

Worlds of experience



No. 14 (June/July 2007)

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 14th issue of the ICYE Federation's Newsletter, focusing on "Youth Active Citizenship".

Volunteering is one of the most varied and meaningful expression of active civil society and "Worlds of Experience" would like to illustrate, with testimonials of ICYE volunteers, how young people engaged in distinct community projects can internalise the importance of serving for the common good and thus contribute to building a more just society world wide.

The personal growth and the acquisition of problem solving abilities, as well as of organisational skills, is best captured by the experience of an Austrian volunteer in Mexico. Her work with socially and financially disadvantaged children gave her sufficient confidence and motivation to start with a Mexican friend a charity to give orphans access to socio-cultural education. Similarly: a Hindu volunteer in an Orthodox Monastery in Finland had a life-changing experience; a Dutch volunteer in Skopje actively participated in activities aiming at overcoming inter-ethnic conflicts between Albanian and Macedonian youth; a Ugandan volunteer in Finland working with disabled young people learned about different ways to enhance social inclusion; and last but not least, a young Taiwanese in France directly experienced that "education is not easy and needs lots of patience and attention".

News from International Organisations features, amongst others: the 4th Annual Youth Assembly at the UN Headquarters; the run up and the new website of the European Year of Intercultural Year 2008; and UNICEF Voices of Youth on working together to protect Children in Armed Conflicts.

NGOs News reports on the: Loesje website and the \$100 Laptop initiative to support campaigns on the MDGs; AVSO seminar on Mentorship for International Volunteers; Stand Up Campaign Against Poverty, and the photo competition on what youth think of Governance by Shoot Nations 2007 .

ICYE news reports on: a training seminar on the Italian National Civil Service; the development of ICYE Over 30s & Intergenerational Volunteer Programmes; the Asia Europe Training for Trainers on Intercultural Learning; and the latest EVS pre-departure and final evaluations meetings involving ICYE member and partner organisations in EU and East and South East Europe.

In the hope that you will enjoy the reading, please note that the next issue of "Worlds of Experience", to be published at the end of October 2007, will focus on "Youth volunteering in rural areas". Please email your contributions, in form of articles/pictures, to icye@icye.org before 30 September 2007.

Warmest regards!

ICYE International Office

VOLUNTEERS VOICES



“I will keep working for the common good”

My name is Maria Krisch, ICYE volunteer from Austria in Mexico. I arrived in Mexico without knowing its people and its language. And my year abroad started with tears because of homesickness and the cultural shock. I felt lost and lonely sometimes, but both, cultural and social challenges, helped to discover and orientate myself. Especially the work with socially and financially disadvantaged children gave time and reason to reflect on my character, my qualities and my life. I broadened my interest in cultural and ethnic groups and developed awareness of issues and problems that affect others. This in turn made me think more critically and act more responsibly in daily life.

After a 4-month's stay in Mexico, I had gained sufficient confidence and motivation to start with a Mexican friend a charity called "AyudArt – Movement", a combination of the Spanish words "ayudar" (to help) and "arte" (art). The aim is to give orphans access to socio-cultural education and sensitise society about these children's situation and needs.

We started by looking for sponsors to enable disadvantaged children to watch, over Christmas, a movie called "Happy Feet". In spite of initial difficulties in the end 120 children from orphanages watched the premiere and won gifts in an interactive game. Articles were published in the newspapers and a radio station interviewed the children. I am still touched, remembering the comment of an orphan: "Thank you for inviting us to this event, because many people don't know that we exist".

The second event - to sensitise society about the poor children's needs – took place at the Regional Museum of Chiapas. It consisted of an exhibition on children's wishes and dreams.

We received more than 300 drawings of thought-provoking children's dreams;

among them "When I am big I want to be a single mother with 4 children", "When I am big I want to be happy", "When I am big I want to be a free girl!", etc.

On February 10th, 2007 the event was launched and for 9 hours about 300 orphans participated in artistic workshops and games, had lunch and enjoyed a free concert.

As a volunteer, I didn't get any payment but children's smiles and experience are priceless. In addition I gained new skills to set up and present a project, to organize and coordinate activities for children, to use graphic software, and to deal with the media and advocate for a good cause.

As a result of the event's success new opportunities arose, such as the organisation of a campaign for about 1.550 children with the Chiapas' Cultural Museum and Human Rights Commission to raise the children's awareness about their rights and duties. Unfortunately, my time in Mexico is already running out. But I still a few more challenges to take up, i.e. ecological activities for orphans in cooperation with the city's zoo, as well as an event on the "International Day of the Environment". Last but not least, I would like to register the charity movement as a "Civil Association" in the near future.

I know that a single person cannot change the world, but I am sure that responsible citizens with reasonable ideals can better it. My year abroad started with tears but will end with tears and a smile. In the future I will keep working for the common good and to keep making a world of difference!

Maria Krisch, Austrian volunteer in Mexico



“Got the same respect back”

My name is Manoj Kunniyur, ICYE exchangee from India in Finland in the exchange year 2006-07.

I heard about ICYE in Malaysia where I worked as a volunteer in a farm. I have watched the Christmas celebrations in Finland in our TV and that was the reason for I choose Finland, where I felt honoured to represent my country.

As a Hindu, volunteering in an Orthodox Monastery has been an absolutely different and wonderful experience. I had many different tasks , such as helping the two resident monks in the farm with gardening, cutting wood, cleaning the snow, and helping the monks in the kitchen etc. I also took care of the many visitors in the Monastery. I always respected the different beliefs and got the same respect back. The biggest cultural shock was the sauna

as in India nobody can imagine that people stay together naked in a room. People expressing their love openly in the streets was also new for me. Finnish people are polite, punctual and honest. I have absorbed many good qualities from Finland and gained some abilities which will be helpful for the my rest of life.

This programme helped me to develop a lot as a person – I have learned to face new challenges and solve problems quickly. Every young people should do it.

Manoj Kunniyur, Indian volunteer in Finland



"You will always miss something.."

My name is Elsa Boele and I just came back to my home country The Netherlands after nine months working as a EVS-volunteer in Macedonia. My main task there was to work in a youth information centre, coordinated by the local YMCA, in one of the municipalities of the capital Skopje. It was a neighbourhood with a majority of Albanians. In Macedonia there is a big minority of Albanians and the relationship between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians is strained, to say the least. There are a lot of prejudices between the two groups and almost no interaction. They literally live in separate worlds, the city is divided in two parts. The neighbourhood in which I was working was in the 'Albanian part' of the city. One of the aims of the youth

centre is to bring together young people from different ethnic and social backgrounds in order to help them to overcome prejudices and to make them aware of their role in society. To this end, we organized activities such as theatre, singing, and various cultural activities for the local young people. The YMCA organized trainings in civil society and citizenship and coordinated youth exchanges abroad. Also there were computer and language courses. I helped in organising the activities and organized events myself.

During my volunteering with YMCA I noticed that there is a group of active young people in projects, in Macedonia and abroad, that aim to enhance civil society through youth participation. In spite of visa restrictions, there are a lots of possibilities for young people to visit different countries and to participate in different projects. I think that these young people are crucial for the future of Macedonia, which is still influenced by its past, and where corruption is unfortunately no exception. It is thus necessary to help young people who feel responsible for building up a better society, particularly after having witnessed that there is still a long way to go to resolve the inter-ethnic problems.

Abroad I have started to value the Dutch culture and organized society more, acknowledging its good things, most of which I took for granted before. But now I am back again, already missing my Macedonian friends, the relaxed lifestyle, the possibility of going out for dinner whenever you want (without having to be rich), the small village that big Skopje is, the chaos... Someone once said to me it that if you lived in more than one country you never can be really happy again: you will always miss something. And I am afraid this will be true for me...

Elsa Boele, Dutch volunteer in Macedonia



"My experience was fantastic!! "

My name is Nasser Mulindwa and I am an ICYE Ugandan volunteer in Finland. I work at Home Mission Society of the Church of Finland, which runs a university of applied science, a home for the elderly people and a

school for disabled students.

As soon as I met my students and had to introduce myself to the people I realised that it was time for me to face new challenges. In the school of the handicap students I attended English lessons to give students the opportunity to practice English, and sometimes I even took over the lesson. I also practiced sports with the students and helped out in the information technology lessons and sometimes I worked as an assistant librarian. I am proud to say that I have acquired a lot of experience on how to handle different kind of students with different cultures and languages. It didn't take long before I was integrated into Finnish culture. While, with time, I got used to the sauna and the cold weather (including swimming in very cold waters in winter), up to now I failed to get used with coffee though.

Something I am going to miss from Finland is the sauna and, of course, my great friends.

Finnish people are wonderful, calm, peaceful and friendly.

Although my host town is small, there are a lot of opportunities. I had the chance to get involved in an international course at my project. I participated in social inclusion projects and discussed about cultural differences from various countries. My experience was fantastic!!

Nasser Mulindwa, Ungandan volunteer in Finland



"Education is not easy and needs lots of patience and attention"

"How is it like, volunteering in France?" I can only come up with an answer, "it's very ..., French."

My name is Ashley Chen-Hui, volunteer from Taiwan. We are more than 30 ICYEers from 4 continents volunteering in France. The projects include youth hostels, care centres for disabled second-hand shops for poverty, centre for elderly people and children centres.

I work at a "Foyer d'enfants" which provides a shelter for kids that come mostly from problematic families. Under the French social welfare system, the kids from illegally immigrated and their divorced, unemployed, or socially marginalized parents may live in the centre and receive a normal and better education. Living in the centre I have the chance to share my daily life with these kids and have the chance to witness that education is not an easy job and needs lots of patience and attention. For example: shortly after I arrived, one morning on my door there were graffiti of ketchup and honey and the kids were making fun of me taking advance of the fact that I did not understand much French. After some time, I learned how to react to their behaviour and have managed to win their trust and respect. The kids are motivated to learn English hoping to travel to another country and help people. Many of my colleagues get to know more about Taiwan and want to visit someday. The projects in France are surely not in short of resources as the third-world countries are. Trying to adapt to an environment which thinks is superior than others takes time and work.

Almost 7 months have passed, I am used to my French life and am in love with it!

Ashley Chen-Hui Lin, Taiwanese volunteer in France



News From International Organizations



Youth at the United Nations
www.un.org/youth



International Youth Day – 12 August 2007

It's time to begin preparing for International Youth Day 2007 (IYD), if you haven't already! The theme for IYD 2007 is "Be seen, be heard: youth participation for development". Team up! Organize! Celebrate! Take action! The Day presents a great opportunity to create awareness of the importance of youth participation and inclusion in the societies in which they live. For more information, please visit <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyouthday.htm>



4th Annual Youth Assembly - August 12-15, UN Headquarters, New York

Do you have a youth delegate from your country attending this year's General Assembly? If not, please see how you can begin the process to include a youth representative in your national delegation. For more information, please see <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/youthrep.htm>.

Every year, the Assembly provides avenues for students and young professionals (18-26 years old) to learn about and become involved with programs that address global and local issues. In 2007, the 4th Annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations will take place from August 12-15, with a Leadership Training extension August 8-12. Endorsed and supported by the Permanent Missions to the United Nations and affiliated NGOs. All participants reside at Pace University, Manhattan for the entire program and optional, post-program activities.



European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID 2008)

The European Union has declared 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID 2008). Throughout the year 2008, activities promoting a dialogue between different cultures will take place all over Europe. They will be supported and run by youth organisations, cultural actors, pedagogical institutions and many further key players in the field of intercultural dialogue. In the run-up to the EYID 2008, part of its future website has been launched in a preliminary version.

Go to www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu and become part of the EYID 2008!



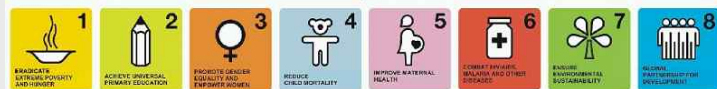
Working Together to Protect Children in Armed Conflict

Armed conflicts and wars are happening around the world, and children and youth are suffering. During the 1990s, more than 2 million children died as a direct result of armed conflict, and an estimated 20 million children were forced to flee their homes. In the fall of 2007, government leaders will gather at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to come up with solutions and make recommendations on how to protect children in war.

For more information please visit: www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_3788.html You will find materials to discuss with others what should be done to help children affected by armed conflict.

News From NGOs

The world is too round to sit silently in the corner



Loesje

A new website and a source for people that want to undertake actions/campaigns related to the Millennium Development Goals and an inspiration for people that want to run information campaigns in the youth sector : <http://www.mdg.loesje.org>
You can contribute yourself, share your ideas and material and download the created material.

In July/August a useful handbook will be available in English and Russian. For more information, please email rola@loesje.org

reinforced mentorship in voluntary service project, 25-29 September 2007, in Rome, Italy . The seminar will gather voluntary service professionals, youth workers, current and future mentors, sending and hosting organisations to offer a learning experience on mentoring and reinforced mentorship. Focus will be on service provided by volunteers in organisations working with young people living with disabilities, coming from poor families or care homes, juvenile offenders, ethnic minorities, refugees, and so on. The Seminar is financed by the European Commission. The registration process is open. For more information please contact Helena at helena@avso.org.



MDGs & \$ 100 Laptop

The UN Millennium Campaign is developing a suite of games on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that will be incorporated into the \$100 laptop. The \$100 laptop is a unique learning tool created specifically for the world's poorest children. The laptop was designed collaboratively by experts from both academia and industry, and will ship roughly 10 million laptops to the developing world this year and moving towards up to 50 million in 2008. For more information, see www.laptop.org



17 October: Stand Up, Speak Out!

On the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, join millions of people from around the world to Stand Up and Speak Out against poverty and inequality. In 2000, world leaders from 189 countries signed up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a global plan to halve extreme poverty by 2015 – being 7 July 2007 the half way date to achieve the MDGs. Last year, more than 23 million people in 87 countries stood up and took action to remind them of this promise. Also, For more information, please visit: <http://www.standagainstpoverty.org>.



"Hand-in-hand" AVSO Seminar on Mentorship for International Volunteers

The Association of Voluntary Service Organisations in Europe, together with its Italian member AFSAI/ICYE Italy will organise an expert seminar on



ShootNations 2007

Shoot Nations, in association with Plan International, is a global youth photography competition for ALL 11 - 24 year olds. We are looking to attract as many kids as possible to sign up and submit photographs on the theme of GOVERNANCE and what it means to them. (there is a detailed youth friendly brief and rules on-line)

Entries can be submitted between 15th June - 20th July by uploading on-line or by post.

The competition is being run in conjunction with the UN's International Youth day on August 12th and the winning images will be presented to the UN on the 13th in New York. Basically, we are really excited about the project and want to inspire as many young people as possible- and there are loads of PRIZES to be WON including digital cameras! The website explains more - www.shootnations.org or www.shootnations.org/presspacks Shoot Nations is being produced in conjunction with International Youth Day, Sunday 12th August 2007. IYD falls on a Sunday this year and so most

ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS



Pre-departure Training EU-SEE EVS project "HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention"

From 16 thru 19 March 2007, a joint pre-departure training for the ICYE EU-SEE Multilateral EVS Project on "Exploring the potential of young volunteers in HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention in EU and SEE countries" took place in Berlin, Germany. The general objective of this EVS project, financed by the European Commission, is to add an intercultural dimension to HIV/AIDS prevention, education and care work and to promote a more widespread responsibility of civil society in the fight against AIDS across all borders. Participating sending and hosting

organisations attended a training seminar in Birmingham, UK, in September 2006. 7 young volunteers people from EU countries and 4 from South East Europe were trained to engage in voluntary service projects dealing with HIV/AIDS prevention and care projects in the respective countries. This preparatory meeting aimed at enriching the ensuing intercultural learning process and at sharing experience and opinions on distinct approaches in HIV/AIDS preventative work in the EU and SEE countries.

Information & Training Seminar on Italian National Civil Service

From 22 to 26 January 2007, representatives of AFSAI/ ICYE Italy and ICYE Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras and Mexico attended an information cum Training seminar in Puebla, Mexico, financially supported by the ICYE Training Fund. The training at sharing information and providing training on the aims and procedures of the National Civil Service programme funded by the Italian government. This activity also enabled the assessment of past cooperation and the planning of future volunteer exchanges within this scheme. An information pack has been produced and circulated.

ICYE Over 30s & Intergenerational Volunteer Programmes

From 18 thru 24 March 2007, ICJA/ICYE Germany, in cooperation with the ICYE International Office organised a training seminar on Intergenerational Volunteer Exchange, financially supported by the ICYE Training Fund. The event was attended by 24 representatives of ICYE National Committees in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe and Latin America. Following inputs provided by experts on aging population in industrialised countries, and demographic trends in developing countries, the benefits and values of enhancing age inclusive volunteering were debated and proposals were made to ensure the continuation of the ICJA Intergenerational programme, as well as to launch an Age Inclusive ICYE programme open to older volunteers, between 30 and 60/70 years of age. To sustain the momentum, it was agreed to plan workshops on ICYE age inclusive programmes at the GA 2007. In addition, this seminar offered also an opportunity to present the upcoming programme of the German Ministry of Cooperation and Development and the ongoing volunteer programme for young German Conscientious Objectors.

public institutions running awareness-raising and civic education programmes with young people from multicultural, multiethnic and multi-faith backgrounds to empower their participation in local campaigns and local development. This project meaningfully enhanced the volunteers civic participation, their leadership skills and their engagement in the dialogue and exchange with youth from minority groups. A joint mid-term evaluation of all volunteers and their project supervisors in SEE countries was held in Tirana, Albania, combined with a 1 day seminar on "the role of youth as agents of change in civil society".



Final Evaluation EU-SEE EVS project - "Youth Dialogue and Local Development"

From 18 thru 21 May 2007, a joint evaluation of the ICYE EU-SEE Multilateral EVS Project on Youth Dialogue and Local Development took place in Berlin, Germany. This exchange project, financed by the European Commission, enabled a group of 14 young volunteers people from 4 EU and South Eastern European countries to work for 9 months in youth NGO's and

Asia Europe Training for Trainers on Intercultural Learning

Intercultural Learning is a key element to promote and deepen mutual understanding and appreciation between Asia and Europe. 30 youth field workers, youth leaders and trainers participated in the Asia-Europe Training for Trainers that took place from 25 to 31 May 2007 in Manila, the Philippines. The event was co-organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the Philippines National Youth Commission (NYC), in close co-operation with the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) and the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS). Through tailored training session, and exchange of good practice, activities aimed at reinforcing the capacity of participants and represented organisations in the area of youth exchanges and non-formal education. In addition, the event also aimed at fostering the creation of an Asia Europe Pool of trainers.



Final Evaluation EU-EECA EVS project "Europe and Human Rights"

From 1 thru 4 June 2007, a joint evaluation of the ICYE EU-EECA Multilateral EVS Project on Human Rights in Europe

took place in Berlin, Germany. This reciprocal exchange project, financed by the European Commission, enabled a group of 14 volunteers to engage, for nine months, in Refugee and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) host organisations in 5 Eastern Europe and Caucasus and 4 EU countries. Volunteers worked in a variety of institutions or associations and learnt about the precarious situations in which refugees, migrants, and IDP's live. The volunteers' involvement brought an added value to the work and life of the beneficiaries and host organisations and gave the volunteers an opportunity to practice active citizenship together with marginalized groups and human rights organisations in Europe.

ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

New ICYE National Correspondents

- Belgium: Joke DE CLERCQ (Ms)
- Costa Rica: Mariel PINEL (Ms)
- Iceland: Halldór HLÖÐVERSSON (Mr)

ICYE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 21-24 August, 2007: | Pre-departure Training of 9-month EU-Latin America EVS Multilateral Project on "Participation of Young People" |
| 7- 10 September, 2007: | Pre-departure Training of 9-month EU-Africa EVS Multilateral Project on "Social Inclusion" |
| 24 –27 September, 2007: | Pre-departure Training of 9-month EU-Asia Multilateral Project on "Youth and Intercultural Dialogue" |
| 5-10 November, 2007: | 25 th ICYE Federation General Assembly – Taipei, Taiwan |