

# Worlds of experience



No. 18 (February 2009)

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#### ICYE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of “Worlds of Experience” in 2009 - dedicated to “Youth and Children’s Rights”. **2009 marks ICYE’s 60th Anniversary** - ICYE is still young and daring, faithful to the vision of John Eberly, ICYE founder, who said: “Don’t ask or explain - just go ahead until you’re stopped!”

The “UN Convention of the Rights of the Child” is an integral part of the human rights framework - rights which are essential to live as human beings, basic standards without which people cannot survive and develop in dignity. They are inherent to the human person, inalienable and universal. Children are particularly vulnerable and have particular rights that recognize their special need for protection, and which must be realized for children to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They are human beings and are the subject of their own rights.

*Volunteer’s Voices* feature the views of ICYE/EVS volunteers, the vast majority of whom work with and for children in community projects aiming at promoting, protecting and realizing youth and children’s rights. The analysis of a Polish exchangee on the legal national and international frameworks of rights of people with disabilities against the day to day life of disabled in Ghana, is followed by the views of a South African volunteer on the relevance of human rights in fighting poverty in affluent Germany. The importance of research, advocacy, and awareness-raising to fight child abuse in South Africa, highlighted by a British volunteer in South Africa, is complemented by the positive assessment of a US volunteer of the Finnish rehabilitation and care system for children and families. The contrast of how children’s rights are promoted in Switzerland and Uganda, as experienced by an Ugandan ICYE exchangee, precedes the account by a Finnish volunteer on how a Kenyan NGO defends Child Rights. The recognition of children’s need for love and care as a universal need is the closing, candid testimony of a young German in Mexico.

*News from Int’l Organisations* feature, among others, the UNEP survey on sustainable lifestyles among youth; the new UN Resolution on Volunteerism; and European Year 2009- Creativity and Innovation. *News from NGOs* reports on the “Ubuntu” (“Humanness” in Bantu languages) Voluntary Service Award and tools to enhance accountability and transparency of international volunteering programmes.

*ICYE Programme News* opens with the celebrations of ICYE 60th Anniversary during 2009, the latest ICYE publications to foster training of long-term volunteer exchanges, and is followed by Youth Peace Conference of ICYE Sweden, as well as forthcoming events of the international ICYE project to promote youth action for civil society.

We hope you’ll enjoy the reading! We would like to encourage readers to send us their articles and pictures for the next issue of “Worlds of Experience”, which will be dedicated too “Youth volunteering in Arts & Culture” and will be published at the end of June 2009. Please send your contributions to [icye@icye.org](mailto:icye@icye.org) , before 31 May 2009 .

Warmest wishes!  
ICYE International Office

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

## “Youth and Children’s Rights”

### VOLUNTEERS VOICES

#### Rights of children with disabilities in Ghana

My name is Dorota Gadzinowska, I'm from Poland and am currently volunteering with EVS/ICYE in Ghana.

**The law** - in 2006 the Ghanaian parliament passed Act 715, or the Disability Law as it is usually referred to. The main aim was to enable disabled people to enjoy the rights granted to all citizens by the 1992 Ghanaian constitution. Among others it guarantees: access to public places (within 10 years all public places in Ghana should be accessible for people with disabilities); free general and specialist medical care; education; and secure employment for disabled people (companies that employ disabled people will get tax exemptions). Edwenase Rehabilitation Centre in the city of Kumasi, where I've been working for the past 4 months, was established in the late 50' when Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah had a vision of setting up vocational centres for people with disabilities throughout the country. Initially, with governmental support, they were successful.

In recent decades though, government funding constraints have impacted the content of courses and consequently the time required for students to qualify in their profession. Some of the trainees have been here for as long as 10 years! Currently the Centre provides courses in shoemaking, dressmaking, tailoring, needlework and hairdressing. The agricultural and catering departments are not functioning due to a lack of funding.

#### Section 6&7, act 715 - Right to access to public places and services

#### Art.23 UN Convention Right to live full and independent lives

David is a talented shoemaker. Even though he has not finished his course yet, many traders order shoes from him which they later sell at the market. He has a good grasp of English, mathematics and how the shoe business works. In the evenings he sits with his girlfriend discussing the future. He is wheelchair bound due to polio. This means that going by public transport is virtually impossible for him. Tro-tros are usually full and have no ramps so he always has to count on external help. His chances to receive a start up grant from the government or an offer of work are unlikely. He cannot work in any small workshop in the market or like many other shoemakers walk the streets trying to find customers.



#### Art. 28 - UN's Convention right to education section 4 of Act 715 - Right to freedom from discrimination

Paulina was brought to the centre by her mother, who was told by a pastor that her daughter was a witch and the reason for all her family's misfortunes. Some staff members believed that she was possessed and attacked them in dreams. When I met her she was very shy, hardly looking a person in the eyes. She is about 13, and has never gone to any school, so I was the witness of her first writing attempts. These are just two examples, but there are many more. This is why I focus my work in the centre on two main areas: literacy and numeracy education, and looking for support for the centre and its students. Teaching has been a great experience for me. Though many have never received formal education before, their enthusiasm and willingness to learn is overwhelming.

Some of the funds from the Christmas Cards Project from dried banana leaves that were later sold in Europe (more on the centre's website [www.ercghana.blogspot.com](http://www.ercghana.blogspot.com)), enabled us to: buy each student a school kit; raise funds for wheelchair ramps so that students can easily get to their dormitories; a library with books, games and other resources to boost their hunger for education; a first aid kit for emergencies; and also some general repairs in the centre. In the photo below you can see students putting their new school kit into good use.



Besides finding appropriate teaching methods for students with various disabilities (i.e. blind and deaf), I am trying different sources to find support for the centre, so that people like David or Paulina can make use of their vocational training and be independent in the future. There is a lot of work ahead, but my motivation is growing day by day. It is my great privilege and best part of the volunteering experience to work and live alongside the trainees and I do hope that one day soon they will be able to enjoy their full rights and live happily and independently in their country.

*Dorota Gadzinowska, Polish EVS volunteer in Ghana.*



### Children's Rights and poverty (in Germany)

My name is Bongani Nkosi, a young South African volunteering in an EVS ICYE project in southern Germany. I have been working for four months at AKI- Aktivspielplatz Raitelsberg, an organisation established in 1977. It is an adventure playground surrounded by council flats in a deprived area where many social welfare recipients live in. 70% of Raitelsberg's inhabitants (neighbourhood of Stuttgart) have a migrant background.

The aim of the activities is to enhance the kids' sense of responsibility, show them that non-violent resolution of conflicts is possible, and to support them in shaping their own future. Children rights are a key element of our work which focuses on the needs of young people regardless of their origin. The kids coming to play are from many different countries such as Russia, Turkey, Ghana, America, Italy, Portugal and so on. Currently 60 to 70 kids come to the centre, where they play, do sports and handicraft.

Since I've been here, I have noticed that the kids are aggressive and do not get along (constant verbal abuse) and it seems that this problem originates back home - they come from different families and they don't get attention from their parents at all and I believe that is the main reason why they behave like this. Although their vocabulary is poor, here they can express what they want, what they feel, what they like or dislike.

I mainly work inside the house and sometimes I go out as they want to play soccer and making fire. I mostly cook with the kids or play in the hall during their school break. I am glad that I can integrate elements of my own culture e.g. by preparing food together, teaching our traditional dances, and supporting them to put into practice their ideas and plans.

For the majority of the kids AKI means attention, support, care and a positive attitude to be someone else. Many of them like to move a lot (unfortunately they have little space to do so), some are children with ASD, others have little sense of balance, and quite a few are overweight. With a few exceptions among the girls, children at Aki show the extent of poverty they live in.

*Bongani Nkosi, South African EVS volunteer in Germany*

### You can change things from behind a desk!

My name is Felicity, I am an ICYE/EVS volunteer based in Cape Town, South Africa, working now for three months for an organisation called Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN). RAPCAN is a children's right organisation that works locally, provincially, nationally and internationally to prevent: sexual abuse of children and humiliating treatment or corporal punishment of children.

In addition RAPCAN is based in courts throughout the Western Cape working with child offenders and witnesses, especially those accused or victim of sexual and violent crimes.

When I first arrived I was first impressed by the look of the office (even if it does not have any views of the ocean!) and was given my placement in the Research and Advocacy department. If I am honest my initial reaction was one of disappointment: a desk job, I could have done this back in Europe. However my advice to anyone that feels like that, give it time, you'll be surprised what you can experience, learn and change from behind a desk!

Advocacy with everyone, from children and community members, to government officials, is vital if the situation in South Africa is going to change from one where high levels of child abuse and maltreatment are acceptable to one where they are not. The violent history of South Africa means that violence, abuse, gangs and crime are still a big problem and the research and advocacy department has as its objective to learn the causes of this violence and advocate for solutions and action.

To start with I was given a number of independent research projects, to help me understand the situation in South Africa and get a feel for the organisation.

I have also been involved in a number of community workshops, bringing together a vast range of participants, from well established and internationally funded organisations to local women wanting to do something in their neighbourhoods, to help them build networks and strengthen their work against youth violence and crime. It was interesting to observe the obstacles they face working with and for youth, for example competing with the excitement that a life in a gang can offer, struggling for resources, and being able to reach the young people that really need it. It was heartening to see local adolescents also very active in changing the situation through setting up their own projects and programmes.

One of the bigger projects is working with the Department of Education. RAPCAN in conjunction with a number of other organisations is designing a two-stranded project on positive discipline and parenting education. The first strand aims to help schools to stop the corporal punishment, which despite a ban is still rife in South African schools. It aims to stop this through providing training on positive discipline - teachers, parents, learners and governing bodies need to be given alternative

strategies to deal with unacceptable behaviour and improve learning in schools.

The second strand on parenting education aims to both reduce the number of teenage pregnancies and also child maltreatment through educating young people on how to be good parents and the responsibilities involved in being a parent. I have been given the opportunity to help write the curriculum and present my ideas and research on how teenage parents are more likely to abuse their children and that teaching about parenting has some impact on reducing teenage pregnancy as young people realise the responsibilities involved.

The organisation is also involved in a number of other projects; they have set up child friendly rooms in all the courts so that Children who have to face the trauma of testifying in court have access to counsellors, food and an explanation as to what is going to happen to them. RAPCAN also does training with educators, youth workers and police on dealing with child abuse, something that is unfortunately still widespread in South Africa,

Whilst my position has not allowed me to see the changes on the ground, working for an advocacy department helped me to see how much thought, preparation and work goes into even the smallest intervention in order to ensure that it has a positive impact. It may not be as exciting as playing soccer with children, or being able to look after their day-to-day needs, but it is just as vital if we are going to ensure that every child is able to fulfil their human rights. It just goes to show that you can change things from behind a desk!

*Felicity Butt, British EVS volunteer in South Africa*

### **Rehabilitation for children and families in Finland**

My name is Kristie Jadwin, a US volunteering with ICYE in Finland.

In choosing a volunteer project in Finland, my main interest had always been the welfare of children and how different countries respond to their needs if they find themselves in an unsafe environment. I had been curious to become involved in a project that included a glimpse of the Finnish foster care system and at a group home for children of all places, which is something unheard of in the United States. The Romano Missio Päiväkumpu Lastenkoti of Hämeenkoski, Finland has given me the insight to what the Finnish government's responsibilities have been in response to child welfare, particularly of children who have been removed from their homes.

The centre is a home for children removed from their families due to complications within their home environment. For fifty years this children's home, tucked away from city life in an open rural area, has catered to children mostly of Romani decent, however the home is also open to relatively any child in need of a more stable and safe environment. At the children's home there are a total of twenty staff who work all hours of the day and night to keep a watchful eye on 16 children

from one years of age through seventeen. The main responsibilities of the staff, and myself, include assisting the younger children with dressing themselves, daily meals, cleaning-up after themselves, and of course my favourite part of the day – Going Outside!

This family of staff and children has meshed together well to meet the everyday individual needs of all children at the home. All of the children are involved in various individual activities such as salibandy, ice-hockey, and horseback riding. The younger non-school aged children get to participate in other activities that have included concerts, swimming, skiing, sledding, or simply taking a walk through the forest to encourage new adventures and learning. The children who live at the Päiväkumpu have visits with their parents and family members on weekends over holiday breaks, or day visits where the parents are always welcome to reunite with their child(ren).

Not knowing how the Finnish foster care system works, at first, my feelings were that the idea of "discarding" children into a group home as a last resort option would be unheard of in the United States. I have found that this difference of the placement in a group home instead of individual families works well in the children's favour. Instead of children in the U.S. going from home to home and slowly be pushed out of the system as they reach their teenage years, the children of the Päiväkumpu can live in one home until the age of eighteen; though the downside to this would be having a somewhat irregular environment with many different people in and out of their lives.

This experience has definitely opened my eyes to how another country has dealt with the social welfare of its children. I have been grateful to be able to work with both staff and children and learn that different ways of approaching and addressing social problems may in fact be the better way of dealing with rehabilitation of families who have struggled to create stable and loving environments for children. To create a social system that encourages rehabilitation for the children and families through places like a Päiväkumpu, there will be a lasting affect on the children nurturing a stable and equally productive future in the long-run.



*Kristie Jadwin, US ICYE Volunteer in Finland.*



## The rights of a child in Switzerland and Uganda

I am Kabugo Ronald, an exchangee from Uganda volunteering in Switzerland. My host project deal with children from the age of 6 month to 6 years. Through my experience at the host project here in Switzerland, concerning the topic of rights of the child, I would say that they are highly respected and recognized. Rights to education, good conditions, good health, food and clothes are all provided.

Unfortunately in some part of my country (Uganda) rights of children are abused due to the great difference in standard of living. Some people are really too poor to provide the basic needs for children, example rights to education, food, clothes and medication. However, organizations such as UNICEF, UNO and the government have to tried to work together in creating solutions to the problem. For instance, free universal primary education was initiated. This has helped thousands of the children to earn free education. Last but not least, I would say that the rights of a child in Switzerland is totally perfect. It was really good for me to have this experience too in Switzerland.



*Kabugo Ronald, Ugandan ICYE volunteer in Switzerland*

## On the way to better Child Rights A Kenyan experience

My name is Maarit Roström, a Finnish EVS volunteer in Kenya with ICYE. According to the African Report on Child Wellbeing 2008 Kenya is doing quite well with its efforts to respect the Rights of the Child. The Report states that despite its relatively low economic status the country is among the best in Africa when it comes to protecting Children's Rights. Despite this, there is still need for different actors such as NGOs fighting for better Children's Rights.

**The CRADLE** – The Children Foundation is one of the main Kenyan organizations fighting to improve the wellbeing of the younger ones in society. This NGO, founded by lawyers in the late 1990's has concentrated on working towards a more child-friendly legislation in the country. One of the major tasks of the organization is also to offer pro bono counselling and lawyers for the ones in need. In addition, research on Child Rights and child wellbeing, as well as awareness raising activities at grass roots are carried out in several local communities. One of the great concerns of the CRADLE when it comes to Child Rights violations is the sexual abuse of children.

The CRADLE was one of the principal actors in Kenya in creating and implementing the Sexual Offences Act, which strives to improve the laws against sexual offences. It provides more accurate guidelines on dealing with sex offenders and seeks to enhance the protection of the actual victims, by challenging, for example, traditional beliefs such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, which are deeply rooted in certain societies and most of the people don't actually know that these practices as illegal.

Also, the harsh conditions in some parts of the country make the exploitation of different vulnerable groups of people too easy. In the Suba district, the region of Kenya close to Lake Victoria, a form of sexual exploitation of women and girls has become known as 'sex for fish'. As men hold the power in the fishing industry, the women and girls are left with little choices when it comes to gaining one's livelihood. In exchange for fish they offer the men sexual services.

Another big concern is the schooling of children. Even though in 2003 Kenya has improved in this aspect by making primary education free and compulsory for all, it still faces some challenges in making this law into reality. Besides the fact that many parents cannot afford to buy school uniforms and lunch for their children, teenage pregnancies have become a serious problem. For this reason the CRADLE works with secondary schools to raise the awareness on the importance of education and to give teenagers other options than finding the 'significant other' at a tender age.

The violations of Children's Rights may be similar in Kenya and Finland, but not always to the same extent. Even though in Finland, with a better economic situation and with a smaller gap between the poor and the rich, people normally have more freedom to decide on their own lives, the protection of Children's Rights is not perfect. For many young people who don't get to grow up with responsible parents and face different kinds of abuse, for example, the situation can be difficult. As for Kenya, people consider children as an essential asset of the society, creatures to be cherished. Only some traditions and harsh realities in times fail to provide what's actually best for the children.

So when it comes to Children's Rights, I don't believe that either of the countries really affords to fall into illusions that everything has been done in order to get child wellbeing to a top level. Both countries have their pros and cons in this aspect. The only way to improve Child Rights is to realize the need for action and take action.

*Maarit Roström, Finnish volunteer in Kenya*



### Deep inside they are still the same children looking for love

My name is Viktor Brandt, I'm from Germany and have been living in Mexico for five months. I volunteer at the *Fundación Pro Niños de la Calle I.A.P* where I work with street children. At first sight, these children seem to be "normal": they like to play, have fun, to smile, etc. But when you get to know them better, you realize that their lives have been very hard and their circumstances have made them grow fast. They are like small adults, and tend to be rude and aggressive, but deep inside they are just looking for love.

On the street, children feel free to find another reality, meet other children with the same problems and feel accepted in their new group, for which they establish their own rules and values. There, they work in what they can, beg for money and steal and in some extreme cases they prostitute themselves. Earning some money gives them the impression this kind of life is easy and makes it difficult to break away from it. I think that is very sad that these children have to work, not being aware of their rights and other options.

*Fundación Pro Niños de la Calle* shows children a better way of living through three different stages: street work, day centre and the option of life. I participate in the second stage, where we stimulate the development of children capabilities and healthy habits in order to convince them to leave the streets, by showing them an atmosphere of acceptance, respect, order and cleanliness.

In *Pro Niños*, I try to give affection, I don't try to change them, just help them in the hope that they will find their own value. Obviously my work will not solve this big problem but is a signal that will help to change this reality.

It is hard for me to understand the origins of this situation. I think it is so complex that not even the government can solve it, even though it has tried to through special programmes and campaigns. I, though in a small way, try to help them in my project.

*Viktor Brandt, ICYE German volunteer in Mexico*

## News From International Organizations



**Youth and the United Nations**  
[www.un.org/youth](http://www.un.org/youth)

### You tell us! Youth voices in World Youth Report 2009

In order to expand the scope and coverage of the World Youth Report 2009 (WYR09), which will focus on youth and climate change, the UN Programme on Youth is seeking information from experts in the field of youth and climate change, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as young people. The input submitted may be academic research, case studies, publications, best practices, effective interventions, as well as national youth policies currently being implemented.

The chapters of the WYR09 will be organized as follows:

- Youth, climate change and the social development agenda
- Climate change youth and their well-being
- Indigenous youth and climate change
- Addressing change at the roots: Youth consumption patterns
- Reforming education for climate protection
- Adapting to climate change: Is youth employment at risk?
- Positioning youth for adaptation and mitigation: the role of civil society
- Moving forward: placing youth at the centre of the response to climate change.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr09.htm>.



### UNEP - Survey on sustainable lifestyles among youth

The Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles (GSSL) is a joint initiative of the Task Force on Sustainable Lifestyles led by Sweden and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as a part of the Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP). The GSSL aims at: 1) inspiring young adults from all over the world, as well as exploring their views and aspirations with regards to sustainable lifestyles; and 2) providing recommendations to policy-makers and other stakeholders in the design for solutions and policies that promote sustainable lifestyles. The survey is targeted at young adults (18-35 years old) from all regions. It consists of an online questionnaire that allows them to share their experience and expectations. By responding to a series of short video scenarios on food, mobility and energy consumption, participants can also share their vision for lifestyles in the future.

The questionnaire can be accessed or downloaded in English at <http://www.unep.fr/gssl>. More information:  
<http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/taskforces/lifestyles.htm>



### UNFPA- State of the World Population 2008 (and Youth supplement)

"Reaching common ground: culture, gender and human rights" is the theme of the State of the World Population 2008. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) flagship publication noted that development strategies that are sensitive to cultural values could reduce harmful practices against women and promote human rights, including gender equality and women's empowerment. The Youth Supplement to the report addresses culture as it shapes and nurtures the lives of young people. It shows how young people develop their own subcultures that are often different from and may conflict with the dominant culture. The Supplement points out the value to young people of protecting the culture in which they grew up. It also speaks on behalf of their right to embrace their own cultures in their own ways. More information: <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/>



### UN committee approves new resolution on volunteerism

Also on the 24th of October a UN General Assembly committee unanimously adopted a new UN resolution that calls on governments to mobilize support for volunteerism research and asks the UN system to integrate volunteerism into its programmes. More than 70 countries co-sponsored the resolution proposed by the Governments of Brazil and Japan. The new resolution, which will be voted on by the GA in the next weeks, requests the UN system to integrate volunteerism into its policies, programmes and reports and calls on governments to mobilize support for volunteerism research.

You can read more on the [UNV website](http://www.unv.org/)



### European Year 2009 - "Imagine. Create. Innovate."

2009 has been designated the "European Year of Creativity and Innovation". The European Commission launched the communication campaign on 5 December, with the slogan "Imagine. Create. Innovate."

The aim is to promote creative and innovative approaches in different sectors of human activity, to better equip the European Union for the challenges ahead in a globalised world.

*"The European Year of Innovation and Creativity 2009 will help unlock Europe's creative and innovative potential, a task that has become even more important in times of economic crisis",* the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Training and Youth Ján Figel' said during the launch ceremony.

Governments, businesses and civil society should engage in a debate on how Europeans should change for the EU to remain competitive on the global stage while also preserving *"a socially cohesive society, united in its rich diversity"*, the commissioner said.

To read more, please visit the official website of the Year 2009 at <http://create2009.europa.eu>.



### Online Public Consultation on the Future Development of EU Youth Policies

On 22 September the European Commission has launched an online public consultation on the future development of EU youth policies. The results will be submitted to European policy-makers, who will take them into consideration when preparing concrete measures to help young people integrate into society, find work, improve their general well-being and get involved in society as citizens.

All stakeholders in the youth field are invited to promote the consultation, whose target groups are youth NGOs, youth leaders and others who work with young people. A web button which links directly to the consultation and also a short teaser text are provided in many different languages. These tools can be downloaded from:

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/consultation/download\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/consultation/download_en.htm)

### EPC report on the impact of the global financial crisis on the world's poorest

The European Policy Centre (EPC) has published the report of its Policy Dialogue on 'The impact of the global financial crisis on the world's poorest', which took place on 16 December 2008. The world's poorest people and countries will be particularly badly affected by the global economic crisis, coupled with recent increases in fuel and food prices, speakers told the Policy Dialogue, organised with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. It also will lead to cuts in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from richer countries, exacerbating the situation. The EU could help to mitigate the impact of the downturn by strengthening international coordination to resist calls for a reduction in ODA.

Read more:

<http://www.epc.eu/en/er.asp?TYP=ER&LV=293&see=y&t=2&PG=ER/EN/detail&I=&AI=871>

## News From NGOs

### THE UBUNTU VOLUNTARY SERVICE AWARD



The one-year UBUNTU project is financed by the European Commission under action 3.2 of the Youth In Action Programme: Youth in the World - Cooperation with countries other than the neighbouring countries of the European Union.

Ubuntu, literally meaning "humanness" is a traditional African concept and has its root in the Bantu languages of Southern Africa. Its essential meaning can be conveyed using the Zulu maxim "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"—meaning, in essence, "a person is a person through other persons."

The core idea of the project is to select and award excellent international youth voluntary service projects in the SADC (South African Development Community) region. During the project we hope to increase networking opportunities between European and African organisations active in the field of international voluntary service and; through comprehensive dissemination of the projects outcomes, we hope to improve the quality of any such future cooperation in this field.

Queries or requests for information can be sent to [simon@avso.org](mailto:simon@avso.org).



### Tools to enhance accountability and transparency of international volunteering programmes:

By Benjamin J. Lough, Research Associate, Centre for Social Development, George Warren Brown School of Social Work

No individual or organisation wants to donate time or resources to activities, which have no documented benefit or impact. Regular evaluation of outcomes should be a planned part of program goals at all levels. In the case of international volunteering and service (IVS), this includes the impact of volunteers on the community, the host-organization, and the individual volunteer. For detail, go to: <http://www.civicus.org>



## AVSO capacity building seminar on health and safety in voluntary service

11 – 14 May in Brussels

AVSO intends to organise a capacity building seminar for voluntary service organisations, who wish to learn more about appropriate health and safety measures concerning voluntary service outside of the EU. The seminar will focus on the following issues:

- Preparatory health measures prior to departure (vaccines, travel medical kit)
- Information about insurance coverage
- health and safety issues information for future volunteers and their parents (!)
- Safety issues linked to travel, valuables, documents, mugging and robbing, authorities, reference person/mentor/supervisor;
- Health preventive measures i.e. drinking water, food, illnesses, insect, etc...
- What to do in an emergency situation (who to contact, insurance company, parents, steps to take...)

For more information contact: [agnes@avso.org](mailto:agnes@avso.org)



## ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS

### 2009 - ICYE 60th Anniversary



1949 - How it all began -the first group of German exchange students on the ship to the USA

The origins of ICYE go back to 1949. Four years after it, the world was recovering from the effects of World War II. ICYE's origins were in experiences of reconciliation. The leading founder, John Eberly, said "don't ask or explain - just go ahead until you're stopped".

For more information please see „An Incomplete Story“ by Bill Perkins under: [www.icye.org/eng/about\\_history.html](http://www.icye.org/eng/about_history.html)

### 60 years after, ICYE is still young and daring!

From the original bilateral exchange between the USA and Germany it is now a Federation of more than 35 member and partner organisations across all continents, from a student exchange to a volunteer programme.

ICYE is:

- A leader in international youth exchange promoting young people's active and global citizenship
- An experience based programme to enhance young people's intercultural understanding and commitment to peace and justice
- An international network of local organisations providing volunteers with the necessary orientation, training and support
- Long and short - term exchange programmes for 3.000 participants annually

The founder organisation ICJA/ICYE Germany will celebrate the Anniversary from 29 May to 1 June 2009, Weimar, Germany. More under: <http://icja60.icja.de/content/menu/Home>

This celebration will be followed by a similar event in Austria in October 2009, and will culminate with a Festive Act to mark the 60th Anniversary at the ICYE Federation General Assembly, which will take place in Tauranga, New Zealand from 22 thru 28 November 2009.



## ICYE/EVS Training Guide and ICYE/EVS Publications



### Practical Guide for ICYE/EVS Trainings in EU & Partner Countries



#### 'Youth in Action' Programme

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The "Practical Guide for ICYE/EVS Trainings in EU and Partner Countries" resulting from the project "Promoting Interethnic Dialogue and Intercultural Learning – Training for EVS sending and host organisations in EU, African and Asian Countries", supported by the European Commission, is now available at [www.icye.org/eng/news\\_pastseminars.html](http://www.icye.org/eng/news_pastseminars.html)

Three publications, stemming from the recently completed EVS Multilateral Projects, supported by the European Commission, containing testimonials and reflections of EVS/ICYE Volunteers can be downloaded from the ICYE web site clicking on the following links: EU & Africa EVS Project on "Social Inclusion", EU & Asia EVS Project on "Youth and Intercultural Dialogue", EU & Latin America on "Participation of Young People".

PeaceSearchers 2009

En plattform för unga fredsaktörer.



### Under The Spotlight: ICJA's Documentary

"School, Education, Work – was that all? Some see it differently. They are young and want to get to know the world. There is still so much they haven't seen, that they would like to experience, before the get trapped into the daily working routine. They are going for a year to Africa, Asia or Latin America to help out where there is a need. They want to help in children's homes, schools, to make the world a better place". "Die Freiwilligen" („The Volunteers“) tells their story – a story of homesickness, of adventure, of lost illusions and new experiences, of growing up in an unknown land with a foreign culture. After having accompanied 6 German volunteers in Bolivia, Brazil, India, Mozambique and South Africa, from summer 2007 to summer 2008, the film production firm "zeroone" has produced the documentary "The Volunteers – One Year For The World", which has been shown on ARTE TV on 14 and 20 February 2009. For more information please visit [www.icja.de](http://www.icja.de) or contact: [info@icja.de](mailto:info@icja.de)

### PeaceSearchers : Youth Peace Conference in Sweden

*By Ruth Odofoley Nortey ICYE EVS volunteer from Ghana and Isabelle Kermeen ICYE EVS volunteer from the UK.*

In December 2008 Internationellt KulturUtbyte (IKU/ ICYE Sweden) held a peace conference for young people with the name 'PeaceSearchers'. Over fifty people attended, among them incoming and outgoing ICYE volunteers from all over Sweden and the world, active IKU members from local IKU groups, and representatives from other youth peace organisations.

The aim of the conference was to create a platform to bring together youth perspectives on peace from people with different backgrounds, approaches and experiences. This created a space for intercultural dialogue, to engage and inspire young people on what they can do to promote and build peace. In view of Sweden's Presidency of the EU in the second semester Of 2009, IKU believes that youth views on peace should become part of the agenda. The conference was also attended by 10 incoming ICYE volunteers in Sweden and 12 outgoing Swedish ICYE volunteers – this provided a chance for young people to exchange experiences from their own countries, and to share traditions and cultural activities.

One of the highlights of the conference was a lecture by Anna Östberg from The Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, the world's oldest peace organisation, on the importance of banning cluster bombs. Equally exciting were the workshops held by IKU's local groups and the Board, i.e. on whether and how international voluntary service is peace work – many felt that volunteers can contribute to a more peaceful world, by being a more aware and active citizen. In addition, the conference led to the creation of the PeaceSearchers network, which will continue to work to make young people's voice on peace heard.

For more info, please go to [www.iku.nu/peacesearchers](http://www.iku.nu/peacesearchers). You can become a member of our FaceBook group at: [www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=40838713524&ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=40838713524&ref=ts)



### A Vietnamese volunteer taking care of the homeless dogs in Viljandi / Estonia

*Excerpts from the Sakala newspaper - Egon Valdaru, reporter*

Nguyen Ba Khiem, a volunteer from Vietnam (Volunteers for Peace Vietnam – VPV, the editor), who has been working since October 2008 in Viljandi's Shelter for homeless dogs, hopes to see some snow for the first time in his life. In Viljandi's Shelter for homeless dogs, we are welcomed by the director Triinu Priks. "I will call our little boy," she says. A bit later Triinu Priks introduces us to a small young man, who smiles and tries to explain with his English that Vietnam and Estonia are two totally different countries. Coming from Hanoi where the population is about 10 million, Khiem points out that back home their traffic is totally crazy, here it is nicely calm.

"Estonia and its people are very nice. Only the prices are more expensive and it's a bit difficult to get used to the cold weather". While laughing he adds, that he is not scared of the snow because he has got some warm clothes. Khiem is a book-keeper by profession and has worked as such for 3 years. He has already done voluntary work back in Vietnam.

"With the peace organisation I have participated in a lot of work camps and helped the volunteers who came from a foreign country. Usually we have worked in SOS- and friendship villages. I think that it is very nice when someone does something just out of good will. I wish that all the people were happy and that there were peace on Earth."

Khiem has arrived to Estonia through EstYES (ICYE partner in the EVS project funded by the European Commission, the editor) and he will stay in Viljandi for 9 months. Khiem, like other volunteers working there, lives in a children's help centre, where he has his own comfortable room. In the mornings he goes to work and then back home with his bicycle.

Khiem says, that he has dreamed about Estonia before. "Your country is small and the nature interested me. I got the information from Internet and 2 of my friends, who have been living in Tallinn about 30 years and working in a kindergarten." The young man says that he has always liked animals, especially cats. "I have a cat and a dog back home. We are allowed to keep only small cats and dogs." "I live together with three other volunteers from Germany, one from Italy and one from France," he says.

### EVS short term on Women Active Citizenship

Thanks to the support of the European Voluntary Service of the European Commission, from March to May 2009 11 young women from EU countries will engage in voluntary service women centred projects in Ghana, South Africa, India, Vietnam, the Philippines, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Honduras and 6 young women from a selected number of these countries will volunteer in similar projects in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain and the UK. The objective of this EVS project is to enhance capacity-building, transfer of know-how, and exchange of experience and good practice between European, African, Asian and Latin American organisations active in developing and running women empowerment programmes. It is also expected that this project will enhance the incorporation of more women centred voluntary service placements for ICYE and EVS volunteers.

### Youth Action for Civil Society

The ICYE International Office in cooperation with ICYE Ghana will organise the "Youth Action for Civil Society – Euro-African Training Seminar on EVS Capacity and Partnership Building", an Action 3.2. Youth in Action project funded by the European Commission. This activity will take place in Gomoa Fetteh, Ghana from 29 March – 03 April 2009, bringing together representatives of EVS sending and host organisations in 6 African and 6 European Union countries. The main aims of this project are to enhance the exchange of experience and good practice in the field of youth volunteering as well as the development of sustainable partnership between youth and voluntary service organisations in the participating European and African countries.

In the frame of the same project, ICYE EU and Asian member and partner organisations will exchange experienced youth workers for a period of two months. The main aim is to enhance partnership building and the organisations' capacity to plan, implement, report and document long-term EVS projects between Europe and Asia. The reciprocal exchange will take place between the following countries/organisations in the period from April to September 2009:

- ICYE Austria - DEJAVATO Indonesia
- ICYE Belgium - Volunteers for Peace Vietnam (VPV)
- ICYE Italy - ICDE India
- FIYE Poland - WOEI China
- Asermun/Spain – ICYE Taiwan
- IKU Sweden - ICYE Nepal

## ICYE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 25-28 February 09:** Pre-departure Training of 3-month EU-Africa, Asia and Latin America short term EVS Multilateral Project on “Young Women Active Citizenship”
- 17-20 March 09:** Pre-departure Training of 9-month EU-EECA EVS Multilateral Project “Youth Volunteering in Social Welfare”
- 30 March - 3 April 09:** EU-African Training Course on “EVS Programme Management”, Gomoa Fetteh, Ghana
- 14-19 May 09:** ICYE Board of Managers Meeting , Nairobi, Kenya
- July 09:** EU-Latin American Training and Partnership Building Seminar on the active role of women in society