Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of “Worlds of Experience”, the quarterly electronic Newsletter of the Federation of the International Cultural Youth Exchange – ICYE.

The newsletter will comprise different recurring sections. The first one - Volunteers Voices - in each issue, will be dedicated to a different theme relevant to international volunteering and global education, on which our international volunteers will share their experiences, views and analysis.

The theme of this issue is dedicated to experiences of young volunteers working along side staff and local volunteers in projects that work with children living in difficult circumstances in Colombia, Germany, Kenya, Mexico, and Switzerland.

The second and third sections will briefly report on youth projects run respectively by international organisations and NGOs.

An update on new ICYE programmes and projects, will then follow together with more “personal” but equally important news from the ICYE network of members and partners.

A calendar of upcoming events, will close and recap each issue.

The newsletter will be circulated via e-mail, as text only and as PDF format, as well as posted on the ICYE Federation’s web site: www.icye.org

Please note that the next issue will be circulated on 30 April 2003 and will be dedicated to HIV/AIDS and YOUTH.

Please send your contributions to icye@icye.org by 15 April 2003.

We hope that you will enjoy reading it!

ICYE International Office
Stefan Etter, Exchangee from Switzerland in Bogota, Colombia wrote:

"...I work in Bogota, Colombia in a family welfare project called “Emergency Centre Villa Javier”, managed by ACJ (YMCA). This project works with girls and boys between 14 and 18 years old that come from different social backgrounds and with different problems, for example: abused, disability, street children, child soldiers, teen-age mothers, children in conflict with the law.

This emergency centre is the first stop for these children, they are brought in by the police or send from special women centres and here, after an interview with the psychologist, they get the opportunity to join programs which can help them to finish school, and be part of a rehabilitation programme. As the project works closely with the parents, if it is possible, children go also back home.

Sometimes the children lack self-confidence and come back to the emergency centre after a few days. Some of them are almost their whole life from one home to another and in between they come again here.

My tasks and experiences:

First of all, I have to say that I have never worked in this field in Switzerland I used to work with machines. I also have to say that it is really good because I can see things from a different point or view as the rest of the team.

At the beginning I worked with the rest of the team and other volunteers and not so long after I started to work with a small group of boys and girls on my own. I organised workshops with different topics for example: truth, confidence, friendship, love, etc... and also some geography. It was also difficult because from time to time children were aggressive to each other and we had to provide the support that they don’t get from their parents and deal also with drug problems, mainly glue – sniffing.

In general terms, I must say that this job is enriching and satisfactory, there are also moments in which you can be really depressed, when you think he/she is going to make it and take his/her chance, and two weeks later stands again at the door but, by working with children you learn a lot about yourself. Lots of people think that by being a volunteer you don’t get anything because you don’t profit and you are not so important. I have a different experience, sometimes two teachers have 90 children to work with and they are always happy when I help them. Also, if you are a European boy in Colombia you are kind of exotic and children have a lot of interest to work with you. It may happen that a girl sees you as a Backstreet Boy and at the beginning it is also a new experience.

In principle one can say that it depends on your own initiative and engagement what you and your project can learn and profit from each other.

Sandra Villa, Exchangee from Columbia in Berlin, Germany wrote:

I work in Caritas House in Berlin, a Christian organisation that hosts disabled (mental or physical) children and adults. This house provide a place to live to people that have no family, people who don’t have someone who can or will take care of them and provide them with the opportunity to lead a normal life.

All the people that live here, if they can, have the opportunity to have a normal routine, that means having responsibilities in the house like any other person and a daily activity. The children go to school, they have support to do schoolwork and they also have free time and people who spend time with them.

I work with a small group of children (total of 8) between 12 and 19 years old and I really like to work with them even though I had never worked with children before.

My tasks are mainly leisure time activities like going for a walk or sharing playtime with them, these activities are really important for them so they won’t get bored or don’t have any contact with the rest of the group. We also share other kind of activities that can help them to get involved with other people outside the house and to achieve social integration. I help them with their personal hygiene and to fulfil their house responsibilities too.

This time abroad and the fact of having a volunteer social activity have helped me to learn about myself and to have a better relationship with the children, in fact I’ve learned to know how to enjoy their company.
Sandy Lehmann, German exchangee in Nairobi, Kenya wrote:

For me it was more than a challenge. Disabled - that was something what I absolutely didn't want. Okay I didn't refused. I told myself "at least you can try".

I work in Mother Theresa home not far away from the slum Kibera. It is a home for mentally and physical disabled girls in the age of 5 till 41. There are 8 sisters, around 50 students who are also called sisters and 12 workers from Kibera. So, when they took me there, many sisters welcomed me - and they still do it nowadays- but, when I saw the children the first time I felt like running away from this place. I was completely shocked. I never had contact with disabled and this home really shows poverty. I don't know why I stayed because I was really scared.... but the sisters told me "you will get use to it" - not me, I was sure this will be more than a challenge - never.

So, at the beginning I was working only in the kitchen and I made sure that I was not where most children are.

But the children who can walk really tried to spend time together with me - it was impossible for me to refuse.

It is true, at the beginning I came late and went early. I was looking forward to the weekend and was scared of the following Monday. But I don't know what happened maybe the workers and the sisters forced me to rest with the children everyday and one day they asked me to feed them. This made me be interested. I mean this children love me and now I don't see why I should not love them too.

So nowadays I come early ad go late. I am sometimes there for more than nine hours and even some Saturdays I go to work sometimes for a few hours.

I like the workers. I learned to love the children, I enjoy the sisters who are really funny - like in the movie “Sister Act”. What first looked for me like a punishment is now a big gift. I really see that I can help in my project and they are very thankful for all I do.

Shree Bhakta Paudel, Nepal citizen in Switzerland wrote:

“.........I work in " Kinderheim Böglihuus” a home where 13 children between 8 to 15 years old live. They attend school in the morning and come back for lunch, after that some of them play tennis/soccer, go to therapy and some of them just stay in the project.

My first day of work (I was a bit nervous) I received some orientation on how the project and the house are managed, they also explained me my responsibilities here. I have to say that the first week I was a little bit confused because my German was not so good so, the first month I spend most of the time helping around the house, to keep it clean and in the kitchen where I became an expert on making salad and setting the table, activities that I really enjoy.

After a short time my name was included on the week-plan paper hanged on the door so, I spend every afternoon with one of the 13 children, I help them with their home work, we share play-time, I help them when they take a shower and we also go for a walk with the other children and the dogs. On Friday after school some kids are picked up by their parents or relatives and they come back on Sunday evening.

Most of the children here speak Swiss-German but it isn’t a problem, we enjoy the time we spend with each other as well as I enjoy my time with the rest of the staff, they are really friendly and helpful. Well, I really like to work here because children are good and innocent, I wish all the children in the of the world could have the same life-standard like the children here.
Jamie Little, British exchangee in Puebla, Mexico wrote:

“......With a huge improvement in my Spanish I have developed a great relationship with the children. I have been teaching most of them how to read and write. It feels so great to see them read a story of which when I arrived they couldn’t have even read one word.

The youngest of the bunch, Omar, constantly asks me "Cargame por favor" - which means "Carry me please" so he spends most of his time on my back like a rucksack. His nickname has become "Omar la Mochila" which means Omar the Rucksack!

Four of the children that have a severe drug addiction to paint thinner have left. This was mainly due to the fact that they were encouraging the other younger children to start sniffing the paint thinner with them as well. Two of these children also unfortunately found themselves in trouble with the police and ended up in a detention centre for children. Not a nice place to be in Mexico.

The problem that we face is that there are no other organisations that will take minors with drug problems. There are some great organisations here that work with adults on drug addiction but they won’t accept anyone under the age of 16.

When these particular children left, the rest of the group became much easier to manage and from my experience of youth work in London, there is no point risking the difference you can make to the majority in the hope of saving the minority. We have to know as Youth Workers when to say "No, I can’t help this child because I don’t have the skills, experience or resources."

I am reading a book at the moment written for Youth Workers working with street children. It explains how those children that spend many years on the street are the most difficult to work with. All of the 4 children that left had been on the streets most of their lives and it showed.

When you work with children that will come up to you and smack you as hard as they can - for no reason whatsoever, you have to be clear of your abilities and limitations.

I am also teaching English to adolescents and adults who live in the Dormitory - in the evenings. They are advancing quickly and I am feeling a great sense of privilege to be working with them. To my surprise my boss told me that the Senior Management team in DIF Municipal (which is part of the local Government here) are very impressed by the fact that I have been able to teach English to the "callejeros" (which means Street Person).

I am lucky as I will be getting holidays over Xmas and New Year. Most of the staff in the Dormitory will be working with the poor communities, right through Xmas making it as special as possible.

I can’t believe its almost Xmas and that 2002 is over. This time last year I was in London thinking “I hope I am in Mexico this time next year” Well here I am and now I am thinking how nice it would be to go home for Xmas to be with my family! We are never happy and the grass always looks greener on the other side.

Its not that I am not enjoying my time here, I am having a great time but the festive season has turned my thoughts to home, family and friends.

I will only have 6 months left here. A part of me already feels a little excited at the prospect of seeing friends and family but at the same time there is a lot here that I know I am going to miss.
Programme KEO: Elected as “Project of the 21ST century” by UNESCO

Programme KEO is an invitation to every individual on Earth to address his message to our faraway descendants. All the messages, without undergoing any censorship, shall be put aboard the winged satellite KEO, constructed and launched into orbit such that it returns to Earth intact in 500 centuries. The world-wide collection of messages, that is already underway since several months, will continue until the end of December 2003.

In addition to our messages, KEO will also carry archaeological gifts that are laden with symbols and information destined for our great grandchildren. Our future descendants will thus be recipients of all the knowledge procured by the Man of the 21st century. They shall also witnesses of his cultural diversity.

KEO is a project that is free from all political, religious and commercial influence. KEO is being realised thanks to the generous offers of its partners who are each contributing to its creation from the heart of their profession and with the support of institutions such as UNESCO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs..., enterprises like Arianespace, European Spatial Agency, networks like the International Federation of Human Rights, and from people around the world who believe in the future.

If you want to be part of this project, or read more about KEO you can do it by contacting www.keo.org

Volunteers Notions from around the world – Global update 32

The International Year of Volunteers 2001 (IYV) provided many indications on how to further develop the potential of volunteering. National Committees showed the best articulation of networking among stakeholders. In addition to the 123 National Committees, there were more than 500 local, regional and state committees in large metropolises, including Hong Kong, New York, Prague and Rio de Janeiro.

National conferences on volunteerism took place in Benin, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Paraguay, Romania, Togo and Turkey.

This web site provides you with reports from individual countries and the United Nations evaluating the Year and making suggestions for the future and more........

www.worldvolunteerweb.org

International Year of Volunteers 2001 - IYV
Volunteers notions from around the world

Even though the IYV was 2001, the need to further strengthen the capacities of volunteer organisations and to work with other volunteer related groups exists. Interests generated from individuals, companies and the non-profit sector must now be sustained.

Volunteer events are an opportunity to make a difference in your community, acknowledge voluntary action, to consolidate networks of volunteers and to celebrate the completion of worthwhile projects. You can discover a diversity of experiences and the spirit of volunteering that motivates millions of young people to go out and make a difference every day.

The scope of volunteer expression ranges from local, traditional involvement to committed engagement half way around the globe. In today's world, there is no limit to the variety and forms of voluntary actions.

By contacting www.iyv2001.org you can find more information, experiences, a follow-up of the IYV 2001 and many other initiatives.

YOUR VOICE IN EUROPE

‘Your Voice in Europe’ is the European Commission's single access point to a wide variety of consultations, discussions and other tools which enable you to play an active role in the European policy-making process:

• CONSULTATIONS: do you want to give them your opinion on EU policies and influence their direction? Take part in shaping European policy by responding to a consultation in one of many activity areas.

• DISCUSSIONS: do you want to discuss the main issues of the day and chat on-line to the EU's leaders? Have your say in discussions on the European Union and its future.

• YOUR EXPERIENCE: would you like them to help you overcome problems you have experienced in the EU and help us - anonymously - to monitor how EU policies work in practice?

• USEFUL LINKS: discover other ways in which you can make your voice heard in Europe.

If you want to find out more about this web site contact http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice
International Youth Parliament

IYP is a global network of young leaders in over 150 countries with a united vision of "youth building an equitable, sustainable and peaceful world". It was launched at a world-first event (IYP2000), attended by 250 international youth delegates in Sydney, October 2000.

These Action Partners (delegates) view the world from a global perspective as well as implement projects at a community level, sensitive to local needs, issues and resources.

This page gives you the opportunity to find more about the organisation and its ideas toward global issues, such as Globalisation, AIDS, Human Rights, Youth development, etc....

You can be part of it by clicking here: [www.iyp.oxfam.org](http://www.iyp.oxfam.org)

Generation Europe Community

NEW SITE!!!!!

Generation Europe aim to create a feedback channel between young people, corporate executives and EU policy-makers. You can be part of this feedback through their Interactive Newsletter and Chat channels.

This web-site is organised by topics and main themes. Over the year, topics will be added and content completed. You will find more information and hopefully have fun. Generation Europe want to create a space where registered members will have the opportunity to produce their contributions and exchange their ideas, to make their voices heard.

Enlargement of the EU, youth employment, forgotten countries and others are the topics you can find here: [www.generation-europe.eu.com](http://www.generation-europe.eu.com)

Taking it Global

TakingITGlobal (TIG) is an international organization, led by youth, empowered by technology. TIG brings together young people in more than 190 countries within international networks to collaborate on concrete projects addressing global problems and creating positive change.

TakingITGlobal is the world's largest online network of young leaders, currently involving more than 7000 young people in 190 countries. It is also one of the most technically advanced web sites focusing on building a global community.

Threaded together within the site is news, information on events, organizations, scholarships, projects and initiatives, discussion on topical issues, personal updates, a global gallery, and member profiles -- forming a comprehensive knowledge resource. [www.takingitglobal.org](http://www.takingitglobal.org)

E- inclusionsite

The digital divide is excluding hundreds of millions of people from the educational, job, health and other benefits of the information society. This site is an invitation to help build the dream of an Information Society for All by helping reduce the digital divide and realise the UN Millennium Summit goal of Reducing Poverty by Half by the Year 2015! It is based on the belief that, together, we can transform our drops of concern into an ocean of change.

The need for a global movement to change the present situation of technological inequity and shares his valuable insights on the challenges and opportunities of the digital revolution is one of the main bases of this web-site.

[www.e-inclusionsite.org](http://www.e-inclusionsite.org)

ICYE PROGRAMMES NEWS

ICYE-Eastlinks VI

Long-term volunteering between EU and CEE countries - Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia

This is a reciprocal project which involves sending and receiving on both sides, European Union and Central and Eastern European countries, giving young people coming from the latter countries the possibility to acquire experiences by living and working in Western European countries and thus contributing to build one European identity at grassroots level.

Young volunteers will engage in quite different local hosting projects, ranging from children care institutions, youth organisations to cultural heritage and environmental protection, will definitely bring an added value to the local communities. The project also aims at enhancing direct bilateral cooperation between sending and hosting organisations.
ICYE-Eastlinks South Eastern Europe

South Eastern Europe multilateral EVS project - Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia and Yugoslavia (Serbia)

In pursuance of one of the stated objectives the ICYE-EASTLINKS Large Scale project which aims to foster long-term voluntary service exchanges with South East Europe, this project gives an opportunity to young people in the European Union member countries and in South Eastern European to acquire experiences by living and working in a variety of voluntary service projects, such as environmental protection organisations, disabled care institutions, as well as projects working with refugees and homeless people. At the same time, Western Europeans will volunteer in Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian and Serbian non-governmental organisations in conflict resolution, new media, environmental issues and youth work, offering a rich sample of civil society where volunteerism will definitely bring an added value to the development of local communities.

ICYE-Eastlinks pilot project on HIV/AIDS Prevention

EVS multilateral Project on HIV/AIDS Prevention in EU and CEEC

The involvement of motivated young people in HIV/AIDS prevention projects aims at enhancing cooperation between themselves and the wider HIV/AIDS prevention sector.

The volunteer's presence will add an intercultural dimension to preventative and care work, as well as an input in term of human resources and networking links, which eventually will become a source of inspiration for similar joint future projects. In more general terms, this project aims at advocating the cause and visibility of HIV/AIDS projects towards civil society, with a view to promoting a more widespread responsibility in the fight against AIDS across all frontiers.

ICYE UK - Social Inclusion Programme (SIP)

ICYE UK have been seeking to make its programmes more inclusive and accessible to people from less fortunate backgrounds. This SIP programme is a three-way partnership with Youth Action for Peace (YAP), Training for Life (a training organisation working with homeless or recently housed people, young offenders and ex-drug users, providing them with skills to enable them to build their confidence and to increase their employment opportunities) and ICYE UK.

Training for Life identified 5 potential volunteers from disadvantaged backgrounds to send to YAP’s work camps in Europe and ICYE UK took care of the administration and preparation of the volunteers.

Eventually three volunteers took part, two to Sicily and one to France. Training for Life has now linked them with other organisations where they receive further training in their chosen field.

The project was such a success that Training for Life has now identified a volunteer who comes to our office to work exclusively with the project with the aim to send up to 30 people on similar projects in 2003.
Euro-Latin American Training Course for youth workers on financial planning and management of YOUTH projects

The International Office of the ICYE Federation will run a training course financed by the European Commission to address issues of financial accountability and transfer of related skills in planning, monitoring and meeting reporting requirements of Action 1, 2 and 5 of the YOUTH programme of the European Commission.

The expected results of this course are: - increased knowledge by participants of YOUTH programme funding rules and procedures; - acquisition of planning and management financial skills; and - participants' ability to apply and transfer information about financial reporting requirements.

UNESCO Participation Programme

Kenya

The UNESCO Participation Programme has approved a project submitted by ICYE Kenya on behalf of the Toi Primary Special Unit for mentally challenged children, Nairobi, Kenya. These children have special needs and therefore need special adapted equipment alongside special education. It is expected that the vocational training project would in turn be an incoming generating project for the disabled youth to benefit, and thus work towards some degree of future sustainability.

The project aims at training mentally challenged youth in skills such as tailoring, woodwork, metal work and cookery and to enhance self reliance in the mentally challenged youth.

The training will be carried out by trained teachers for children with special needs in the unit who are ready for vocational training. During training and once trained these youth will produce items for sale to generate income.

Europewide Refugees

The ICYE International Office has submitted to the YOUTH Programme of the EC a project applications for an europewide initiative of youth NGOs to promote European solidarity with marginalised and disadvantaged groups such as refugees and migrants. Through this project 13 volunteers to learn about and get involved in working with refugees, migrants and defence of human rights.

The European and intercultural dimension and the spirit of young persons willing to share and participate will bring an added value to the projects. At the same time volunteers through practising active citizenship will prove that Europe can be an open house where refugees from all parts of the world are welcome. Full support and learning from good practice will be provided by the experienced host co-ordinating organisations to the respective hosting projects many of which receive LTV's for the first time.

Euro – Latin American Seminar on Youth Leadership and Active Citizenship

Young people want to take part in decision-making and youth participation can lead to more democratic decision-making processes and positive changes for society as a whole. This seminar will bring together young people, youth leaders and policy makers from Europe and Central America to give meaning to the concept of youth participation.

Participants will reflect upon and learn about the situation of youth participation in each others' countries, increase their knowledge on different ways to enhance youth leadership and active citizenship, including youth mobility and non-formal learning experiences.

The European Commission's White Paper on Youth and the resources provided by the Youth programme will be presented and discussed as ways to encourage young people to make an active contribution to their society. Particular emphasis will be laid upon the ways and means to enhance youth participation by young people who do not have access to associative life and non-formal learning experiences.

ICJA - ICYE Germany - Civil Service Abroad

As of summer of 2003, ICYE Germany will be able to send young men who will carry out their civil service (alternative to military service) in voluntary projects around the world.

The field is very wide! Projects can range from social work with children, older people, less advantaged people, to youth in general (f. e. youth centres), social work in the community, hospitals, sports/educational centres up to cultural institutions (libraries, museums)

AFSAI ICYE Italy Civil Service Abroad

In view of the plans which envisaged doing away with the compulsory Military Service in Italy will stop to be compulsory, the Italian government is going to set up a National Voluntary Service scheme which allows Italian young people to volunteer in organisations which need the volunteers' support to run their activities.

This opportunity is also available on an International level: Italian young people will also be able to their VS abroad, regardless of the geographic area.

The main features of this government supported programme are:
- Voluntary Service period: 12 months.
- Age limits: 18-26 years old.
- Countries: no limitation
- Limitation: this programme does not finance foreign volunteers coming to Italy

Around 35 volunteers have been successfully selected and will join this special program as follows: Those working in voluntary service projects with Children in April 2003, those dealing with disabled people will leave in May 2003, and on Ecology in June 2003.
European Union YOUTH Programme – Third-Country Evaluation Seminar

Representatives of ICYE International Office together with its partner organisations Alternative-V, Ukraine, Swallows/ICYE Russia, Volunteer Centre Zagreb, Croatia and Young Researchers of Serbia, Serbia have been invited to attend the Third-Country Evaluation Seminar which will be held in Brussels on 26-27 February 2003. 30 national and international NGOs and 30 representatives of YOUTH National Agencies will take stock of past cooperation with Third countries and based on lesson learnt will make recommendations for the next cycle of the YOUTH programme.

Meeting with the Ford Foundation

On 5th December 2003, Claudia Castro Valle, Director of ICYE Honduras and Chairperson of the ICYE Federation Board of Managers, Cristina Ruiz, Director of SIIJUVE/ICYE Mexico, and Salvatore Romagna, Secretary General of the ICYE Federation met with Mr Pablo Farias, Representative of the Ford Foundation for Mexico and Central America to discuss possible cooperation around projects aiming at promoting volunteering and training activities for volunteers (i.e. on health education and HIV/AIDS prevention) in Mexico and Central America.

ICYE FEDERATION NEWS

ANNIVERSARIES

Taiwan 10th Anniversary
Following the ICYE Asia Pacific Regional Training Seminar and the ICYE Federation Board of Managers Meeting held in Taitung, Taiwan, on the 21st of November 2002, ICYE Taiwan celebrated its 10th Anniversary in Taipei. The lively and very entertaining event was attend by numerous host Families, host projects, co-workers, exchangees and delegates from ICYE National Committees in the Asia Pacific together with members of the ICYE Board of Managers and the staff of the International Office.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND LONG LIFE ICYE TAIWAN!!

MEXICO 35th Anniversary

On December 6th, 2002, SIIJUVE/ICYE Mexico celebrated its 35th anniversary in Puebla. A number of Invited guests from Puebla’s Municipality, representatives of host families and projects, ICYE exchangees and SIIJUVE past and current co-workers from Chiapas, Mexico City, Guadalajara, Toluca and representatives of the ICYE Board of Managers and the International Office attended a formal event followed by a social get together which lasted until the early hours of the following day.

VIVA Mexico & FELIZ ANNIVERSARIO SIIJUVE – Hasta los promixos 35 años!!
NEW ICYE NATIONAL CORRESPONDANTS

- Grenzenlos - ICYE Austria: Susi Hack
- ACI – ICYE Costa Rica: Mauricio Gabert
- Swallows – ICYE Russia: Olga Bouzinova
- ICYE South Korea: Jin Sam Kim
- IKU – ICYE Sweden: Emmy Bornemak

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

- General Assembly ICYE European 1st to 7th April 2003 Portugal
- Board Of Members Meeting 1st to 5th May 2003 Honduras
- ICYE Federation General Assembly Mid-Nov. 2003 Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

- Eastlinks VI October 2002 to April 2003
- ICYE Eastlinks Project on HIV AIDS Prevention November 2002 to June 2003
- ICYE – Eastlinks South Eastern Europe February to August 2003
- UNESCO Participation Programme – Kenya February to December 2003
- Euro-Latin America Training Course 22nd to 27th March 2003
- AFSAI-ICYE Italy Civil Service Abroad First Group – April 2003
- ICYE UK Social Inclusion Programme Summer 2003
- ICYE Germany – Civil Service Abroad Summer 2003
- Europewide Refugees Project September 2003 to May 2004
- Euro-Latin America Seminar on Youth Participation 1st to 10th of October 2003