



# Worlds of Experience

No. 42 (February 2017)

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### **Volunteering: Charity or Solidarity?**

Dear friends,

International volunteering is a complex mesh of individuals, groups and institutions that shape our worldview, where the lines between charity and solidarity are never clearly drawn. In the 42nd issue of the ICYE Newsletter we therefore pose the question, “Volunteering: Charity or Solidarity”. Charity refers to help or money given to people in need. Thus, for example, the primary motivation of many volunteers to help others can be aligned with charity, and there is certainly nothing wrong with this. Nevertheless, charity can only take us so far. Solidarity moves beyond the help given and is reflected in the quote of the aboriginal activist, Lill Watson, “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is tied up with mine, then let us work together.” In “Volunteers Voices”, seven current and former volunteers depict their experiences, anecdotes and reflections of their volunteering in relation to theme of the newsletter and propose ideas for building solidarity and working towards a better way of engaging in local communities. An US-American volunteer in Denmark describes it as the beginnings of her understanding of what it means to be a global citizen. A British volunteer in Honduras explains that he learnt the definition of solidarity from the El Venado community, which taught him as much as he taught them. A Brazilian in Poland places emphasis on ‘exchange’ of life and experiences. A German volunteer in Iceland says it’s about taking and giving, working together as a community. Along the same lines, the British volunteer in Russia and Costa Rican in USA offer that building solidarity is about integrating oneself into the host community. A Swiss volunteer in Honduras says she met people who never gave up and the experience has changed her life and her future. All volunteer articles depict relationships built on solidarity, which have led to respect, mutual learning and growth.

News from Int’l Organizations, amongst others, feature: the 10th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and ILO – World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Trends for Youth. News from NGOs report on: A.I. Report 2016/17; #GirlsCount; the 2017 European Action Week Against Racism; the LLLP Erasmus+ Implementation Survey 2016 Results; and Youth Action Net: New Video Series Profiles Youth Taking Lead on SDGs. ICYE Programme News include: the “Calling Youth to Action in a Global Visibility Drive” training for youth workers; ICYE Ecuador’s workshop on prevention of violence against women ICYE Iceland/AUS meets the new President of Iceland; AUS workshops „Acted Out“ & „Earth Citizens“, respectively on human rights & refugees and on inclusion and equality; PATH - Volunteer Path & Tool for Heritage.

Wishing you an interesting reading, we look forward to receiving articles and pictures for the next issue of “Worlds of Experience”, dedicated to “Good Practice on Intercultural Learning & Human Rights”. Please send your contributions to [icye@icye.org](mailto:icye@icye.org), before 30 June 2017.

Warmest regards!  
ICYE International Office

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## Embracing hygge

**Taylor Paraboschi (USA)**  
Volunteer in Denmark



*Hygge*: the Danish concept of finding warmth and beauty in otherwise insignificant, overlooked moments. It's about finding the coziness of life; embracing, with an open heart, the positivity and enjoyment found in everyday experiences and the people you share them with. Prior to my departure, I was a cynic, convinced that my time abroad would be only charity, an act largely to benefit the hosting school. My trade off would be the chance to travel for an extended period of time and I would, without a doubt, remain detached. I never expected to be immersed into the community atmosphere of my volunteer project so quickly. Nor did I expect the instant sense of solidarity and connection that was offered by every staff member, teacher, student, and parent at Filipskolen.

Volunteering at Filipskolen humbled me, taking me out of my comfort zone and forcing me to redefine my overall goals as an ICYE volunteer. From my first day, I realized that working at this small school in Amager shouldn't be about what I could accomplish and give back as an individual but rather how I could grow within my new Danish community and what we as a unit could accomplish and learn together. That in order to be effective during my year long quest, I would have to compromise; that the only way to truly excel would be to do so as a team, melding my wants and needs with the desires of my project. Every day was a new chance for growth and development. Whether it was impromptu Danish lessons from the kids, trying console a crying child in broken Danish, or helping the ninth grade prepare for their English exams, I constantly felt challenged and took a new life lesson away from each day. The people who surrounded me went out of their way to include me in the familial atmosphere of the school. They gladly taught me local customs, had me try popular food such as smørrebrød and licorice, helped with my Danish pronunciation, and always had someone nearby to translate during the biweekly assemblies so I would

know what was going on. In my short time there, I hope I was able to give them a glimpse into the American life not normally stereotyped in movies or seen on the nightly news. Through assisting in English classes and tutoring students after school, I hope I helped them gain confidence in their speaking and expand their knowledge of the English language. Most of all I hope I was a part of breaking down the barriers between foreigners and locals. That my daily presence helped show that, despite not sharing a culture or mother tongue, we all have something in common, something that binds us to a larger global entity. That despite our differences and eccentricities, we can come together to forge lifelong bonds and friendships.

My instantaneous connection helped me to fully and constantly engage as a volunteer. My time at Filipskolen was successful because as a community we were invested in one another, committed to the personal and professional success of each person. We shared a solidarity rooted in understanding the individual's goals and how they were interwoven with the community vision. I never felt the separation an outsider might feel trying to integrate into a foreign community. I entered into my experience without expectation, learning over time to surrender myself to the experience. There was a mutual curiosity shared between both myself and my hosting project; a genuine interest in understanding and getting to know each other's cultures and world perspectives. In order to be an effective volunteer, you mustn't look at it as charity but rather as an opportunity to build a global network of shared investment. My quest was the beginning of my understanding of what it meant to be a global citizen, taking my individual experiences and using them to contribute to a collective understanding and shared growth. By embracing *hygge*, I was able to slow down my pace in life, welcoming the unknown that surrounded me and finding solidarity in the warmth of the insignificant, everyday moments and the locals who guided me along the way.

## Honduras: The Deer

**Thomas Barnes (UK)**  
Volunteer in Honduras



My name is Thomas Barnes-Hooker and for the past 6 months I have been living on the Pacific coast of south Honduras, volunteering alongside a very small and isolated community called "El Venado" (The Deer). The people of El Venado were incredibly welcoming

and we showed strong signs of solidarity from day one. Everyone would help welcome me into their way of life, the women would come together to teach me how to cook local food (when I helped them cook) and clean my clothes (on a table of bricks). The children taught me how to play local games with them (when I would teach them a new game or English) and took me round the whole community to say hello to everyone (literally everyone... and the animals).

Within my volunteer program I had many roles to fulfil and to create. From the start of September to the end of October, my main role was to protect and collect turtle eggs from the beach that was only accessible by boat and to teach English in the local primary school. This involved me attending school for approximately 2 hours a day educating 9 – 13 year olds on how to pronounce, read and write basic English (a very big challenge in its self as no one in the community spoke English and my Spanish was well... limited) and from the hours of 18:00 – 00:00 I would be walking up and down the 4 mile beach looking for turtles. This didn't just involve me however, the whole community was involved so I was able to develop a bond with each and every individual (again with minimal Spanish). From the end of October, I would monitor the turtle eggs waiting for them to hatch and ensure all the administration was up to date, this was also a challenge as there was limited electricity and no Wifi so all administration was paper based. This was a very interesting time for me as we started to have tourists come and visit the conservation center and to assist in the liberation (release) of the hatchlings. This was a very special and spiritual time; we would place the hatchlings on the beach at sunset and let nature take its course (a surprisingly emotional time for everyone). At the end of December, we had released approximately 3500 baby turtles that would someday make their way back to the same beach for mating .

One issue I came across in Honduras was the lack of education on environmental issues, specifically within rural communities, so towards the end of my project I took it upon myself to educate the community about littering and how they can try to control this issue. I started this by leading by example, so every day I would go to the beach and around the community collecting litter; this raised many questions (most questions being "why?"). So I explained to them that littering is damaging to the environment. I hope that the people will continue to keep their community and beaches clean.

Saying goodbye was extremely difficult and emotional, I have a very strong bond with the community and I have promised to return at some point in the future. For my last night, the people of the community held a surprise leaving dinner for me where specific members of the community came. I was also awarded with a certificate (officially a turtle protector!). We shared goodbyes and the children took me round the whole community to say goodbye to everyone (like my arrival).

Often I am asked by friends and family "why are you working for free?", and this involves me explaining that I'm not working for free but rather being paid with knowledge and experience. From my 6 months volunteering one thing is clear to me, not only do I

have the self-pride in knowing that I have helped a community and vulnerable animals, but also that I am leaving with the comfort of knowing that I have developed my own skills and character in a way I never thought possible. I'm leaving Honduras knowing that I was fully integrated into a small community that taught me to be a more open minded, self-sufficient, eco-friendly person, who is willing to look at other people's perspectives and ways of doing things differently to mine and work with them to achieve their goal, even if I think I know a more sufficient method of doing things. The community of El Venado taught me as much as I taught them; this is the definition of solidarity.

## A piece of Poland with me

**Luciana Caetani Feijó (Brazil)**  
Volunteer in Poland



Volunteering is more than just charity. It's an exchange of life, of experience, to dedicate a little of yourself and give to the other. There is no sense of pity, "I'm better and I'll give my time for something you need." Let's be realistic: this is a vision of conqueror and conquered. The goal of the international volunteering is this cultural, linguistic, and personal exchange. The need for work is allied to the need for life experience, together with the human will for contact and the curiosity of a different culture, way of living, expressing yourself and dealing with life.

I came from southern Brazil to volunteer in Warsaw, Poland. I spent 3 months in a school for children and teenagers with special needs, which uses various rehabilitation techniques such as hippo therapy. My professional experience is based on mental health and communities, but I never had contact with horses! They had to teach me how to take care of them, to understand their body language so that I could be able to do the work. I had no knowledge of a fundamental part of my project!

Hippo therapy is a form of physical, occupational and speech therapy that uses the horse movement to develop and enhance neurological and physical functioning by channeling the movement of the horse. Also interacting with a horse a child/adolescent can improve emotionally and psychologically, proper balance and posture, cognitive benefits like attention and ability to express thoughts and needs. It's a two person job when the child is riding the horse. The therapist monitors movements and reactions walking alongside, focusing on safety. The volunteer has to

# Volunteers Voices

learn how to clean, dress with the right equipment (learn the names in polish!), differentiate between all the horses and guide them with the therapist and the child. It is not an easy job: they are strong and like to eat, then you have to be tough and firm for them to obey you, to go the right way, not eat the flower on the other side of the rope, give its leg to be cleaned and stop when you tell them to. And horses bite, step on your feet and make you frustrated for not doing what you want.

I got the training and in return I performed it as professionally as I could. I was not the best; I always had trouble with the harness (the problem of being short). However, I was always trying again and again. "Tomorrow will be better" is a good motto. I am now living like this: tomorrow will always be better than today.

I think I grew up a lot in those months; I am more patient, noticed I really like to work outside and get dirty. Keep thinking how I could promote Brazil to others countries and tell how Poland is brave and have an amazing sad history. I learned so much! I brought the Brazilian culture to the Poles, heard Michel Teló and Gustavo Lima' songs with their accents, I was able to talk about the history that unites us and make friendships. I will have in my heart all the children, teenagers and teachers who went by me at school, in hippo therapy, art therapy, the others volunteers in the same project and in Pułtusk (nice and small city near Warsaw, Napoleon lived there) and Poland itself with its buses at the right time, the wonderful snow and "the worst place you need to go" Auschwitz, that was my dream to visit since High School. I left a piece of me and brought a piece of them and that's the biggest consequence of volunteering.

## Volunteering - popular, versatile and successful

**Stefanie Vierath (Germany)**  
Volunteer in Iceland

Volunteering is becoming popular all around the world. Everywhere there exist thousands of different organisations that need volunteers to reach their goals. As a volunteer you can choose what you want to do. But what does volunteering mean? "Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain." Or with different words: Volunteers offering their time to work for other without getting paid. But why has volunteering got so famous? What is the motivation of the volunteers?

A lot of countries support volunteer work with advertisement and money. This makes volunteering more famous and a lot of people start trying it. Everyone has his/her own motivation to be a volunteer. The most important reason for a lot of people is to do something for other people and not for themselves. It is a win-win situation. You feel better during and after doing it and other people get help. "Help" is a strong word and maybe not the right word in all kinds of volunteer work. Of course volunteers support their organisations with their work and money but "help" is

much stronger. Volunteers are not in a higher position, than the people who work together with them. "Working together" for me is a much better description. For me, volunteering means working with other people together to reach a goal. It is fun to do things in a community without getting paid because the motivations of all are much higher if they don't get money. Everyone who works there is willing to be in this organisation or project.



I came for one year as a volunteer to Iceland because I want to meet new people, learn something about myself and others, live alone and be independent and do something good for others and the nature. For me it was really important to go to another country for one year of volunteering. I will always have the chance to be a volunteer at home. I am in Iceland since half a year and it was the best decision for me. Volunteering give me a lot of things back: Friends, experiences, connections, fun, good memories, a good feeling, skills and more. It depends on you how much you are taking out of your volunteering time.

But is volunteering charity or solidarity? I think nobody can answer this question 100%, because there are so many kinds of volunteering. I can only make a decision for the experiences which I have had. The last half year, I was working as a workcamp leader for Worldwide Friends. Workcamps are perfect to learn a lot of things about other countries and traditions. Everyone is working together for 10 or 14 days. You get new friends and learn so many interesting things. For volunteering in a workcamp the answer is Solidarity. Maybe I would use another word: Community. Everyone is working together to reach a goal.

## Goodbye beach, hello farms!

**Mónica Sánchez (Costa Rica)**  
Volunteer in USA

My name is Mónica Sánchez and I'm from Costa Rica. I've been volunteering in the US for six months in a place called Goodland Academy, a boarding school in Oklahoma. When I came to Goodland, I didn't know what to expect. To be honest, a lot of people had told me that I would be in the middle of nowhere and that I was crazy about thinking of the possibility quitting my job in Costa Rica, taking one year off of my university career, and having a 360 degree life change. Honestly, I don't regret it, and I never will.

When I was arrived in a town called Hugo, I was scared because I couldn't see anything but farms. The community where I live is extremely far away from everything, and the distance between the campus and town is quite long. When I arrived to my apartment, I realized it was old, and I had just the basic supplies. In that moment, I panicked and I started to think: what am I going to do one whole year in this place?



The next day, when I went to school and met the students, they started to talk about everything they do in their free time outside campus (which only includes go eating, sometimes movie nights and sometimes skating) and how people from different churches give them clothes, toys, food or money (because their parents can't afford it).

In that moment, I realized I was just starting my volunteering work as a way of solidarity. I teach Spanish to the students during school time, but beyond that, I am one more of them. I spend 24 hours at campus with them, I go eating outside when they go, and I do the same as they do; all the time. I think in that way I am able to be involved in the Goodland community, cooperating with them in whatever they need and giving my best to make the students happier. The reason? I know how they live and how they feel about living here. On the other hand, churches and Goodland donators do charity. They send money every month to afford basic expenses, such as campus maintenance, staff salaries, internet, food, clothes, etc. They don't come very often, they just send the money (which I think is one of the best actions of charity someone can do, because otherwise Goodland wouldn't exist), but they don't feel how it is living like them. The impact that this program has had on me is huge, because I have learned to be humbler, to respect different ways of life, and most importantly, to help with the community by being a local. I look forward to taking advantage of my six months left at Goodland, so I can work together with Goodland community and the students in order to build a better place and to form better people.

## What the 'E' in ICYE means to me

**Sophie Newbery (UK)**  
Volunteer in Russia

On our pre-departure training in the UK, we were asked to show to what extent we agreed with various

statements by standing at different points across the room. One of these statements was 'My project will benefit more from me than I will from it'. While most of the statements had seen all of us in a fairly neat huddle in one area of the room, this one split us quite dramatically. Using the logic that I was too wise to believe the 'saviour' narrative of volunteering, I stood confidently on the side of me benefiting more than the project. A little over half of the soon-to-be-volunteers stood, equally confidently, at the other end of the scale.

Now, just over halfway through my ten-month project in Samara, Russia, I would like to reassess. I'm not necessarily saying what I said before was totally wrong, but I think my attitude was. I do not think that I am indispensable at my project, but what I do is useful and is appreciated. The people I work with enjoy my company and my help and I enjoy theirs in return. There is no point trying to calculate who benefits more and indeed it would be impossible to do so. The point is that the experience is beneficial to everyone and that all the volunteers, foreign and local, and everyone else involved with the projects here in Samara are taking part because they enjoy the experience and find it interesting. As the name suggests, ICYE projects are all about exchange: exchanging culture, traditions, language, skills, ideas and more. To call it simply 'charity' would be to do it a disservice. We interact as equals, not as benefactors and recipients, and that is what I think is so wonderful about a programme like this. I would be interested to hear if the volunteers who stood on the opposite side of the room have since reached the same conclusions. I suspect they probably have.

This idea also extends beyond the project and into the host community. I am lucky enough to live with a wonderful host family who has made me feel very welcome here. I recognise that accepting a stranger into your home and your family for ten months must have been a difficult decision, but this never shows. The primary reason they decided to host a volunteer was to help their son learn English, so we study together and he teaches me Russian at the same time. His parents, who do not speak any English, nonetheless make the effort to include me and to talk to me about what I do here, about my family and about life in England and they share things with me in return. Their four-year-old son is delighted to have found a playmate, even though he is sometimes rather unimpressed by my failure to understand all the rules of his games... Luckily for me though, fear of incurring the wrath of a four-year-old is an excellent motivator when it comes to learning the language!



# Volunteers Voices

Even total strangers are often very interested (if rather surprised) when they get talking to the other volunteers and me. I've been asked by taxi drivers what language I'm speaking, how the Russian government has verified that I'm actually a volunteer and not a foreign spy, whether I know Benedict Cumberbatch personally and whether I could explain the rule for the present continuous tense- this being the only snippet he remembered from his English classes at school. Of course, the questions are not always this amusing, but even so I love how curious people are and how willing they are to chat to me. The chance to speak Russian with new people is invaluable and listening to their experiences and points of view is always interesting (as I hope mine are for them).

Therefore, I believe that the best way to build solidarity is through integrating yourself into the host community as much as possible. Learning the language is an important part of this and, while this is not always possible, I think volunteers should be helped and encouraged to learn as much of the language of their host country as possible before arriving. I also think that host families are a great way of helping the volunteers to understand the culture into which they are being welcomed. These key elements help encourage them to see their project as an exchange and to build a sense of solidarity. I think it is very important to see your project in this way in order to have the best experience for yourself and to provide the best you can to the project. If you see it as you selflessly sacrificing your time and energy to help a needy project, you are closing yourself off to all the ways you can benefit from it and all the things you can learn. You are also unlikely to be giving the attention and respect they deserve to those with whom you are working, who likely have a great deal of experience with the project and without whose help and guidance you are unlikely to be of much help at all. Equally, you should not sell yourself short by underestimating the skills, ideas and energy that you can contribute. The projects all choose to host volunteers for a reason, and you will certainly find ways in which you can make a very positive impact. If you are open to it, your project will also have a very positive impact on you.

## Because I could

**Vitoria Haerter (Switzerland)**

Volunteer in Honduras

I spent one year as a volunteer in Honduras. One year is a long time. That's what I thought. That's what everyone told me. But my year passed by in seconds. I was 19 when I started my volunteer exchange in Campamento, a little village in Honduras. When I came to Honduras I knew that I would work in a school, but I didn't know at all what I would have to do exactly. Not to know things or not to plan everything ahead, that was something I had to learn in Honduras. There exists Swiss time and on the other side Honduran time. Coming from the most punctual country, it was a hard change to adjust to Honduran time.

During my time at the Liceo Fray Iván Rohloff, a bilingual English-Spanish school, I worked as a teacher. This experience helped me in many ways. I was the

class teacher of a third grade class. In my class there were only four students, and after that year I love and miss all of them. I also gave some classes to 1st, 2nd and 4th graders. All were smaller classes and I had a very personal relationship with all my students. Also with the other teachers, I got along very well and some of them became good friends of mine. They always helped me when I struggled with the language, was homesick or just needed a day off. They looked at me as a normal teacher but never forgot that I also was a volunteer at the same time.



I would never say that during my year I did charity work. Also solidarity doesn't describe exactly the feeling why I wanted to do this year. I worked there as every other person did. The only differences were that I didn't get paid and it was a temporary situation for me. I didn't decide to volunteer to make me feel better, I did it because I could. I had the possibility to take a year off and travel to another country to do something useful. So if someone would ask me if I did charity work I would say no. I hope that during that year I could help the school as much as I could benefit. I found friends and family and got to know and love a country and its culture. I met people there who never gave up. It didn't matter how hard life was to them at the moment. They always stood up again and tried to continue. I am happy that these people are my friends. Life in Honduras can be very hard and difficult and I am so lucky that so many people there shared their life and their culture with me.

No one could have prepared me for what awaited me in Honduras or could have told me how I would change during this time. Being a volunteer doesn't mean that you know everything from the beginning or that you won't have any problems. But with ICYE, I never felt alone. I knew there was always someone I could call in an emergency. During my year in Honduras I learned so many things that I never would have learned at home. The exchange with ICYE changed me and also my future.

### Launch of the Youth4Peace Global Knowledge Portal on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding



The Youth4Peace Global Portal has been relaunched to support the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. Join the Youth4Peace Community to take part in online consultations (or start your own!), showcase best practices and lessons learned, generate new knowledge, trigger new initiatives, collaborate on common projects and much more! The Portal is a multi-stakeholder partnership between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), Search for Common Ground, and United Network of Youth Peacebuilders, and hosted by Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace (Youth-GPS) (2016-2020), with support from the Oslo Governance Centre. [More](#)

### UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



This year marks 10 years since the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) was adopted, setting minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples around the world.

In light of the anniversary, experts attending the meeting were asked where the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has made an impact, and how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are making a difference. Check out this [video](#) to hear what the experts answer! [More](#).



### World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Trends for Youth (Report, Videos and Interactive Maps)



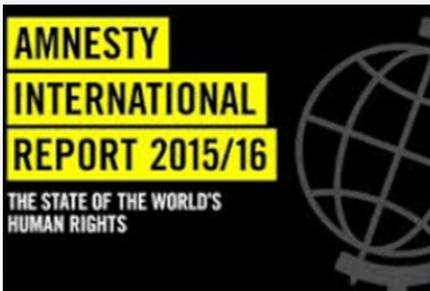
The International Labour Organization (ILO)'s "[World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Trends for Youth](#)" provides updated figures on global and regional youth unemployment. It also looks at working poverty rates, decent work opportunities in both developed and developing economies as well as gender inequalities and migration trends among young people. [Watch the 'report in short' video](#) to understand how young people are doing in the world of work and what their prospects are for the future. [Explore interactive maps](#) to learn about youth unemployment and gender gaps in 2016. [More](#) .

### NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN



Today's generation of young people is the largest the world has ever known. Half of the global population is under 30, and yet 73% of countries restrict young people from running for office, even though they can vote. Around the world, campaigns are underway to promote the rights of young people running for public office by seeking to lower the legal age of candidacy, and bring it into line with the age at which you can vote. Read more at [here](#).

### Amnesty International Report 2016/17: the State of the World's Human Rights



The Amnesty International Report 2016/17 documents the state of human rights in 159 countries and territories during 2016. For millions, 2016 was a year of unrelenting misery and fear, as governments and armed groups abused human rights in a multitude of ways. [Read more.](#)

### #GirlsCount



ONE Campaign is making the world take notice by counting from 1 to 130 million— a number for every girl out of school around the world. If you believe all #GirlsCount, go to [one.org/girlscount](http://one.org/girlscount) and help ONE Campaign count every single girl out loud and urge our leaders to act. [Read More](#)

### Don't be divided - Stay UNITED! - European Action Week Against Racism 18-26 March 2017.



Join 100.000's of people actively engaging for tolerance, equal rights and celebrating the diversity of Europe.

Find activities happening near you to mark the European Action Week Against Racism 2017. 21 March is the International Day for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966 following the brutal murder of 69 protestors in the South African township of Sharpeville in 1960. Every year around 21 March, the UNITED network coordinates the European-wide Action Week Against Racism and calls upon the international community to bring an end to racism, discrimination and intolerance. [Read more.](#)

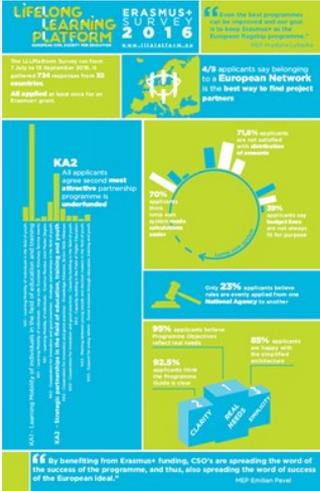


### CIVIL SOCIETY EUROPE's position on European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps was launched on December 7th and young people can already register. [Civil Society Europe](#) finds that the European Solidarity Corps proposal is particularly relevant in current European societies which are increasingly polarised and where people can feel more and more isolated. The initiative can also potentially contribute to a better understanding and sharing of the EU values and make feel people part of a common project that has relevance to their daily life. However, a number of issues still need to be clarified, such as a participatory set up and implementation of the programme, integration in a broader strategy and adequately resourced or the role of civil society organisations. [Read more.](#)



### #ErasmusPlus Campaign: LLLP Erasmus+ Implementation Survey 2016 Results are out!



### YouthActionNet: New Video Series Profiles Youth Taking Lead on SDGs



YouthActionNet's new ["Goal Getters"](#) video series profiles 12 young leaders and their powerful role in contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Viewers learn about [Rainier Mallol's cutting-edge use of technology](#) to prevent disease outbreaks (SDG #3) and [Jacqueline Joseph's sports-based approach](#) to ending violence against women and girls (SDG#5), among other youth-led solutions. Together, they represent a growing movement of youth-led social change sweeping the globe. [More](#)

The LLL- Lifelong Learning Platform [Erasmus+ Implementation Survey 2016 Results are out!](#) The 2016 Survey Preliminary Results were made public on 10 October during the LLLWeek2016 kick-off event in the European Parliament, chaired by MEP Milan Zver, European Parliament Rapporteur for the Erasmus+ Programme. The Platform organises a yearly evaluation on the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme. The survey aims to provide decision-makers with an evaluation coming from the programme's direct beneficiaries on what works and what could be improved. Spread the word and take part in improving Erasmus+ by joining our [#ErasmusPlus Survey Campaign online!](#) The campaign is taking place on social media, using the Survey data and infographics (available on FB).

## Calling Youth to Action in a Global Visibility Drive – a global training for youth workers in Accra, Ghana



From 16 – 20 November 2016, 25 youth workers from 21 ICYE member countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America met in Accra, Ghana to develop a long-term strategy to promote the visibility and build recognition of international volunteering. The 5-day training, part of the project “Calling Youth to Action in a Global Visibility Drive,” was hosted by ICYE Ghana. It was also attended by the Youth Engagement Officer of CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Maria Elisa Novoa Rengifo, who provided valuable input on creating an enabling environment to mobilize and engage young people as civil society actors. Based on CIVICUS’ vast experience in campaigning and civil society actions, she also elaborated on campaigning as advocacy towards political change and outlined key guidelines for campaigning.

From January and July 2017, the 21 participating organisations will run campaigns in their respective countries with the support of local and international volunteers, local NGOs, etc. For more information on the country campaigns, and individual and global actions, see <http://www.icye.org/calling-youth/>

The project, implemented by the ICYE International Office and co-funded by Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Programme of the European Union, will culminate with a Final Evaluation meeting in Paris, France in September 2017.

## Working towards a diverse and inclusive Europe/Anti-racism training in Graz, Austria

**Anne Lea Nørholm, EVS volunteer (Denmark)  
ICYE International Office**

As a result of an ongoing arrival of large numbers of refugees, political and financial instability and the aftermath of a number of terrorist attacks, the situation in Europe today is extremely difficult and complex. The result being that fear, anxiety and resentment within communities are being fuelled by political rhetoric and the public discourse on refugees and migration in general, which is leading to minorities being targeted. To target these issues the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 project: “Youth Work Can Unite: Merging Parallel Realities in Europe” was conceptualised.

As part of the project a 5-day training on anti-racism and tackling hate speech took place from 22 – 26 February 2017 in Graz, Austria, organised by Grenzenlos – ICYE Austria and the ICYE International Office. Twenty-six participants from 11 different European countries came together to share and discuss knowledge on the refugee situation in the participating countries and share ideas and best practice to challenge the populist discourse on refugees and migrants and promote inclusion and diversity in Europe. The training also provided participants with tools and methods on tackling discrimination and racism within different groups and using the knowledge within their countries

For me, an EVS volunteer at the International Office in Berlin, this was my first encounter with these topics. The week was intense and provided a number of different approaches on how to work with the issues. The first days of the training were informative and inspirational as participants presented the situation of refugees in their countries. In one session, we made a timeline of racism for which each participant wrote down two historical events that had had a big influence on how the world looks today. They then placed the event/period on a timeline which started around the 12th century up to the present day. This helped us map out the history of racism and get a clear idea about how deeply it is rooted in our society today. After working intensely with the situation in Europe for the first days, the last days we had to get more active. In another session, we created our own anti-racism and tackling hate speech- workshop targeting a specific group within Europe, i.e. children, youth and adults. Participants also had the opportunity to work in groups to create an action plan to be implemented after the training.



The training helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the political situation and narrative related to refugees in different European countries and taught me that there is much more to learn. Learning about the situation of refugees from the trainers and other participants as well as getting the chance to talk to someone who escaped war and terror in his country were heavy experiences. They provided us with a small glimpse of the daily struggles refugees are faced with upon arrival and how important it is for us to work towards a diverse and inclusive Europe. Hopefully all participants of this training will take what they have learned back to their home countries.

## Workshop on the prevention of violence against women

ICYE Ecuador / VASE



From 15th to 17th February 2017, the director of ICYE Ecuador / VASE (Voluntariado Internacional Ecuador), Belén Mora, in cooperation with the GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation) organized a workshop in Quito, Ecuador, addressing the prevention of violence against women. An international audience consisting of twenty-two participants from different parts of Ecuador and international volunteers from different countries in the world attended the three-day workshop to learn about the reality of domestic abuse, the circle of violence, the different types of violence, the effects on the abused and ways to stop violence against women. Furthermore, questions about gender and roles of men and women in society were widely discussed. During the second and third day of the workshop, the participants became the people in charge, learning how to lead a successful workshop while improving valuable skills such as public speaking, leadership, and managing large groups of people. On the third day, the participants worked in groups and held an educational workshop for children, “La ruta participativa” (“the route to participation”). Along 5 different stations, children learnt in a simple and playful manner that boys and girls are equal, that violence harms us, that every person is valuable and that we can stop violence together by raising our voices

The purpose of the workshop was to give participants the necessary knowledge and skill to replicate these workshops in their own projects, which are partly VASE or ICYE projects. Similarly, the participating volunteers can use the workshop’s activities with the staff and children in their projects. In the end, all the participants spent enriching and educational days, gaining the knowledge and skill to raise awareness of the issue of violence against women.

## ICYE Iceland / AUS meets the new President of Iceland

On 17th of November 2016, AUS volunteers, the AUS team and board members met with newly elected President of Iceland, Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson. After only 3 months of becoming President, AUS volunteers had the opportunity to visit him at his home Bessastaðir in Garðabær and have an informal talk

with him. As a historian, he was a docent at the University of Iceland until his election and it was easy to recognise his vast experience in communicating with young people. After almost every sentence he spoke, you could hear his laughter in the presidential living room

After the traditional greetings and introductions, the President declared how honoured and privileged he was being in his position and how happy he was receiving people: “I love every single part of it. Meeting new people, chatting and learning new things – that’s one of the most exciting parts of it. So feel free to ask me anything you want to. And... just take it easy folks!” He shared how he and his family have been adapting to the new house and environment. The President has 5 children, 4 of them are quite young: aged 3, 5, 7 and 9 years. They are loving life here, says Guðni Th Jóhannesson, but they also love crayons and it can be very tempting to colour in the old bible in the President’s library, which was written in the late 16th century in Iceland. We have to do something about it, before... something happens, the President concluded. Or he could just follow his butler’s advice and always just turn the page.



With the recent media discussions about the “wrong” length of his tie fresh in his memory, Guðni Th Jóhannesson shared this story with the AUS team: “Did you tell them about the tie issue?” he asked his ex-student – now looking at his former professor in this different role. She replies that it was on the news. The President continued, “My tie was way too long and the fashion police in Iceland was not very positive. Somebody has to teach this guy, he is new in his job.” We suggested that the “Fashion police has been very hard on you,” to which he replied, “Yes. Not only the tie but also the buff, the bandana I was wearing. Apparently you are not supposed to do that if you are a President. Nobody tells me these things! But now... (as he takes off his tie)...it is more informal. Yes!” And of course, we all cheered. Here a video where one of our former volunteers rapping for the President of Iceland: <http://nutiminn.is/rappadi-fyrir-forseta-islands-a-bessastodum-sjadu-myndbandid/>

## „Acted out“ - Workshop addressing human rights and refugees



From 19 to 26 November 2016, 25 youth workers from around Europe (Croatia, Spain, Italy, Portugal) gathered together in Iceland for a week's workshop on global human rights and the refugees' situation. The workshop, which was organised by AUS with a guest trainer from Portugal, Aleksandra Maldžiski, took place in the South of Iceland and in Reykjavik and comprised exercises and activities aimed at raising awareness of racism/nationalism, and promoting inclusion and tolerance, sharing experiences on the refugees situation in Europe and discussing asylum and migration topics. These activities combined with visits to the beautiful Icelandic countryside and the landmarks of Reykjavik

## „Earth Citizens“ – Workshop on inclusion and equality 19 January 2017



On 19th January 2017, an open workshop and discussion entitled “Earth Citizens” took place at the youth centre Hitt Husið, where AUS is located. The main topics centred on the meaning and subtle notions of terms such as tolerance, inclusion and equality. The workshop aimed at creating awareness of the ways in which discrimination affects us in our daily lives and at inspiring us to take action in the fight against racism and discrimination. Twenty young people attended the workshop, among them students, volunteers and young professionals, who had the chance to take part in an awareness raising workshop led by AUS' trainer for anti-racism and anti-discrimination. The workshop was followed by an open discussion and a speech by a special guest from Somalia Abdiwahid, who narrated his harrowing personal story as an asylum seeker and immigrant. The evening came to a close with a sketch on stereotypes called “Cultural Dialogue”, performed by AUS' volunteers.

## Volunteer PATH - Volunteer Path & Tool for Heritage

**Adeoluwa Onamade**  
ICYE Nigeria - director

Between 6 and 11 February 2017, I represented ICYE Nigeria with other representatives from Africa, Asia and Europe at the Stakeholders Forum of the Coordinating Committee of the International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) project ‘Volunteer PATH (Volunteer Path & Tool for Heritage)’ in Paris, France. This is a year-long project on Cultural (tangible and intangible) Heritage and Diversity, co-financed by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The aim of the project is to be diverse as much as possible, to show the richness of this diversity and to include local people as educators, emphasising the bottom-up approach of international voluntary service and the work with local communities and young people with fewer opportunities. The project partners presented Actions which focused on food, culture, language, cultural and natural sites, indigenous traditions etc.



ICYE Nigeria's presentation was on the dying tradition of indigo dyeing - *Adire* in Yoruba land. This art of dyeing clothes that have been passed from one generation to the other (from mothers to daughters) in Yoruba land used to be practiced with so much pride and precision. It however suffered a lull in the twilight of Nigerian Colonialism in the 1950s, and later on due the flooding of Nigerian markets with cheaper, imported textiles, which were not taxed, while the locally produced ones were. In addition, many educated Nigerians see the *Adire* merely as rural cloth for poor, illiterate, rural dwellers. The project will launch a cultural revival of *Adire* as it can be revitalized and used for National development.

The workshops that followed focused on volunteering and preservation of cultural heritage, and volunteering and SCR, looking at an example of cooperation with Samsung in South Korea. On the third day, after the first partnership meeting, keynote speeches were given on: “Heritage conservation Challenges”; “How IVS can bring Together Volunteers and Heritage Preservation” and on “Impact Measurement”. During the last day, the participants were asked to identify potential stakeholders and networking opportunities. They also discussed potential strategies to use for approaching the stakeholders and for forming partnerships. The second phase of the project is a Capacity building training coming up from the 25 May to 1 June, 2017 in Uganda.