

**EU and Latin America European Voluntary Service Project on**  
**“Participation of Young People”**



**Project Documentation**  
**August 2007 – Mai 2008**



Education and Culture DG

**‘Youth in Action’ Programme**

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# **EU AND LATIN AMERICA EVS PROJECT ON PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE 2007/2008**

Documentation of the International Voluntary Service project between EU and Latin American Countries August 2007 – May 2008

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## 1. Introduction

The present document is a documentation of the **“EU and Latin America EVS Project on Participation of Young People”** supported by the Youth in Action Programme of the European Union (Grant Decision Nr. EVS - 2007-1239) and coordinated by the ICYE International Office from August 2007 - May 2008.

The participants were 7 volunteers from Latin America (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Ecuador) and 9 volunteers from the European Union (Austria, United Kingdom, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania and Poland).

The theme “Participation of Young People” was proposed by EU and Latin American youth workers during the EU - LA seminar “Youth Active Citizenship ” held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in February 2006.

In line with this proposal the project aimed at promoting volunteering opportunities to enhance young people’s leadership skills and engagement in civil society.

The reciprocal exchange project enabled young people to engage in voluntary service projects and to gain experience by living and working in European and Latin American countries. Most of the project partners, being either sending or host coordinating organizations, were part of the ICYE network. More than half of the involved host organizations in Latin America had never hosted EVS volunteers before.

Alongside with the volunteering experience the project offered the following training and evaluation meetings for the volunteers:

- Preparatory meetings with the sending organizations in the volunteers’ home countries
- A joint three-day preparatory training organised by the project coordinator in Berlin
- A three-day on-arrival training organized by the host coordinating organizations in the host countries
- A two-day mid-term evaluation in the host countries
- A three-day joint final evaluation and follow-up meeting enabling the group of EU and Latin American volunteers to meet again in Berlin before the return to their home countries.

An important feature of this project is the present documentation of the volunteers’ experiences throughout the whole project duration. To this end, a part-time facilitator and trainer of the joint training meetings stayed in contact with the volunteers during their service abroad, providing material and information related to the theme and facilitating an on-going dialogue between them.

Besides enhancing the exchange of experiences amongst all volunteers, this stimulated the production of this documentation.

In the chapter "The nine-month Voluntary Service Experience" you will find comments, reports, extracts of e-mails, which have been written during the period of the 9 month project in different languages (Spanish, English and German). The mix of languages reflects the multicultural composition of this group: The preparatory training was held in English, Spanish and providing translation from and to Portuguese and German.

Obviously the e-mails written by the volunteers also document the development of their language skills. Some European volunteers started to write in English, but after 2 or 3 months we received the first mails in Spanish. A concrete example was a Brazilian volunteer who didn't speak English before the EVS, after 2 months wrote his first mail in English although being taught Lithuanian in his host country.

This documentation is mainly consisting of excerpts of the numerous mails received by the EVS participants and dealing with the various facets of their experience.

We would like to thank the EC for the support as well as all volunteers and partner organizations for their invaluable contributions to the EVS project and to this documentation. Their enthusiasm and team spirit made this enriching experience possible.

## 2. Participation of Young People – The Theme and its Relevance

Besides "Inclusion", "Cultural Diversity" and "European Citizenship", one of the key priorities of the EU-YOUTH IN ACTION programme is "Participation of Young People" and is to be understood as the following:

"Participation of young people in democratic life is a recurrent topic on which many texts have been written both in Europe and worldwide. Moreover, in the consultation process preceding the adoption of the White Paper, young people from Europe underlined that participation is needed to allow democracy to function properly.

More concretely, the YOUTH in Action programme is aimed at encouraging young people to take an active part in society, to increase their participation in the system of representative democracy as well as to support any initiative that encourages and teaches active participation." (<http://www.salto-youth.net/aboutparticipation/>)

The definition of participation needs to be widened to describe all areas and levels, where it influences politics, civil society and local communities.

Before applying for this project some of the participants had already worked with non-governmental organizations of different types and therefore chose this

project out of particular interest in the theme "Participation of Young People". Others were interested in the experience abroad and in the work with young people in general but were eager to learn more about participation policies in youth work.

The understanding of participation we promoted within the context of this project is best described in the preamble of the "Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life":

"The active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level is essential if we are to build more democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies. Participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society."

(<http://www.salto-youth.net/download/1510/Revised%20European%20Charter%20on%20the%20Participation%20of%20YP.pdf>)

Considering all spheres in which young people are engaged is vital in promoting participation - f. ex. culture, education, sports, leisure and gender.

ICYE, in cooperation with its partner and member organi-

zations, aims at enhancing young people's participation, leadership skills and their engagement in civil society in European Union and Latin American countries.

Within this context the ICYE EVS project on "Participation of Young People" was implemented to enable our volunteers to promote - and learn about - participation in their own voluntary service experience as well as with their commitment supporting the efforts of the respective host organizations.

Summary descriptions of the host projects can be found in Annex I and in the chapter "The EVS Volunteering Experience", in which volunteers comment on the experience in their projects.

They were involved in local development activities run by and for young people, targeting particularly on young people in rural areas or from vulnerable groups.

This enabled the 15 young volunteers to engage in a variety of local hosting projects ranging from youth clubs and youth initiated networks to community development and social work projects, for example theatre, dance, language, but also on environment, conflict resolution, women's rights, the facilitation of thematic workshops, working with people with special needs, etc.

The involvement of international volunteers in these projects stimulated the debate on youth participation and further on enhanced the interest of local host communities around volunteerism and its benefits for social development.

Sometimes it seemed as if the participants did not see the

bigger context in which they were volunteering. It took some reflection to see that developing ideas and their translation into action in a community-based project is a kind of participation.

To support this reflection process, the question: "what is participation?", was on top of the agenda at both, the preparatory-training and the final evaluation meeting in Berlin.



Furthermore during their stay volunteers received additional material i.e. with links and information concerning participation, for ex.:

- <http://www.salto-youth.net/participation/>
- <http://www.salto-youth.net/aboutparticipation/>
- <http://www.salto-youth.net/Participationpublications/>
- <http://www.salto-youth.net/download/1510/Revised%20European%20Charter%20on%20the%20Participation%20of%20YP.pdf>

- [www.coe.int/compass](http://www.coe.int/compass)
- [http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/files/Child\\_and\\_Youth\\_Participation\\_Guide\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/files/Child_and_Youth_Participation_Guide(1).pdf)

After going through the 9 months experience the feedback from both volunteers and host organizations was mostly positive even though volunteers also reported about difficult times and challenges they had to face.

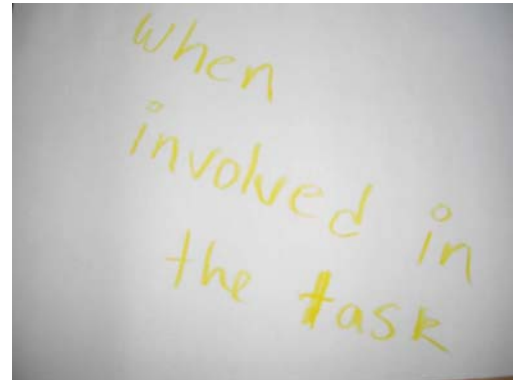
However, all volunteers acknowledged the fact that the project had offered them multiple learning experiences and constant reflections on the realities they and the local host communities were facing. Through the exchange of experiences and the fresh view brought in by the foreign volunteers, numerous new initiatives and ideas for their work and future activities related to the theme evolved.



This fact reflected in the e-mailed reports in which most volunteers commented that they were surprised about being encouraged and able to bring forward their own ideas and initiatives regarding the work. Thus - by participating in this project - the volunteers gained leadership skills, more self-confidence and strengthened their commitment to work for civil society organizations in their own local

communities after returning home.

The host organizations were grateful for the support and input given by the participants and appreciated the intercultural enrichment of their work.



### 3. Preparatory Training in Berlin, 21-24 August, 2008

At the end of August 2007 nine volunteers aged between 18 and 28 arrived from different countries at the Hotel Arizona in Berlin with lots of expectations in their luggage for the preparatory training. Unfortunately due to visa problems some of the participants from Latin America were not able to participate in this meeting and started their EVS a few months later.

The main objectives of this joint three-day preparatory training were:

- to offer opportunities to all volunteers to establish interpersonal relationships and share expectations, fears, hopes towards the intercultural and voluntary service experiences they are about to undergo
- to provide background information and preparatory training on issues related to the work areas of the volunteer's host organisations

#### Topics of the preparatory training:

- intercultural learning
- volunteering in Europe,
- volunteering in the respective hosting countries
- hopes and fears
- details about the single hosting projects where volunteers will be placed,
- information about the European Voluntary Service programme and the relevant EU institutions
- information about the support structure of sending, hosting and coordinating organisations they can rely on in case of problem situations or conflicts

- AXA insurance coverage and procedures
- practical information about the stay abroad.

#### **Some of the methods used during the training:**

#### **Expectations of my EVS – motivation, hopes and fears**

- 1) host project
- 2) language and culture
- 3) living and accommodation
- 4) home



Some examples of the comments made by volunteers:

#### **host project**

##### motivation

- ayudar a los niños
- pasar un poco de mi experiencia
- to work with children and maybe to be able to support them somehow
- to know "how life is", become more independent

##### expectation

- to get to know more about the background of the project
- de poder ser util
- to get really involved in the project work

##### concerns

- not to get along with the children
- also the language



-not to get involved and not to be taken serious

#### capacities

-experience in working with children  
-he trabajado con los niños en las favelas brasileños por 3 meses

#### **language and culture**

##### motivation

-get to know another part of the world not only by watching TV or reading about that  
-being directly in the country with a new language and culture  
-aprender la lengua  
conocer una cultura diferente y totalmente desconocida para mi

##### expectation

- to be able to communicate with the people there without being concerned about the language-barriers  
-to get to know another culture to stay in contact with the people there

##### concerns

-problems in the beginning, to talk with the people because of their language  
- feel like a stranger in the new culture  
-will be difficult for locals to view us as different from other tourists

##### capacities

-open minded  
-curious

#### **living situation/ accommodation**

##### motivation

-aprender a vivir con poco y en modo más simple  
-to adapt  
-integration in the population in the easier way

##### expectation

-living with a host family could be difficult. I expect life to be very different to home. I am hoping that like last year my family is open and caring  
-place to put my things  
-be treated as a family member

##### concerns

- perhaps I won't fit within their daily life or I will not be welcome  
-que no tengo agua caliente para hacer la ducha  
-that my host family values are different from mine

##### capacities

- I lived in many different settings, so not too much to worry.... flexible  
-exchanging information about the different cultures



#### **home**

##### motivation

-new career direction  
-widened horizons  
-modo de pensar

##### expectation

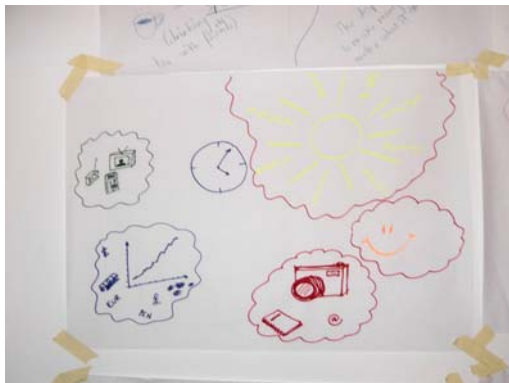
-will be difficult to fit in again

##### concerns

-to be dissatisfied when 'home' after return

**What do I want to take to my host country? What do I want to leave at home?**

The volunteers were given the task to draw at least three things, habits, etc. in each category. Then the discussion turned around cultural differences between the host and sending countries and how volunteers were expecting to be able to deal with them.



**What do I think about conflicts?**

What is a conflict?

The volunteers take a stand on a scale from 0% to 100% depending on the level of agreement with the following sentences:

- I enjoy dealing with conflicts!
- Whenever it is possible I try to avoid conflicts!
- etc.



This was followed by a role play-session. The participants received rolecards with descriptions of real life situations in their host project, host family which could lead to conflicts. After each role play a discussion took place and volunteers and trainers exchanged their opinions on how each situation should be dealt with.

This was followed by an explanation on the support persons / organizations the volunteers could rely on during the EVS project in case they could not

resolve problematic situations or conflicts on their own. Finally a list of frequently asked questions concerning financial and practical matters was gone through and participants were encouraged to ask for clarification whenever needed.

**Trading Values** - activity on different value systems (in: T-kit No. 4 Intercultural Learning, [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net))

After a short introduction, each participant received 8 cards with different values. The participants were asked to trade the values gathering the values they find most important for themselves. After a certain time the trading stopped and participants holding similar value-card got together in groups and discussed, what they have in common, where these values come from, etc.



### **Cooperation, Participation and Communication**

Flying eggs- activity about teamwork, participation and communication

The participants worked in groups of 4 or 5 using sheets of paper, adhesive tape, drinking straws, a string, balloons and a egg. They were not allowed to talk and the task was to create a safe packing for the egg so that it can be thrown out of a window at the 3rd floor and it should land safely.





It worked: Both eggs did land safely!

### And finally: the **evaluation**

Volunteers commented on the outcome of the preparatory training as follows:

They appreciated this transition between home and host country very much. It meant to have three intense days to prepare oneself knowing that the experience is about to start. It was a possibility to reflect and share expectations, fears,

motivations, with other participants.

The sharing with an international group was enriching and fostered intercultural learning, particularly the fact that Europeans could learn from Latin Americans about life and culture in Latin America and vice versa. This intense learning experience was seen as a good preparation for the volunteers who immediately after the meeting continued their journey to their respective European and Latin American hosting countries.

The volunteers emphasized that after the meeting they felt more certain about their decision to participate in EVS, as the meeting had provided them with important information about the project setup and the support they could count on during their service.



## See you in 9 months...



## **...again in Berlin!**

## **4. The nine - month Voluntary Service Experience**

### **a) First impressions**

#### **Ana - Bolivian volunteer in Italy**

.....nos han dado indicaciones para manejarnos en la ciudad, para las compras, para el bus y eso, para mi todo es nuevo porque en Bolivia muchas cosas se hacen de diferente manera, yo siempre estoy atenta y me gusta preguntar todo, .....

....te aseguro que estoy aprovechando cada minuto del dia en el trabajo y en el tiempo libre, fue un viaje larrrrgo pero vale la pena.

#### **Jule - German volunteer in Bolivia**

So I will start with the absolutely beginning...

At the beginning when I arrived I had so much problems with the height...I felt dizzy, had a deep headache, had a sick feeling and more :( so the first days I stayed in my bed... but my hostfamily took care of me!!!

#### **Linda - German volunteer in Brazil**

Ich habe inzwischen schon 3 Monate in Porto Alegre verbracht und die Zeit verging so schnell, dass ich jedes Mal selbst überrascht bin, wenn ich mir das bewusst mache.

Aber das ist für mich ein sehr gutes Zeichen, denn es bedeutet, dass ich mich wohl fühle, beschäftigt und vor allem glücklich und zufrieden bin.

Die Entscheidung zu treffen und vor allem die Chance dafür zu bekommen, 9 Monate im Ausland zu verbringen, ist das Beste was

mir passieren konnte. Ich bekomme hier die Möglichkeit jeden Tag etwas Neues zu erfahren, zu lernen und zu erkunden.

Ich kann das brasilianische Portugiesisch direkt vor Ort lernen, was es viel leichter und spaßiger macht.

Mein Portugiesisch ist derzeit schon recht gut. Ich kann schon sehr viel verstehen und ausdrücken kann ich mich auch.

Aber natürlich lerne ich dennoch jeden Tag etwas Neues dazu.

Ich lerne so viele neue Menschen kennen und bin überrascht von der Gastfreundlichkeit und Vertrautheit zu Fremden.



#### **Giovanni - Brazilian volunteer in Lithuania**

Well, I don't have much free time. Well, my experience here is easy. Because, I don't speak English very good and Lithuanian either, but I have studied and I study very much, this is the most difficult for me in this moment, but I have to manage it.

#### **Fernanda - Equadorian volun- teer in Lithuania**

...estoy bien mi primera impresion de Lituania es que estaba cubierta de nieve para mi fue nuevo porque en Berlin no esta nevando y me sorprendi mucho

... post. hace mucho frio y hay pocas horas de luz.

...

Mi primera impresion de Lituania fue sorpresa: porque vi desde el avion que todo estaba absolutamente blanco, fue mi primera vista de la ciudad cubierta completamente de nieve. Experimenté el frio que es normal aqui en este país baltico, pero con mucha ropa es soportable.

### **Irita - Estonian volunteer in Bolivia**

I have also communicated with AXA, because I was bitten by monkey and need lots of injections against rabies. I guess I tend to learn in a hard way :).

### **Sophie - British volunteer in the Dominican Republic**

The Dominican Republic has been quite surprising. They have a huge love affair with the United States as there is a huge number of Dominicans residing there. Therefore we are not British or Polish but 'Americanas' as we are extranjeras! Salcedo is a very friendly, sunny and lively town but sadly it seems to have very little knowledge or stimulation from the rest of the world. So at present we are learning Spanish as fast as we can and picking avocados from the tree in our garden with glee, and hoping we can continue with our integration here which so far has been fast!

### **Abelina - Austrian volunteer in Ecuador**

Die einzige Barriere die noch zu überwinden ist, ist die Sprache! wir haben einen sehr guten Sprachkurs aber mir fehlt einfach die Zeit zum lernen, wegen "work" und so.



...

I am living and volunteering in Ecuador since 6 months now.

Before I arrived in Ecuador, I tried not to expect something special. Of course I knew it was a third-world-country, so I expected poverty - but still- when I arrived I was totally surprised. I was really shocked by the obvious poverty, which exists here.

The first thing I saw, when we left the airport in Quito, were children performing feats at traffic lights, hoping to get some money before they turn green. Little boys, following every person, which is wearing leather shoes and trying to get them polished for some change.

What also stroke me in my first month here was, that everybody looks at you. Men, women, children. You are white - may have blue eyes - don't speak Spanish that well - and look rich - the perfect definition of a gringo.

At first I really felt uncomfortable and I could feel that I was a stranger. But as time goes by, you get used to it, you learn the language and you learn to adapt.



**Diana - Polish volunteer in the Dominican Republic**

I am fine, really fine! Dominican Republic is beautiful! People very very friendly! It's been two months since I came here and I can say I feel like settled down already! I love my apartment, have friends, know the neighbours and my neighbourhood.

I've been already to a few places like Higüey, Santo Domingo, Jarabacoa ...

....

It's my first time in developing country, so for me it's been a challenge to get used to poor conditions like for example constant problems with electricity, running water etc. It's frustrating but possible to overcome! :)

## **b) Host Family / Living Situation**

### **Linda - German volunteer in Brazil**

Ich hab eine extrem nette Gastfamilie und inzwischen schon sehr gute Freunde gefunden. Ich wohne in einer nicht sehr reichen Gegend, was ich vorteilhaft finde, da ich alle Facetten Brasiliens sehen möchte. Ich fühle mich sehr wohl und von Heimweh kann hier nicht die Rede sein!!

.....

Nette Menschen sind auch in meiner brasilianischen Familie.

Ich habe sie schon in mein Herz geschlossen und bin sehr dankbar für ihre Unterstützung, Geduld und Hilfe. Ich fühle mich wirklich sehr wohl, obwohl ich in einer armen Gegend wohne. Meine Gegend heisst Santa Teresa und ist eine Vila. Hier in Rio Grande do Sul, also im Süden Brasiliens, benutzt man nicht das Wort Favela, sondern Vila. Ich wohne in einem Häuschen und habe mein eigenes Zimmerchen. Die Nachbarschaft ist sehr arm.

### **Selene - Italian volunteer in Ecuador**



La vida aqui me gusta mucho, tengo muchos amigos, una

familia maravillosa. Me encanta todo.



### **Irita - Estonian volunteer in Bolivia**

My first month was hard, because my family didn't treat me very nicely. They didn't show me around and didn't even talk to me. I had no idea why they acted like this, and that made it worse.

...

I told the Bolivian ICYE office about my problem. They promised to solve it, but here Bolivia things happen very slowly...

After that I had to live with this family almost three weeks more.

... On the same time they never talked about the problem, they didn't want to communicate at all. So, because of the situation in my family, to a very different culture and to typical problems at work (no assignments and guiding, nothing to do etc) I experienced a culture shock.

Feeling lonely amongst people, who should be supportive, is quite hard.

.....

About conflicts: The situation with my family wasn't even a real conflict. They just didn't talk to me much, didn't ask questions, didn't show me around and usually I had to eat alone. I didn't feel welcomed at all. After first week I told about it to

local ICYE people. Next day my family was more open and friendlier, they seemed relieved. I was happy, but also afraid that it happened because ICYE had talked to them. That was true, ICYE had promised them, that I'll move out.

.....

I also had a nice meeting with the woman who rents a house. She even agreed to lower the rent 20 dollars. ... I will meet with ICYE coordinator Carmen Rosa today. I think I'll move out this week. The place I go is quite safe.

....

Vivo en el mismo lugar, por suerte no tuve que mudarme. Me gusta aquí.

### **Ana - Bolivian volunteer in Italy**

....vivo con una chica alemana asi que nos comunicamos en ingles por el momento mientras empezamos nuestras clases de italiano.....

### **Giovanni - Brazilian volunteer in Lithuania**

I live with two volunteers, one girl is from Germany and the other is from France. They are very nice.

### **Fernanda - Equadorian volunteer in Lithuania**

Las voluntarias con quien estoy compartiendo la casa son muy amables y he tenido suerte por que trabajo con Margarida una voluntaria con quien tambien comparto el departamento por que ella me guia y me conduce cada dia a la casa y al trabajo por que yo aun no conozco bien esta ciudad. Pero por lo menos ya se llegar sola a casa. Aun no tengo mas novedades por que son poco dias que asisto al trabajo y ricien

hoy conoci a mi profesora de lituano.....

....

Vivo en Kaunas en un departamento muy intercultural porque comparto con Maggi de Portugal, Anna de Alemania, Amelie de Francia, que ahora son mis compañeras y amigas.

### **Abelina - Austrian volunteer in Ecuador**

In der host family passt auch alles!

Hier sind sehr viele andere Volunteers von ICYE, mit denen ich mich sehr gut verstehe - dieses Wochenende fahren wir gemeinsam nach Baños - einem kleinen, netten "Ferienort" 3h von Quito entfernt.



### c) The EVS Volunteering Experience

#### Linda - German volunteer in Brazil

Die Arbeit ist sehr interessant, ich fühle mich sehr gut in dem Projekt und macht großen Spaß! Bald werde ich mit meinen Projekten beginnen. Ich werde Englisch- und Tanzunterricht geben. Mit der Sprache geht es immer weiter voran, jetzt wo ich Brasilianische Freunde habe, ist es noch einfacher!



...

Mein Projekt, also meine Arbeit ist direkt 4 Häuser weiter und unterstützt arme Familien. Die Kinder und Jugendlichen bekommen hier täglich Essen, ab und an Kleidung, können hier ausgiebig spielen und lernen diverse Dinge, wie den Umgang mit Computern, Capoeira, Theaterdarstellungen etc. kennen. Diese Stiftung finde ich großartig und arbeite sehr gerne mit den Kindern und Jugendlichen zusammen. Ich habe sehr viel Spass und es erfüllt mich sehr hier helfen zu können oder einfach ein Teil der Stiftung zu sein. Natürlich war es anfangs schwierig durch mein Sprachdefizit, aber inzwischen läuft es ganz gut und gebe auch schon Unterrichtsstunden in Englisch und Tanzen. Geduld

muss ich hier wirklich an den Tag bringen, denn die Kinder wollen zwar einerseits Englisch sprechen können, aber das dies Lernen mit sich bringt, haben sie wahrscheinlich nicht bedacht. Sie sprechen nur ihre Muttersprache und konnten es anfangs nicht verstehen, warum ich ihre Sprache nicht sprechen kann. Für sie ist Brasilien die Welt!

Bevor ich wieder zurück fliege würde ich ihnen gerne etwas Englisch beigebracht haben und das mit Spass verbinden. Mein Tanzunterricht ist so wie ich es mir vorgestellt habe und bringt jedem Teilnehmer sehr viel Freude.

Die Kinder nehmen alles nicht so ernst, deswegen ist der Englischunterricht bis jetzt die größte Herausforderung für mich. Um mein Ziel zu erreichen brauche ich nur Geduld.

Unterstützung bekomme ich im Projekt von meiner Kontaktperson Kênia, meiner Gastmutter Nadia, die auch ab und zu in der Stiftung arbeitet und von den anderen Lehrern, die dort arbeiten. Wenn ich Fragen habe, kann ich immer mit jemanden sprechen und es wird sich immer Zeit für mich genommen.



Welche Arbeit ich verrichte, entscheide ich allein. Ich habe sehr viel Entscheidungsfreiheit und werde in keinsten Weise eingeschränkt. Meine Projekte,

meine Anwesenheit und meine Ideen werden in meinem Projekt sehr geschätzt und respektiert. Einige Kinder habe ich schon sehr lieb gewonnen und ich denke im Mai 2008 werde ich Schwierigkeiten bekommen, das alles hier (für immer) zu verlassen. Aber bis dahin sind es ja noch 6 Monate!



.....  
Ich mache zur Zeit noch einen weiteren Sprachkurs, deswegen bin ich nicht so lange in meinem Projekt.  
Zudem werden gerade neue Gruppen gebildet und neue Kinder erwartet. Meine Kontaktperson im Projekt ist dabei mir Zeiten zu organisieren! Ich assistiere derzeit und helfe in den Informatikstunden.  
Ich warte auf meine Tanzstunden, die ich eigentlich schon lange beginnen wollte!  
Naja, dauert eben alles etwas länger hier :)

### **Irita - Estonian volunteer in Bolivia**

Now I'm working all day until seven o'clock, I have no time to

see anything else. I feel that those three weeks that I have for vacations is very little. Bolivia is a big country, travelling to another city takes all day and night. With those three weeks I could see just a southern part of Bolivia. And if my friends come to visit me, I have no time to travel by my own.

...

I had a conversation with my organisation's director and it seems that things are going to improve. I offered them some things I could do and they were nicely surprised. I still have to work in the cafe, but now I can also work in the streets with children and I will work as a photographer of the organisation, too. So, this time I managed to solve my problem.

....

Trabajo: Mosoj Yan, donde me mandó EVS, no es exactamente mi lugar. Todavía no me incluyen, no he aprendido mucho y no siento que soy parte del equipo. ... Pero está bien. Ya no tengo que trabajar mucho tiempo allá. ...  
Intento hacerles una colección de fotos para usar en los paneles, libros, trípticos y folletos. No tienen ningunas fotos que tienen afecto emocional, pero me parece que las necesitan para propaganda y presentaciones.  
Otra organización ITEI me gusta más. Puedo aprender y siempre me incluyen.

### **Giovanni - Brazilian Volunteer in Lithuania**

In my project I have to work with orphans / children in the age from 9 to 16 years. I have taught sports. For example: football, basketball and volleyball. In my future I'll intend to teach Capoeira and dance from Brazil.

....

My project is going on in the same way, when it is possible to play some games with the children I play and when it is not possible I stay with them and we are just talking and watching television or DVD.

### **Jule - German volunteer in Bolivia**

Since then I had a lot to do... All the volunteers had to go to the hospital, to the police and to a further seminar. After that I went to my project where a further seminar took place too. In between I have my language courses... But all in all I feel very well here... the city is amazing, my family is so nice, I have a lot of fun with the other volunteers and I like my project too... but it is very strenuous... in Berlin I felt scared about my project and my tasks but now it is totally different... I have a lot of fun with my little girls and they are so open and help me to learn the language...)

...

Por lo tanto he encontrado muchos nuevos amigos en mi proyecto y además otros voluntarios en La Paz. Me encanta mi proyecto, estoy muy feliz aquí y no quiero pensar en el día de mi vuelta. Por eso paso todo el tiempo posible en ALALAY y a veces estoy al sábado o domingo allá.

Trabajo en la cabaña de mujeres y mis niñas tienen 4-9 años. Por la mañana me levanto a las 5.30 y empiezo mi trabajo a las 6.00. Tengo que despertar a las chicas, ayudar a vestir las, preparar el desayuno y después acompañar a las pequeñas al colegio. De 8.00 a 13.00 puedo descansar normalmente. Después de mi pausa recojo el almuerzo, pongo la mesa y juego con las chicas.

De 14.00 a 15.00 hay almuerzo y más tarde las ayudo con las tareas. Cuando hay tiempo podemos jugar afuera o vemos tele. A las 17.00 recojo la cena y preparo el té. Desde 18.00 tengo tiempo libre. pero a veces juego con los chicos en la cancha. A las 21.00 -más o menos- estoy en mi cabaña con los otros voluntarios.

Creo que tengo una relación muy buena con los niños y no solamente con mis niñas sino con los otros niños también. Aprendo tocar la zampoña con la ayuda de los chicos y está bromeado. Para mí he conseguido mucho. Tengo buen contacto con los niños, tienen confianza en mí y disfrutamos. Y cuando vuelvo después del fin de semana unas chicas corren. Están radiante de mí... Eso es el mejor para mí. Quiero mantener esta relación y espero que la comunicación se va a mejorar durante el tiempo. Aunque está bien. Lo que me falta aquí es tiempo... para estar con los niños en ALALAY y para visitar muchos lugares en Bolivia. Pero siempre hay cosas para hacer y por eso es bien difícil.

.....

Cuando llegamos a ALALAY podríamos probar 1-2 cabañas y después elegimos. No nos han dicho nuestras tareas en la cabaña. Teníamos que descubrir nuestras tareas. Entretanto unos de los voluntarios han recibido un plan por el trabajo de la oficina.

Creo que mi trabajo está respetado y que las educadoras necesitan la ayuda de los voluntarios. He dibujado unas pinturas por mi cabaña y han aceptado esas.

A veces no me gustan los métodos de la educación en mi proyecto. Son muy duros, estrictos y religiosos. Para mí es extraño o nuevo con la religión,

pero tal vez me voy a acostumbrar.

...

So zum Projekt... Das ist halt an sich ein religiöses Projekt und die Kinder haben so keine Wahl ob sie religiös sein wollen oder nicht, wenn sie ins Projekt eintreten... Es wird halt immer am Sonntag in die Kirche gegangen und immer gebetet vor dem Essen...

Ist halt ziemlich ungewohnt...!

....

### **dia del niño**



Sometimes there were some performances in the school of my kids. So I took them to school and spent the whole day with them there. The parents of the other kids in the school were there too. I felt like these are my kids and I really wanted to see them dancing or performing and give them support. It was really nice and funny and showed me another world which I had never seen before.

### **actividades afuera**



My project is situated in the countryside, so it was easy to go out with the smallest kids and do some activities when they had free time. Normally we went to the park close to the project where you can find a playground and a pool. Every time it was a lot of fun for us because it was something special and the kids were very happy. They could play in the pool and we had a picnic for example.



### **promocion**

When the older kids finished the school their parents came and accompanied them to the handing over of the certificates. A boy of my project asked me to be his godmother and so I accompanied him. I was so proud of my kids and so proud to be the godmother of the boy.

It was a very nice ceremony, personal and very solemn in a way which I didn't know from Germany. After the promotion all the teachers, parents, godmothers and the kids who finished school sat in a small room and ate a typical dish called fricase.



### en mi cabaña

For me a special moment every day was to bring the kids to bed. I worked with the smallest kids in the age of 4 to 8. So sometimes it happened that my girls or especially the youngest girl (picture) called me mom which affected me a lot. I felt so responsible for them. Furthermore some of the girls prayed before they went to bed and for me it was indescribable to see a 7 years old girl praying for me and to god to say thanks for the food they received.

Although I worked in the cabaña of the girls I had contact to the other kids too. We made a lot of jokes and played in the evening together. I could help the older kids in their daily work, for example helping in the kitchen, baking bread or tailoring something to sell.



### Ana - Bolivian volunteer in Italy

....de todas formas esta semana fue muy importante para mi porque inicie mi trabajo y ahora me siento útil y parte de algo importante, ya tengo pequenas responsabilidades que sé que aunque pequenas tienen un gran valor, la gente que trabaja en el "Fogio di Primavera" es muy buena y accesible, ademas de paciente con el idioma y muy gentil, sobre todo Sara Zancanela que fue la persona que nos ha ubicada en el departamente y en el trabajo, ....

### Abelina - Austrian volunteer in Ecuador



Das Projekt hab ich mir ein bisschen anders vorgestellt, es hieß ja ich werde Kinder unterrichten - meine Arbeit ist aber eher in Kinderunterhaltung - es ist eher schwer 3-4jährigen Kindern (ohne die Sprache gut zu beherrschen) etwas in einer anderen Sprache beizubringen, aber so wie es ist passt es eigentlich schon. Es ist einfach nur sehr, sehr anstrengend...aber ja :)

...

The start at my work place was also a bit hard.

I'm working in a kindergarden with 3 to 4 year-old children. At first, I expected not to work only



with little children – I thought I would do some activities with older kids too.



As I didn't have any experience in working with children and my Spanish hadn't developed yet, it certainly was hard to communicate with them – and of course with the teachers there. Since I couldn't really say what I thought and what I wanted to say, and everything was so new, I didn't try to change the way the teachers were handling some things with the kids. So I just adapted without thinking if this way handling the children would be educationally valuable/ effective.

Telling a 4-year-old child, who just hit another child, "sit here and think about what you did", just can't be effective in any way. But this also developed - now I can express myself better and I also tried to get a change in the way of treating the children – by making up rules for everyone who is spending time with the kids.

I also evolved myself in the work with the children – I definitely improved my patience and my way setting boundaries.

Now, since I am able to communicate with the kids better, there are situations, when a kid would simply tell you, that his mother hit him yesterday, or his father came home last night –

totally drunk – and had a fight with his mother.

And you would just be sitting there, being shocked by what you just heard and by the way how the child said it – without any emotion. Sitting there and not knowing what to say or to do. The only thing to do, I realized, is to give every child all the love you have. Because I can imagine, this is a thing they rarely get at home.

By living and working in such a little community like Santa Ines, you gain insight in some peoples lives here and you get an idea of how it could be living here as an Ecuadorian.

I'm really thankful for this experience and even though my volunteering here turned out to be totally different from what I expected it to be, I actually like it exactly the way it is.

I couldn't think of a better experience.



### **Fernanda - Ecuadorian Volunteer in Lithuania**

Ahora estoy trabajando en un centro de personas discapacitadas. Es un trabajo muy enriquecedor porque esas personas saben muchas cosas y cada dia te dan una leccion de vida .

.....

Aqui por el momento todo bien. En mi proyecto las personas son

muy agradables. El idioma es muy difícil y concentrarme por que debo estudiar a la vez lituano y ingles. Pero bien mis compañeras voluntarias me ayudan a estudiar.

....

En mi proyecto comparto cada dia con jovenes y adultos con discapacidad fisica y otros con deficiencia mental - son personas muy amables. Con ellos aprendido lo importante que es ayudar a otros que lo necesitan.

Margarida y yo trabajamos en este centro. Les ayudamos a comer, conversamos, hacemos actividades nuevas como jugar ajedrez. Ahora aprovechamos la nieve para hacer muñecos de nieve. Son personas muy colaboradoras

....En Kaunas mi organizacion se llama DEINETA somos 13 voluntarios. Alemanes, Franceses en su mayoria .

....

Ya estoy acostumbrada a mis labores diarias: como en mi trabajo y en mi casa, estoy aprendiendo poco a poco el lituano. Tengo una excelente profesora que tambien fue voluntaria en Colombia.

### **Diana - Polish volunteer in the Dominican Republic**

I am working at Casa de la Juventud, a center for young people in the province of Salcedo. At the moment I'm preparing the program for the workshops that I am going to run in the near future for the local schools. I'm very pleased that I am working on the topics I am the most interested at i.e. sustainable food and consumption.



...

Ahora mismo estoy muy ocupada. Tengo mis responsabilidades con mi curso/taller sobre consumo sostenible y estoy preparando una propuesta para crear un eco club. Para jóvenes que quieren participar en este proyecto organizamos la excursión a montaña, camisetas verdes etc. Me encanta mucho este trabajo y me gustaría estar aquí más tiempo...





### **Selene - Italian Volunteer in Ecuador**

Aquí en Ecuador todo super bien. Mi proyecto me gusta mucha, tenemos muchas actividades diferentes: reforestación, educación ambiental, estudio de nuevas tecnologías alternativas, enseñar en las escuelas, cuidar granjas orgánicas.

### **Leonardo - Brazilian volunteer in Spain**

Bueno, ya hace 7 meses que estoy aquí, mi trabajo me gusta mucho, a mi me encanta trabajar con niños. También ayudo al ayuntamiento de Castuera en la Universidad Popular, a mi me gusta mucho este trabajo, porque estoy trabajando con la parte de cultura, exposiciones, películas, fiestas culturales y estoy aprendiendo mucho de la cultura española y también aprendiendo muchas cosas en cuestión de formación, muchas cosas que puedo utilizar después, a mi me pone lleno de ideas para un futuro...

Bueno lo que no me gusta es que tienen personas aquí que no saben trabajar en equipo y piensan mucho en sí misma, pero eso es la realidad de hoy, son pocas las personas que saben trabajar en equipo..

He logrado más experiencia con jóvenes y niños, un poco más de

responsabilidad, aprender a trabajar con personas discapacitadas (JEDES = juegos extremeños de discapacitados), he aprendido también a trabajar más en equipo, he aprendido muchas cosas sobre la organización de eventos, también he logrado con la cuestión de la paciencia, con la cuestión de estar lejos de casa, he logrado en hacer comidas típicas de España..jejeje..

He cambiado mucho la forma de pensar, pensamientos, he cambiado el modo de ver las cosas.

Lo que me gustaría lograr mucho más sería la RESPONSABILIDAD, creo que eso sería genial, responsabilidad en todos los sentidos, he logrado en ese aspecto pero quería lograr más, responsabilidad con las cosas de casa. Eso es lo que me falta...

Tengo mucho apoyo aquí...Tengo personas que me apoyan todo el tiempo, tengo personas que son como padres para mí... Tiene 3 chicas que son responsables por mí aquí y ellas me están ayudando mucho... Estoy aprendiendo mucho con ellas..

También hay un hombre que trabajo con el que estoy aprendiendo muchísimas cosas con él.. Todo que he aprendido hasta hoy es trabajo de estas personas, he aprendido y estoy aprendiendo mucho con ellos.. también he aprendido y estoy aprendiendo con mi compañero de piso, me enseñan muchas cosas.

Los desafíos para mí van ser cuando yo me vaya, dejar aquí todos los vínculos que he creado aquí, he conocido muchísima gente y he echo muchos amigos. Os voy echar mucho de menos. Aquí la gente me ha acogido muy bien, me han tratado genial...

Mi contacto con los empleados es genial, yo no tengo problemas con nadie, tiene personas que no me gustan pero las trato igual a todos y me llevo bien con ellas...No he tenido ningún problema aquí..Con el vecindario muy bien...el vecino de arriba que no me gusta, esta siempre borracho y siempre diciendo cosas a la gente, pero eso yo comprendo que es una enfermedad y que el necesita ayuda.

Mi trabajo es muy respetado y mis ideas lo mismo.. A mi me gustaría cambiar la cuestión del trabajo en equipo pero eso no es posible, porque la gente que trabaja conmigo ya no va mas a trabajar aquí, termina su contrato, a ver si es posible con quien va entrar nuevo... Bueno en estas próximas semanas, tengo planeado mis clases de capoeira, mis clases de Portugués.. También tengo planeado echar mis vacaciones ...jejeje...

Mi vida aquí esta estupenda, a mi me gustaría quedar aquí, pero echo mucho de menos a mi FAMILIA, mis amigos y también mi ciudad..Y también si me quedo, será muy difícil que venga otra persona de Brasil en este proyecto...

I like my stay in Brasil very much! I adore my project in Cesmar, but till now I've spent these two months more for adaptaion, learning a language than making a contribution I would like to make. It's very big and diverse project and my tutor is very open and supportive to all the new initiatives volunteers are offering. The teachers and social workers are so creative, have lots of faith in what they are doing and just are great people!! I am attaching some pictures from Semana Consciencia Negra and dance presentation of some pupils in favela.



### **Ginte - Lithuanian volunteer in Brazil**



### **Sophie - British volunteer in the Dominican Republic**

The last 7 weeks have been exhausting. The first two weeks were a period of introduction for us. So lots of shadowing and new names to remember. Afterwards things slowed down rather too much, but following a meeting yesterday it seems as if some needed initial adjustments have been made and we can now look

forward to assisting the work they do here which is very interesting.

...



My time here hasn't been the easiest, and to be honest a lot of things here have been a real struggle. I am at the moment trying to gather some momentum to see me through the last part of the programme. Work wise there is not a great deal to report, I have been running workshops on conflict resolution with the local Fortaleza (Prison), having now worked with all of them however I will be starting to do the same programme in some high-schools very soon and hopefully filling my timetable a little more in the following weeks!



#### **d) (Differing) Cultural Encounters / Cultural Adaption Process**

##### **Diana - Polish volunteer in the Dominican Republic**

I take Spanish classes 3 sometimes 4 times a week. My teacher is a really nice young woman who surprisingly turned out to be a judge, working in a local court of justice! My Spanish is getting better and better and it gives me a great deal of satisfaction! But at the same time I feel that my English and Polish are deteriorating!!

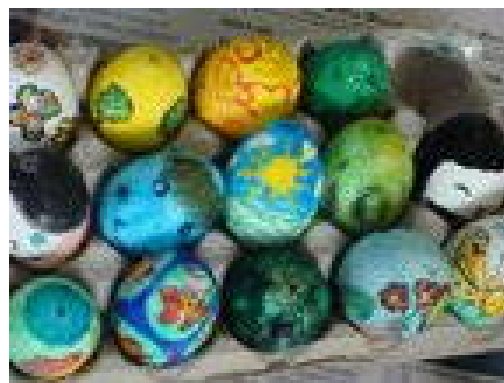
.....

Me gusta mucho la vida en Republica Dominicana! Especialmente ahora, porque puedo comunicarme mejor con otras personas. Cuando llegué a Salcedo yo no sabía nada español. Gracias a eso puedo disfrutar más mi vida aquí y mi trabajo también.



....

Ayer comenzó Semana Santa, pero en Salcedo no hay algo especial para celebrar esto. Mañana en mi oficina vamos a pintar los huevos. Espero que mis compañeros disfruten esto mucho!



##### **Fernanda - Equadorian volunteer in Lithuania**

He tenido la oportunidad de compartir tradiciones lituanas como bailes tradicionales la cena de navidad, juegos, comida.

##### **Linda - German volunteer in Brazil**

Freunde habe ich auch schon gefunden. Ich bin selbst überrascht, dass ich das so schnell sagen kann und sehr froh darüber.

Durch sie habe ich schon sehr viele schöne Tage gehabt und Brasilien von der jugendlichen Seite aus sehen können.

Brasilianer sind glückliche Menschen, teilen gerne Erfahrungen und laden Freunde oder Ausländer, wie mich, gerne zu sich nach Hause ein. Sie wollen ihr Land von der besten Seite zeigen und versuchen einen schönen Aufenthalt zu ermöglichen. Das gelingt immer mit viel Spaß, Caipirinhas oder/und Chimarrao (das Nationalgetränk von Rio Grande do Sul), Gesprächen und Fußball :)

.....Brasilien ist ein wirklich atemberaubendes Land mit ganz unterschiedlichen Facetten. Ich war schon oft sprachlos, ausgelöst durch Brasiliens Schönheit. Andererseits war ich auch sprachlos durch die hier

überall vorkommenden beiden Extreme: Armut und Reichtum. Man kann bildlich gesprochen ein Bein in einer Favela und das andere Bein gleichzeitig in einem mit Mauern und Wächtern geschützten Gebiet für Traumhäuser haben.

Dass ich das mit eigenen Augen sehen kann, finde ich sehr gut.

Positiv finde ich auch, dass ich in einer dieser "Vilas" wohne. Ich sehe das wirkliche Leben, die Probleme Brasiliens, die Armut und werde davor nicht geschützt. Ich will und kann davor nicht die Augen verschliessen.

Ich habe mich sehr gut eingelebt und gewöhne mich zur Zeit an den brasilianischen Sommer und die dazugehörige Feuchtigkeit.

Duschen ist hier eines der erleichternsten und schönsten Dinge am Tag :)

Ich freue mich schon auf das erste Weihnachtsfest, welches ich nicht in eisiger Kälte verbringen werde. Das soll heißen, dass ich den Winter in Berlin nicht sehr vermisse, auch da ich weiss, dass ich noch genug Möglichkeiten haben werde um ihn mitzuerleben. Das Einzige was durch den Sommer hier verloren geht, ist meine Weihnachtsstimmung. Ich muss mir hier immer wieder vor Augen halten, dass bald Weihnachten ist. Jedes Mal wenn ich in einem Shoppingcenter bin, kommt es mir so absurd vor, wenn ich Tannenbäume,

Weihnachtsmänner und eben den ganzen Weihnachtsschmuck sehe, den ich mit Kälte, Schnee, einer heißen Schokolade zum Aufwärmen und Dunkelheit verbinde. Aber es ist sehr schön nicht frieren zu müssen!

Weiterhin plane ich meinen Reisemonat im Januar und bin sehr gespannt auf den berühmten Karneval in Brasilien, den ich in

Salvador verbringen werde.

Samba wurde mir schon gezeigt und Capoeira habe ich auch schon ausprobiert.

Dass Samba sehr wichtig für Brasilien und die Menschen hier ist, bemerkt man auch anhand des eigenen Verbes, dass es für das Samba tanzen gibt :Eu sambo (Ich tanze Samba).

Ich entdecke jeden Tag irgendetwas Neues, das mich überrascht, beeindruckt oder umhaut und genau das ist das Schöne daran hier zu sein!

.....

Mit mir ist soweit alles in bester Ordnung. Ich habe meinen Reisemonat sehr genossen und bin der Meinung, dass das die beste Zeit meines bisherigen Lebens war. Ich würde am Liebsten wieder zurück nach Salvador und den Karneval noch 'mal feiern :) Es war wirklich traumhaft! Wieder zurück in Porto Alegre hat sich der Alltag wieder eingestellt. Ich besuche einen weiteren Sprachkurs, der mir echt großen Spaß macht. Meine Arbeit mit den Kindern und Jugendlichen ist echt super, jetzt wo ich die Sprache schon besser beherrsche. Ich werde aufgenommen, wie ihresgleichen!

### **Abelina - Austrian volunteer in Ecuador**



...

aber mittlerweile geht es mir echt

gut hier in Ecuador - ich fühle mich "wie zu Hause", habe so viele tolle Menschen kennen gelernt, mein Spanisch könnte etwas besser sein (finde ich...) und obwohl ich noch 3 Monate hier bin, weiß ich dass die so schnell vergehen werden und im Moment will ich gar nicht wieder nach Österreich!

...

You start to like the exciting bus drives in Reaggeton-playing, full-filled buses, with a man standing in the door, yelling "Suba, suba! Venga, venga!" to get more people on the bus. When you finally grabbed a seat you're lucky because you don't have to concentrate on not falling from one side of the bus to the other. Because the way how the bus-driver is driving down this "some-kind-of-road" just can't be healthy...

You get used to hear Reaggeton at every corner you pass by, you're not surprised by the overflowing number of dogs anymore. At one point you just start to live here – with the traffic, with the dogs, with the language, with the people. But my start into my "new" life in Ecuador was actually a bit difficult.

Mainly because I couldn't speak any Spanish when I came to live in my host-family. So the contact and communication with them was kind of rare at the beginning. Me, trying to say something in Spanish, looking for the words in the dictionary lying in front of me, hoping my host-family would have enough patience, stuttering some Spanish words, and then not even being able to understand the answer. At the start I really felt like an idiot, but as the Spanish classes showed their results and my Spanish-

skills developed it all started to get better.

I would consider the time around Christmas as "the best time" with my host-family. I started to have great conversations with my host-mother, we baked a cake together, I helped her to cook Christmas dinner, and now, living and working in Santa Ines (that's where I live) feels just like home to me.



### **Irita - Estonian volunteer in Bolivia**

Bolivians are very different from what I expected them to be. They don't fit into the conception of stereotypical Latin American. They are much more closed, and that is what makes volunteer's



life here more difficult at the beginning. It is quite easy to feel lonesome (I am sure though, that Silvia will say the same about Estonians.)

...

Mi vida social ha cambiado. Antes siempre estaba en un círculo de otros voluntarios. Como algunas de ellos no querían aprender castellano, sólo teníamos que hablar en inglés. Entonces después de medio año sentí que mi castellano tiene casi el mismo nivel que antes. En trabajo también la gente no es muy educada, entonces no puedo preguntar casi nada sobre el vocabulario.

Decidí que voy a conseguir algunos buenos amigos bolivianos. Durante del último mes he hablado más castellano que inglés, y estoy contenta.

...

He notado, que los voluntarios aquí normalmente no tienen muchos amigos bolivianos. Sin ellos me sentía bastante sola (mentalmente) y podía conversar a fondo con poca gente, normalmente con mi pareja en Estonia.

.....

Así es mi vida aquí en Bolivia, en país donde se puede ver muchas cosas que ya no existen en otros lugares. Eso me encanta, aunque no puedo decir que mi vida aquí es fácil y feliz. Sin embargo estoy contenta, que me mandaron aquí.

### **Giovanni - Brazilian volunteer in Lithuania**

For me it is difficult to communicate and sometimes I miss my country, my family and my girlfriend very much. This is the main problem, but I am going to stay in Lithuania until the end.

...

Well, here everything is ok now, I

like to live here but not a lot. I prefer to live in Brazil because it is so cold here and everything is different.

### **Jule - German volunteer in Bolivia**

What shocked me immediately was the poverty. You will be confronted with it everywhere and anytime!

But what I definitely like are the colourful and joyful fiestas which you could see during the past days...wow...

Furthermore my family did a lot of activities with me... sightseeing-tour across the city, a trip to the mountains with a horse and they took me also to a barbecue with all the family members...so much fun!!! At the moment I would not change my place with anybody else ;)

...

Claro que extraño al invierno de Alemania. Es bien diferente aquí. Hay sol y está caliente. Además no tenía un sentimiento de Navidad. Me faltaban las películas, las canciones y la comida típica de Navidad. Pero está bien...es solamente un invierno sin nieve....esto voy a sobrevivir...es una nueva experiencia y me gusta esto!!!

....

en la panadería



During xmas time the whole

aldeia had to prepare special bread called paneton. Therefore the volunteers helped to prepare more than 2500 panetons for sell them.

Everyday I worked in the bakery with some kids and it was fun not only work. After a few minutes we rubbed the faces of two boys with flour, we ate the candies of the bread or just made jokes.

Also we baked cookies for xmas with the kids which was new for them.

### **Ginte - Lithuanian volunteer in Brazil**

How do I feel about the winter?? I don't miss it!! I just miss Christmas, because when it's hot and sunny, I just can't feel the calm and secret atmosphere of this Festival we have in Lithuania :)

The most difficult thing for me was communication problems in the beginning and adaptation in the family, cause I didn't speak any Portuguese, but now I feel that my English is becoming worse and Portuguese is becoming better!!:)

Speaking about adaptation, the most important thing I have learned until now is 'try to be positive!':)

### **Selene – Italian volunteer in Ecuador**



## 5. Joint Final Evaluation Meeting (Berlin, 18–21 May 2008)

The joint final evaluation activity aimed at:

- assessing the volunteer's intercultural and voluntary service experience;
- drawing lessons learnt for future projects
- discussing ways to maintain relationships established between volunteers, local projects and communities and ways to stay/become active when back home
- providing a space for the sharing of experiences as well as for discussing fears and hopes with regards to the return home

### Beginning of the Final Evaluation Meeting:

The group of volunteers was warmly welcomed by the team with this photo wall, which served also to remind them about how they looked when they left for the EVS project 9 months ago.



### Expectations for the final evaluation meeting

Volunteers were happy about the opportunity to meet again and to have an opportunity to share their experiences with the others. The main expectations expressed by the volunteers were:

- meeting the others and spending time together
- showing to the others what I have done and experienced during my EVS project
- talking about the theme participation of young people related to my voluntary service experience
- preparing myself for the return home and to talk about the insecurities related to that





**Presentation of the projects:**



The volunteers were given the task to prepare a presentation on their voluntary service experience in the respective project covering the following areas:

- Describe your host project! (philosophy and activities of the project)
- main target groups,
- structure of the project
- my main tasks /activities - my main achievements

After 30 Min. of preparation each volunteer his/her project and responded to the questions of the other volunteers, showed photos, flyers and other material collected or prepared during the EVS.



Here are some highlights of the volunteers presentations regarding their main achievements:

- have learnt a new language
- integrated in host project
- knowing how to use "machete"
- got more aware about environmental problems and got hope to be able to overcome them
- learning about tolerance
- learning how to work more autonomous
- being able to work with people with different abilities
- strengthened my feeling of solidarity
- self-confidence
- Feeling accepted
- watching and becoming part of the lives of the girls and the babies in my project - now they know more about the world, they can speak (a little bit) English and even German
- being prepared for working and living in a different country and culture - todo es posible
- ....



### **Poncho – My time in the host country**

1. My good moments/ my achievements
2. My bad moments/ difficulties: How could I deal with them? What could I have done different?
3. What astonishing and surprising situations, that are related to major cultural differences as compared to my home country, did I experience? How did I deal with them?
4. Did I face any major intercultural problems or did I adapt easily? What did I learn?



The participants drew their "poncho", had time for an exchange in pairs and then presented their partner's poncho to the group.



### **Evaluating my EVS project & experience**

This activity was a step-by-step questionnaire leading through all different elements and phases of the EVS project, starting from pre-departure training, to final evaluation meeting and also evaluating the work of all actors in this project including the work /performance of the volunteers themselves.

### **The European Voluntary Service Programme – feedback and recommendations**

In this session volunteers were asked to give feedback and recommendations for the EVS programme as a whole. All volunteers had been very happy about the possibility to participate in this project. However some suggestions about possible improvements were made as follows:

- getting a recognized visa status for EVS volunteers so also the Latin Americans

- have less problems to enter the EU countries
- more support for the preparation before departure and with the language learning
- Possibility to do a follow-up

### Europe!?

Statues showing positive and negative aspects:

The group was divided in two and participants were given the task to discuss the meaning of the European Union for them and positive and negative aspects they can see. They were then asked to express the outcome of their discussion in form of a human statue. This was the introduction to a plenary discussion on the European Union and particularly on relations between the EU and Latin American Countries. Volunteers participated actively in the discussion, mentioning the visa problems for Latin America as one of the negative aspects, acknowledging however the positive impact of youth mobility programmes such as EVS.



### Returning home

The participants were asked to choose a postcard expressing their feelings/thoughts concerning returning home after the nine month volunteering experience. This was a follow-up of an activity we introduced at the preparatory

training regarding their fears and hopes with regards to the life in a different culture. Now the participants were asked to express their feelings, expectations and fears with regards to their return and re-integration back home. This continued with a discussion on the different expectations and perspectives; their own and those from family, friends, colleagues, etc. Connected with this we exchanged suggestions on how to cope with the reverse cultural adaptation process.



and...



Hasta la proxima!  
See you soon!

**Thanks to all who contributed!**

### **On tour in Berlin**



## 6. Conclusions

All in all the project has been an excellent opportunity for the participating volunteers from EU and Latin American countries to put into practice their commitment, to be creative and to take autonomous decisions. These are important steps towards ensuring their future active participation in their own communities and societies.

The experience of the organizers in working with this heterogeneous, multicultural group has also proven, that all young volunteers regardless of their social, cultural or economic background can be led to an increased involvement in the work of their host organizations and can contribute significantly.

The feedback given by volunteers was that the participation in this programme has been very important to their lives, that they learned a lot on professional and personal level and that they are very thankful for having had this opportunity.

During the discussions at the joint final evaluation meeting we had the impression that the group of volunteers had grown together and had become more aware of the value of volunteering, taking initiatives and being an active member of society.

Especially the young adults enhanced their knowledge and shared it with others functioning as multipliers and are now promoting the concepts of volunteering and participation in local communities and in future professional careers.

The long-term effects of this learning experience is best shown using the examples of two volunteers who after returning to their home countries wrote the following:

Selene Diaz

(from Italy to Ecuador)

"I would like to take the opportunity to let you know that in October I will start a new job working with Colombian children on the boarder between Colombia and Ecuador. The project is for one year - and this time I will get paid for it☺. I am very thankful for having been able to participate in the EVS project as enabled me to find my way – and now I have the opportunity to continue in this direction!"

...and... Sophie Bray Watkins  
(from UK to Dominican Republic)

"I have been so busy in the last three months it's been unbelievable! Travelling around the UK and applying for jobs etc, but yesterday I got some good news; I have got a job with 'Rainer' in their Youth Inclusion Programme as a Volunteer Coordinator in London."

The opportunity to accompany the volunteers during their 9 month volunteering experience, and to follow their developments more closely has enabled us and them to reflect more thoroughly on the value of their engagement in promoting participation of young people in a variety of different projects and work contexts in EU and Latin American countries.



We would like to thank all volunteers for their valuable contributions to this recollection of a challenging and fruitful 9 month volunteering experience.

We hope this documentation will be widely used to inform future volunteers, host and sending organizations on the EVS programme and the work done with and for young people in different EU and Latin American countries.

Cvetka Bovha

## **7. ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1: Special contributions by participants**

- Sylvia Lily Cruz Limachi: My volunteering experience
- Sophie Bray Watkins: Long runs and distance
- Ginté Zulyte: Flyer of a photo exhibition on youth volunteering organized in Porto Alegre – Brazil, May 2008

### **Annex 2: List of participants and host organisations**

### **Annex 3: Links and Literature**

## Annex 1: Special contributions by participants

### MY VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

(By Sylvia Lily Cruz Limachi - from Bolivia to Estonia)

#### Purpose of my EVS.

The purpose of my EVS was to give love to the children I was working with and to make others feel they could trust me. I also wanted to share my culture with the people from Estonia and Russia.



My second day in Tallinn, Estonia. Me at the lake with my mentor Jelena.

#### My experience:

It was hard at the beginning because of the language, the culture, the traditions, the life style and such. As time went by and life and activities continued I felt I became more integrated and I kept on learning everything that was new to me thanks to people that arrived with me and the ones who worked along with me at the school.



Thanks to friends like Natalie from France I could feel more integrated: I had a lot of support from her throughout this experience!

## **My activities:**

The project I was assigned to was a regular school. I had different responsibilities such as the pedagogical support to first level six to seven year old boys and girls, the recreational activities during the children's free time and at times I could help by teaching some basic Spanish to the same kids. I always remained close to the children in any of the activities they were involved in.



Working with children in the class!



The children playing in the break time also in the class

## **My personal message.**

My living experience in Estonia nor the time I had working as a volunteer can be easily explained with words... Those were very unique experiences in my life.

What I can say to other people who are interested in having the same volunteering experience is to give yourselves the chance to enjoy every

new experience and put a lot of interest, strength, personal will, and “positive-curiosity”.



Me and my friends in Estonia

**EXPERIENCE A NEW LIFE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING!**

## **Long runs and distance** **by Sophie Bray Watkins - from UK to Dominican Republic**

Nine months in an exciting, exotic country was not going to be too stressful, right? Don't get me wrong, I wasn't under any illusions. I had always expected this experience to be challenging. However a defining moment came for me one day when I arrived at the office after seven months there. My heart started to beat fast, my palms were sweaty, I felt dizzy and couldn't breathe properly. After weeks of non-stop problems I felt like a piece of elastic; over stretched and scared of if and how I might snap. This was probably the most stressed I could remember being, but the one thing I couldn't completely grasp was why?

That week I went for an early run in the countryside outside of town. I allowed myself to get lost, running around dirt roads and fields of platano until my legs started to tire, at which point I started to ask random people where the nearest road back to town was. As the sun got higher and the only noises were my breathing, distant motorbikes and dogs barking, I realized that one day all of these experiences, both the good and the bad, would very soon be behind me. Feeling like I was feeling was ok given the circumstances. A lot of difficult things had happened in a short space of time; problems with my project and the office, both practical and personal, problems with my living situation, a difficult relationship with my boyfriend and new, ongoing problems with my health, had all added up. These circumstances in my life at home might not have translated into such difficult conflicts, but by just being in a strange environment a certain sense of my equilibrium was lost. Lacking a well established and familiar support network and the ability to communicate fluently, as in your own culture, maybe not necessarily be something you identify as a major stressor. However in reality it does affect hugely the ability to dissipate stress and negate new challenges.

All these problems had taken their toll and built up over a period of time and despite sincere efforts to think positive, it becomes more and more difficult when all areas of your life in a new place are affected. We all have a sense of self that defines us and our ability to deal with difficult situations. For volunteers sometimes ironically, the pressure that you put yourself under to intergrate or 'succeed' can just make things more difficult in the longer term. Living in another country creates huge shifts in fundamental layers of self; on a daily basis for a substantial period of time you are reconsidering and exploring areas of your personality that in your day to day life at home normally remain somewhat dormant or are already well established. Depending then on what kind of environments or circumstances you are in, the narrative of your time away will can feel like a rollercoaster of self discovery and learning, either negatively or positively.

This week I went for another run from a different side of town towards the mountains. Although it wasn't my intention, I went much further than I meant to and eventually I arrived at a small dip where a river crosses the road and a few shack houses filled with Haitian families sit perched on the edge of the bank. I recognised this as the half way point between a village I knew and the town I lived in, I also realised the run back home would be harder and longer than I had anticipated. Despite this I was happy that I had come so far, and that I thought I could achieve the run home. I also imagined that when I finally reached the end, it would all be worth while despite any difficulties that I might still encounter along the way.

**By Ginte Zulyte - Flyer: Photo exhibition on youth volunteering organized in Porto Alegre – Brazil in May 2008.**

# 40 Pingos

Exposição de fotografias

Conheça a experiência de 17 intercambistas da Europa em projetos sociais de Porto Alegre

Exposição que retrata a vida de crianças e jovens no ambiente de projetos sociais da Grande Porto Alegre foi organizada pelo grupo de 17 voluntários de países europeus (Alemanha, Reino Unido, França, Bélgica, Finlândia, Lituânia e Áustria) que participam dos programas de intercâmbio da ABIC.

**Quando?**  
19 a 30 de maio de 2008  
segundas a sextas, das 10 às 20h  
e sábados, das 10h às 13h.

Abertura dia 19 maio, 19h30 - com apresentação do grupo de percussão dos Jovens do CESMAR (Centro Social Marista).

**Onde?**  
Galeria do Goethe | 24 de Outubro, 112  
Porto Alegre/RS.

Obs: Os visitantes da exposição são convidados a fazerem doações (alimentos, lápis, tinta, papel, calçados, roupas) que serão repassados aos projetos sociais.

Amigos do projeto:



Caso queira excluir seu nome da lista de contatos clique aqui!

## **Annex 3: Links and Literature**

**What is EVS?** [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/info\\_kit\\_0407.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/info_kit_0407.pdf)

### **On Youth Participation**

<http://www.salto-youth.net/participation/>

<http://www.salto-youth.net/aboutparticipation/>

<http://www.salto-youth.net/Participationpublications/>

[www.coe.int/compass](http://www.coe.int/compass)

### **Revised European Charter on Participation of Youth:**

<http://www.salto-youth.net/download/1510/Revised%20European%20Charter%20on%20the%20Participation%20of%20YP.pdf>

Child and Youth Participation Guide

[http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/files/Child\\_and\\_Youth\\_Participation\\_Guide\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/files/Child_and_Youth_Participation_Guide(1).pdf)

### **Revisiting youth political participation**

Challenges for research and democratic practice in Europe

Edited by Joerg Forbrig

Council of Europe

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

ISBN 92-871-5654-9

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[http://www.youth-partnership.net/export/sites/default/youth-partnership/documents/Research/2005\\_revisiting\\_youth\\_political\\_participation\\_coepub.pdf](http://www.youth-partnership.net/export/sites/default/youth-partnership/documents/Research/2005_revisiting_youth_political_participation_coepub.pdf)

### **Intercultural Learning; T-kit No 4**

Council of Europe

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

ISBN 92-871-5654-9

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[www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)

### **Education-Pack : All Different - All Equal**

Secretariat of ECRI

Directorate General of Human rights - DG II

Council of Europe, Strasbourg

[www.coe.int/ecri](http://www.coe.int/ecri)



## 8. Contact and Copyrights

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This documentation can also be downloaded from the ICYE website.

For information on the EVS Programme:  
[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/info\\_kit\\_0407.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/info_kit_0407.pdf)

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