guys“ who offer sex for money. Subway is a place where these guys are provided with food, clothes, medical help and if needed psychological support.

In the afternoon we went to „Hydra e.V.“ Hydra is among other things a legal aid office for prostitutes. Finally we went to the „Weltküche“ where we had dinner cooked by immigrants. The seminar helped in the follow-up of the project and to build a bigger network with youth organizations working in this area.

*Nicole Santiana  
Intern at the International Office in Berlin*

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ICYE CO-WORKER?**

From the 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of May, in Reigoldswil, Switzerland, a co-worker's seminar took place involving the German-speaking ICYE National Committees in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. 25 co-workers and staff met to exchange methodologies and contents of intercultural activities of preparation, mid-term and evaluation seminars organised for international volunteers participating in the ICYE programme. The seminar focused on themes such as Intercultural Learning, Volunteers management, and Crisis Management.

The seminar was very productive, useful and a lot of fun thanks to the beautiful venue - an old farmhouse of the 19th century - and the special Swiss hospitality and good food.

If you would like to receive the seminar's final report, please contact ICYE Switzerland at:

[info@icye.ch](mailto:info@icye.ch)



### **“THE DREAM CONCLUDES...”**

My final days in Uganda are heavy with the weight of nostalgia.

As I flip through the dog eared pages of my worn, leather journal; bulging so wide with life the spine has split, I am able to scale the mountain of hindsight and gaze across the vast and varied landscape of this past year.

In many ways the time there has flown by, a fleeting instant, but when I ponder all the lessons I have been taught; all I've born witness to, I know my soul has spent a lifetime in this land.

I have made friendship and bonds that will stand the test of time; I have found a second family whom will love and remember for all of my days.

I have seen true beauty. Joy spread across children's eager faces as we laugh, sing and scatter flower petals into the gentle breeze. The way the full crystal moon reflects on the deep in black water of Lake Victoria, as our wooden canoe slices gracefully through the gently lapping waves. Only the guiding path of the Milky Way's twinkling night sky sets our course.

I have learnt to trust. To trust carefully, to trust wisely, and to trust completely.

I have seen people clinging desperately to life. I have witnessed someone's last breath; I have watched someone's first.

I have seen families robbed by AIDS; I have experienced the suffering of malaria. I have seen the pain of abandonment, and I have been inspired by the resilient strength and determination of the human spirit.

I have held the forgotten children of the North. Embraced little girls who were pulled suckling from their dead mother's breast. Women shot down with their babies in their arms.

I have wiped away tears, I have held confidences, and I have cradled hope and moulded dreams in my humble hands.

I have given, I have taken. I have laughed and I have cried. I have hurt, I have rejoiced. I have loved and I have been loved. I have found myself. And I have truly lived.

*Phillippa Herbert,  
ICYE UK Volunteer in Uganda*



## ICYE AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING

A six-day African Regional Meeting was held from 4 to 8 June 2004, in Maputo, Mozambique, with the participation of representatives of ICYE National Committees in Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and Uganda, as well as by the Federation's Board of Managers and the staff of the International Office.

Besides dealing with regular (statutory) business, the Regional Assembly dealt with:

- Common concerns (i.e. stagnation or decrease of exchanges between the African and other ICYE regions; stricter and costly visa regulations; internal communication problems);
- New contacts in Botswana, South Africa, and Swaziland, Tanzania and Togo;
- An action plan referring to co-workers training, intra and inter-regional activities around HIV/AIDS, Peace and Reconciliation, staff exchanges, projects applications to UNESCO (building on the Participation Programme Grant received by ICYE Kenya) and NEPAD; and
- The 1st African Youth Summit on Globalisation to be hosted by ICYE Nigeria in April 2005.

In addition, a short training session with ICYE Mozambique's co-workers was carried out, and meetings with foreign long-term volunteers in Mozambique were held.

All participants felt that the meeting was challenging, informative, and that it fostered better understanding of the potential and limitations of developing the ICYE programme in Africa. It has also been a successful opportunity to revive the cooperation within Africa, as well as between African and other ICYE committees and regions.

*Adeoluwa Onamade,  
ICYE African Regional Co-ordinator*



## PRESIDENT OF ICYE SWITZERLAND VISITS ICYE INDIA

During a personal visit to India, Mr. Tony Ligi, President of ICYE Switzerland, visited ICYE India office and shared his experience as former ICYE exchangee, spoke to our out going exchangees to Switzerland, and was interviewed by one of the major newspapers in India "The Times of India". We hope to receive more of these inspiring visits in Bangalore.

ICYE India

**'Exchange students are bound to have fun as they learn'**

**STRAIGHT ANSWERS**

**Q** When is the next youth exchange programme scheduled for?  
This year there are five students from Bangalore who will be coming to Switzerland in August. On my visit here, I have met all the students to give them an insight on what to expect.

**What can the students participating look forward to?**  
During the first month of their stay they will be able to learn the local language to help them get through the entire year comfortably. After an orientation programme, there is an International evening where every participating country showcases their talent. Over the years Indians have been known for having put up the best acts. Then on, they are placed at different work units.

**TONY LIGI**  
President, ICYE Switzerland

**On visiting exchange students in Bangalore**

**What are the most common work areas?**  
Work areas are always those connected with social work. It could be anything to do with children, from little ones to teenagers, the elderly or even with the handicapped. Some can even chose to work with radio, theatre or even with wildlife and national parks. If students choose according to their interest, they are bound to have fun while they learn as well.

**How and when did you join this programme?**  
I started off as an exchange student myself. That was 10 years ago when I went to Central America, where I worked with street children. After that I joined back as a co-worker.

**'I started off as an exchange student too'**

**What is your experience as an exchange student?**  
A student needs to be open to learning about new cultures. It teaches you to adapt yourself to different situations, make your point, be independent and take up responsibility.

KAVIYA CHRISTOPHER

## ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

### New ICYE National Correspondents:

- Iceland: Anna LUDVIKSDOTTIR (Ms)
- Russia : Diana SIMKOVICH (Ms)
- Sweden: Karin WIMMER (Ms.)
- Germany: Simone KLEINEKATHÖFER (Ms)
- Japan: Hanako KIMURA (Ms)
- Brazil: André PITTA (Mr)
- ICYE European Association: Katrine VASEGAARD (Ms)

## ICYE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 26 June – 2 July, 2004: Euro-Latin American Seminar on Youth Leadership and Active Citizenship in Sambo Creek, Honduras – supported by the EC YOUTH Programme
- 15 September 2004 to 15 May 2005: EU-CIS EVS Multilateral Project – supported by the EC YOUTH Programme
- 9 –15t October, 2004: EU-SEE Training Course 1 - On Youth Partnership Building and Project Management in Vukovar, Croatia for BiH, for Youth NGOs from Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and NGO's from 7 EU and Pre-accession countries - – supported by the EC YOUTH Programme
- 6 to 12 November 2004: EU-SEE Training Course 2 - On Youth Partnership Building and Project Management in Podgorica, Serbia and Montenegro, for Youth NGO's from Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro and NGO's from 5 EU and Pre-accession countries – supported by the EC YOUTH Programme
- 15-19 November 2004: ICYE Asia-Pacific Regional Training Seminar, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 27 November – 4 December 2004: ICYE Board of Managers Meeting – Brazil
- 9 –25 February, 2005: EU-CIS Training Course On Youth Programme: Partnership Building and Project Management in Minsk, Belarus (submitted to the EC YOUTH Programme)
- 15 February to 15 November 2005: EVS Multilateral Project on Youth Volunteering and Social Inclusion in EU and SEE from (submitted to the EC YOUTH Programme)