

Worlds of experience



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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 25th issue of "Worlds of Experience" dedicated to the European Year of Volunteering and the IYV+10.

Half way through this crucial year, and ten years after the UN International Year of Volunteers (2011), it is encouraging to note that volunteering is much more visible on the agenda of international organisations, governments and civil society organisations. However, we hope that the impact of this year, particularly when it comes to overcoming barriers to youth mobility and to supporting the efforts needed to document the benefits and assessing the impact of volunteering, to give it recognition and explore realistic ways to certify and accredit achievements, will become a sustained progress beyond 2011!

At ICYE, we seized the opportunities offered by this year to embark in an action-research project, which is being carried through the EVS project "Volunteering Matters" - it involves a variety of volunteers and volunteer engaging organisation in 16 countries across four continents. The aim of the project is to map out and document the situation of national and international volunteering in these countries.

'Volunteer Voices' presents the first impressions and results of what the volunteers and their host organisations have done and learnt so far. One of the first reflections of a Costa Rican volunteer in Sweden is that "international volunteering seems to have a positive impact on a personal level (but) also on civil society, as ex-volunteers tend to be more involved in various social welfare organizations". An Italian volunteer in South Africa reports that for a mother from a Cape Town township "hosting foreign volunteers in my home has affected my life in a big way". For an Ecuadorian volunteer in Turkey her participation in an "International Volunteers Summit" marking the EYV 2011, was a real eye-opener. A British volunteer in Brazil hopes that her documentation "will also help promote it to prospective volunteers here in Brazil and the world." A German volunteer in Ghana says that "international volunteering, in my understanding is first and foremost a learning experience for all involved". A Finnish volunteer in Ecuador discovered that "Ecuador has a long history of volunteering that can be traced back to the pre-Columbian times". An Indian volunteer in Austria will pursue his special interest in investigating the situation of volunteers with disabilities in Austria.

These reflections are complemented, among others, with news on how the EYV 2011 and IYV+10 are working together; the new "Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work"; ICYE Mexico's activities to celebrate the year, and a report on the second EU-level thematic conference for the European Year of Volunteering 2011 "Volunteer! Make a difference" by two ICYE volunteers.

News from Int'l Organisations feature the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and the "64th Annual DPI-NGO Conference: Sustainable Societies; Responsible Citizens". News from NGOs reports on the publication "Culture of Peace in Young People's View" and the Earth Charter Youth: e-Conference "Building a global community for sustainable development".

ICYE Programme News include, among others: the final conference of ICYE Germany's long-term training project aiming at enhancing and improving program quality in partnership, the seminar on "Promoting Tolerance and Greater Inter-religious Understanding", the new ICYE Facebook fan page, and the report of a South-South exchange by a Costa Rican volunteer in Kenya.

Wishing you an interesting reading, we would like to encourage readers to send us articles and pictures for the next issue of "Worlds of Experience", which will be dedicated to "Volunteering for Gender Equality" and will be published at the end of October 2011. Please send your contributions to icye@icye.org, before September 30th, 2011.

Warmest regards!
ICYE International Office

This and previous issues of "Worlds of Experience" can be viewed and downloaded from: www.icye.org

EVS Project “EYV 2011 - Volunteering matters!”

VOLUNTEERS' VOICES

Volunteering in Sweden

My name is Andrea Artavia and I am from Costa Rica. Since the end of April I am in Sweden with PeaceWorks / ICYE Sweden taking part in the EVS project “EYV 2011 – Volunteering matters!”



Sweden has a strong history of volunteering. According to the Institute of Government Skondal Ersta (2009), 48% of all Swedes are involved in voluntary work. The most common voluntary work relates to sports, culture, labor, housing and social work. According to Wikström and Larsson (2002), there are about 200,000 associations that work with volunteer work in Sweden, in one way or another. These organizations gather 32 million memberships, to be compared with Sweden's population of 9 million. In total, the work and involvement of volunteers is said to be equivalent to about 400 000 full time employments every year. Added to this, it is estimated that the value of services produced by volunteers round about 150 billion per year.

But what can we say about international volunteering? How does the international volunteer context in Sweden look like? This is the subject that I have been investigated until now.

The project is going slow but good progress. On one hand, I have interviewed representatives of 4 different organizations engaged in international volunteering in Sweden, which are very recognized and known in this country. They represent different sectors of society: private, government, and non-governmental organizations. One is a privately owned travel company focusing on “volunteer trips”; one is a governmental institution and two NGOs who coordinate different kinds of volunteer exchanges.

The purpose of these interviews is to know in general terms the profile of people who choose to participate in international volunteering. In addition, to compare the different programs that each organization offers in relation to international volunteers, and also to find out how they are funded and if links they have with other governmental or not. It is also necessary to analyze the perception that exists about the recognition of international volunteerism by both the state and civil society.

At the same time, during the PeaceWorks Forum, I had the opportunity to conduct a group interview with the incoming ICYE volunteers from different countries who are about to end their projects in Sweden. The main purpose of the interview was to determine their motives for volunteering in this country, expectations, and goals, among others. This interview is part of the second phase of the project, which consists in assessing the impact of international volunteering in Sweden.

One of my first reflections is that international volunteering seems to have a positive impact on a personal level. Volunteers come up with new ideas, become more open-minded and more self-confident. This has an impact also on civil society, as ex-volunteers tend to be more involved in various social welfare organizations and actually give back their knowledge to society with a lot of enthusiasm.

On the other hand there is a perceived lack of recognition and support by the state that is increasingly affecting organizations engaged in international volunteering, which seems to be a big challenge in Sweden.



The forum was an excellent opportunity to meet local, outgoing and incoming volunteers, talk to them and share experiences. In addition, we participate in various recreational and cultural activities, which allowed us to get closer to the Swedish culture. We celebrated Swedish “Midsommar” (midsummer), went swimming in the lake and played different games all together. Undoubtedly, the forum represented an opportunity for me to get closer to my host organization so we can have a broader view of what is international volunteering.

Andrea Artavia
Costa Rican EVS volunteer in Sweden

Celebrating Volunteering at the Volunteer Centre, Cape Town, South Africa

My name is Elena Bruno, an Italian EVS volunteer participating in the ICYE “Volunteering Matters” project. On the 2nd June, Volunteer Centre / ICYE South Africa organized an event to thank all the people and the partner organizations that have been contributing with eagerness to the Centre's activities, so far.

The event took place at the Athlone Stadium, a well-known landmark in Cape Town, which was upgraded for the Soccer World Cup 2010. As a result of the Athlone Stadium's generous sponsorship of the venue, many of people attending the event had the chance to visit the sporting facilities for the first time and to enjoy this extraordinary location and its relaxed and joyous atmosphere.



The purpose of the event was to officially thank all the host families who have been cooperating with Volunteer Centre by hosting foreign and South African volunteers at their homes by providing them with board, lodging and especially family warmth and personal support.

28 families (mostly from Athlone and Kayelistsha's areas) were presented with Certificates and medals of appreciation for their valuable contribution to the programs run by Volunteer Centre, like the European Voluntary Service, ICYE short-term program, and the Youth Exchange Programme North-South (between Canada and South Africa) and South-South (between Mozambique and South Africa).

These families have been supporting the young volunteers through their integration path in the communities where the voluntary projects are held and assisting them in getting to know South African culture through food, habits and personal stories.

Besides that, Volunteer Centre used the opportunity to award some partners organizations, based in the Athlone area (i.e., Bridgetown High School, Bridgetown Community Theatres, Athlone library and some others) as a sign of appreciation of their commitment in Volunteer Centre activities and in all the initiatives they take in favor of the local youth.

Some persons have been recognized for the operative support offered to Volunteer Centre through their digital competences, job skills and advocacy activities. Among them, the South African Scouts Associations for their commitment to promoting volunteer service amongst youth and also for their generous assistance of the accommodation for the Centre's headquarter office in Claremont.

During the evening, a short presentation about the IYV+10's aims and objectives has been showed to all the stakeholders, including journalists of local newspapers and radio stations, like Athlone News and People's Post, that interviewed the Director, Deline Van Boom, about the campaign.

What do families have to say about their experience of hosting international volunteers in their homes in Athlone and Kayelitsha, Cape Town? This is what some have answered in interviews:

"I enjoy having them (...) I had a lot of fun because for the first time, as in South Africa (you know about the apartheid and all that) we were separated from each other, we didn't liaise; you were staying in your corners, I was staying in my corner...So, by having blacks in my home, I could learn from them and they could learn from me and for the first time different cultures came together and we could speak about a lot of things and I could learn from them and they could learn from me." Brenda – Athlone

"It has affected my life in a big way. My oldest daughter who is at university has decided to join Volunteer Centre and she will be leaving in the next month, on a six-month youth exchange program. She will first be doing in the South African part, in Khayelitsya, she'll be staying there for three months and after that, she'll be leaving for Canada, for three months. So we are very very excited about that!" Carmelita – Athlone

Elena Bruno
Italian EVS volunteer in South Africa

Volunteering in Turkey

My name is Estefany San Andres and I am an EVS volunteer from Ecuador in Turkey.

I am working together with GESOGED in the frame of the Project "EYV 2011 - Volunteering Matters!" for which, in Turkey we would like to focus on the "Recognition, facilitation, networking, promotion" and "Impact Assessment". Of international volunteering. Due to the extension of the country and the language barrier (most of the information sources and data needed are in Turkish - only few has been translated to English), process is slow, but almost 50% of the information has been gathered for the country profile on volunteering has been completed.



We participated in the "International Volunteers Summit" that took place on 06-09 May 2011, in Gaziantep-Turkey, which was organized and coordinated by the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of Youth, the Regional Development Agency, the Governorship of Gaziantep, and the Turkish National Agency. This special meeting, marking the EYV 2011, gathered more than 150 international and national volunteers and youth workers from all over Europe and Turkey to discuss, share the best practices and develop the voluntary work process

in Europe. I could make useful contacts with volunteering organizations; collect data and information through interviews and talks with volunteers, which helped me to understand the different perspectives, motivations and effects of volunteering.

In addition to this, during the "On Arrival Training" in Antakya I could get to know many other EVS Volunteers in Turkey and have a general image about their situation, their organizations' and projects' characteristics and their adaptation process in the Turkish culture.

Have also visited local organizations that develop "Community Service" activities, like the University of Balikesir, a group of teenagers that work for blind children and the group of parents of two different schools that organized events for people with social or economical disadvantages.

In the next months I would like to visit the YIA National Agency in Ankara to research more the voluntary sector in Turkey by the private sector and civil society, government policies, recognition and support. With their support I would also like to visit voluntary organizations in the eastern part of the country. A public event will be organized to celebrate this important year, in which we will present the results of the project; the benefits and life experiences from a volunteer in the University of Balikesir. Last but not least a presentation about Ecuador (which includes intercultural shocks) will be held in 2 high schools in order to interact with local people about voluntarism and cultural exchange.

Estefany San Andres
Ecuadorian EVS volunteer in Turkey

Volunteering Matters in Brazil



I've been in Porto Alegre, southern Brazil for 2 months now and I'm finally getting used to the Portuguese and the culture. I've visited about 70% of the projects and every time I'm shocked by the level of participation of the volunteers. From my previous volunteering experience I remember the difficulties of integrating into the staff team (language barriers, cultural differences, etc), but the volunteers here have overcome these difficulties and become valued members of staff and the community. I'm not saying their lives are easy, of course there are issues that crop up, but the projects and the volunteers are resourceful and 90% of the time solutions are found.

National volunteering in Brazil, specifically in Rio Grande do Sul, is on the increase. The

organization, *Parceiros Voluntários* (Volunteer Partners) which co-ordinates almost all of the national volunteering programs started in Rio Grande do Sul and they now have bases in 4 other states. They are dedicated to making volunteering an accepted and normal part of life for Brazilian people and as their figures show, they are doing a pretty good job! They had a total of 369,006 volunteers placed in projects last year! As for government guidelines, laws and regulations they are still in the early stages, however *Parceiros Voluntários* are only just getting started, they have big plans for the future of volunteering in Brazil and they are more than prepared for the tasks that lay ahead.

As for international volunteering, in Rio Grande do Sul there are only two organizations, ABIC (ICYE-Brazil) and AIESEC an international student training/internship program. They offer very different types of volunteering opportunities, and as a result ABIC is the only organization in southern Brazil that offers an "exchange", putting them in a fantastic position to spread the word of international exchanges and volunteering.



I have started meeting with the volunteer coordinators of the various partners ABIC works with and all of them speak highly of the international volunteers and the difference they make to the projects. Bringing their culture and their experiences to the projects and showing the community a different side to life.

I have also started collecting information from the volunteers, finding out their stories and collecting their experiences.

My idea to celebrate IYV and EYV is to make a montage of photos and videos, with the volunteers talking about their experiences of volunteering. I am hoping that not only will this serve to commemorate international volunteering it will also help promote it to perspective volunteers here in Brazil and the world!

Alexandra Perry
British EVS Volunteer in Brazil

Volunteering in Ghana

My name is Eva Schwark, a German EVS volunteer working at ICYE Ghana:

'Volunteering in Ghana has changed my life', Stine and Gunhild agree. After their 3-months stay at the Grace Masak Orphanage in Kasoa, near Accra, the two Danish girls feel they learnt to view their home country from a new perspective.

Besides their daily activities of teaching the kids, bathing, feeding and taking care of them, the volunteers describe their new appreciation of their

lives back home ('everything is so easy for us'), their increased understanding of people's needs and a more open attitude as the most important learning achievements during their voluntary service with ICYE.

I tested my questionnaire during the evaluation discussion with them – and it worked well! The opportunity I had to talk to volunteers that were either ending or starting their voluntary service abroad has been an exciting "distraction" from my research, and by now, I feel really settled and familiar with the functioning of ICYE Ghana.



Although I still have to put all the acquired information in order, the emerging picture seems to prove that volunteering plays a quite important role in Ghana. In traditional Akan culture, the term *nnoboa* (*boa* = to help) describes a form of communal labor that usually once a week, on Saturdays, brings together all the members of the community to work together on a voluntary basis. Men may clean the environment or do some construction work while the women cook for them and so everybody is contributing his/her own share for the village's sake. These regular voluntary activities not only provide for a community's upkeep, they are also important as social gatherings that create bonds between the people who talk and sing together. In the villages it is still common to have *nnoboa*, but the modern individualistic city lifestyle makes many Ghanaians fear that their society might lose their traditionally positive attitude towards volunteering. The National Service Scheme may be seen as a way to keep up that spirit of serving the society: although it is a compulsory one-year program for all university graduates that requires them to 'volunteer' in mainly the education and health sector, the service makes many of them recognize the importance and value of volunteering – indeed many of former National Service personnel later also participate in the National Voluntary Programme that deploys 10,000 young people annually.

Once I will complete the research on the state of voluntarism in Ghana, I am looking very much forward to find out what impact the ICYE and other volunteering programs actually make. Qualitative interviews with international long- and short-term volunteers, their local colleagues in their placements as well as members of their host families and host communities should provide an insight into the manifold dimensions of international volunteering, which in my understanding is first and foremost a learning experience.

Not only do the incoming volunteers (virtually all of them are from Western Europe) have the chance to reflect on unconscious stereotypes about Ghana/Africa, they also represent their home countries and through their behavior may challenge or confirm existing clichés of White Europeans among Ghanaians.

The analysis of the interviews will finally show the way forward by coming up with recommendations of how to further improve the programs.

As result of promoting the IYV+10 and EYV 2011, ICYE Ghana joined the Coalition of Voluntary Organisations in Ghana, which brings together volunteer-involved NGOs, and is closely associated to the National IYV Planning Committee, ICHA Ghana has agreed to support the preparation of a big blood donating event in October (under the umbrella of Red Cross Society), which will involve various secondary schools and will also educate the youth. Other activities ahead include the organization of a Volunteer Day during the orientation of the next batch of international volunteers, to discuss with them and their hosts the values of volunteering. We shall also run activities with the local community on proper waste disposal and we'll go out and clean part of the place with the whole group. We hope that this activity will help to raise awareness on the importance of voluntary action of local youth.

Through the new ICYE Ghana's Facebook Group we will give a space to think about the value of volunteering and contribute with their on reflections and inputs to the EYV 2011.

We are also part of the planning committee that organizes the celebrations/activities on 5th December. After all it is this special year that makes my experiences in Ghana possible – and I really appreciate that.

Eva Schwark
German EVS volunteer in Ghana

Volunteering in Ecuador matters!



My name is Hanna-Kaisa and I am an EVS Finnish volunteer with ICYE Ecuador. The past one and a half months that I have spent researching volunteering in Ecuador have opened my eyes to see volunteering in a new light. First of all, I have made some project visits to be familiarized with the many existing opportunities to serve as a volunteer. Secondly, the research has showed that the networking and intercultural learning is not only the objective of the volunteers, but it is also the host projects', host coordinating organizations', governmental institutions' goal.

In Ecuador, there are two important organizations, which promote, strengthen and increase the volunteerism and facilitate participation. The first is the "Mesa de Voluntariado de Ecuador" (MVE/National Roundtable on Volunteerism), a unit created by the United Nations' Volunteers formed by 25 volunteering organizations. The second organization is the "Federación Ecuatoriana de Trabajo Voluntario" (FETV/Ecuadorian Federation of Voluntary Work). The basic idea of these platforms is to increase cooperation, solidarity and exchange of information in order to diminish poverty and inequality in Ecuador. Moreover, the Millennium Development Goals and the Ecuadorian government's "National Plan for Good Living" can be seen as good guidelines for planning and implementing volunteering in Ecuador from improving international relations to the actual projects where the volunteers work.

As a matter of fact, Ecuador has a long history of volunteering that can be traced back to the pre-Columbian times: This cooperation is still seen in the "minga", which is a type of volunteer work within the community based on reciprocity, for example, by helping in the construction of a house or community center. Through the Catholic Church's charity, volunteering has changed from an immediate help to a long-term plan for development. In general we can say that the number of volunteers in Ecuador has been quite large: In 2008, 500,000 volunteers (both national and international) supported development in Ecuador. Their economic support represents between 2 and 3 percent of Ecuador's GDP.

My plan for the next month is to conduct interviews and questionnaires to find out if "volunteering matters to the projects, communities and to volunteers itself?" Also, to celebrate the IYV+10 and the EYV 2011, we are planning a fair about volunteering in October that includes contests and an exhibition to promote the international volunteering. I have very busy but important months ahead and hope to find out much more information about Volunteering in Ecuador.

Hanna-Kaisa Salmi
Finnish EVS volunteer in Ecuador

Volunteering in Kenya!



I am Laura Griffin, British EVS volunteer in Kenya. As I already was a volunteer in Kenya in 2010, the opportunity to take part of the "EVS -Volunteering Matters" project for 6 months was perfect for me to learn more about Kenya and volunteering on the ground there. The aim of the research I am

undertaking is to take stock of the impact volunteers have on their projects and in turn on Kenya as a nation.

So far, I have been visiting volunteers in their projects all over the country, doing interviews with them, their host families and project supervisors. It is really great to see them in their 'natural habitats'. Those in children's homes are doing great things being caretakers to these children who have no one else. I think that there is at least one child in every home that we have been to that I want to take home. The volunteers in schools are also doing a fantastic job. They're planning lessons, researching topics, coming up with new ways to discipline the kids and even fundraising to build/improve the school compounds.

I'm looking forward to the next few months. I hope that I will be able to visit the remaining volunteers and collect more data using the questionnaires. I am also creating a video presentation to promote volunteering and the projects that ICYE Kenya works with. I hope to network with other volunteer organizations within Nairobi to get a clearer picture of the volunteering 'culture' in Kenya. My aim is that the final project and videos will enable us to showcase some of the great work volunteers are doing in Kenya. It should also be a resource for others wanting to find out about the impact volunteers are making on this country's development and what more could be done in the future.

Moreover, we are all looking forward to the ICYE Kenya day on July 24th, where we will celebrate the work of volunteers and appreciate the support of all involved in hosting and sending volunteers in Kenya.

Laura Griffin
British EVS volunteer in Kenya

Volunteering Matters in India



My name is Emelie Lin, a Swedish volunteer working in Bangalore, India, in the EVS project "EYV 2011- Volunteering Matters". This year 2011, we also celebrate the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers.

I have been here for a month and I am exploring India with its incredible culture and people. For my research on volunteerism worldwide I have found very useful websites of UNV (www.unv.org) and the World Volunteer Web (www.worldvolunteerweb.org), both about volunteerism worldwide. I have also visited the City State Library, but with no results in finding any suitable books for my research.

I have visited two projects. The first one was William Joseph Music Foundation, which is a music school that teaches underprivileged children music and art. There I got the opportunity to interview one of the project's staff, Oliver Kunder, and a French volunteer working there and asked them about their thoughts about volunteering and what difference it makes.

The other project that I visited was Parasparas Trust, which is a transit home for orphans; there I interviewed a German volunteer that has been working there for almost a year.

What I want to do next is to continue working on mapping out how volunteerism is perceived and supported in India, with the aim of producing a country profile. I will also contact the Government of India to get more documents and information on this subject.

Emelie Lin
Swedish EVS volunteer in India

Volunteering in the Philippines

My name is Mimmi Viviana Clase Hagman, a Swedish EVS volunteer in the Philippines. My host organization is We Spark Action (formerly known as EYES) in Cebu City. The first period of the project was an introduction to the Philippine culture and to the work of the host organization. I am now collecting secondary data for a National Profile on volunteering and I plan activities with my host organization to celebrate the IYV+10 and the EYV 2011.



From my research about volunteerism in the Philippines, I have learned more about the country's history and society. The voluntary sector is large and has many stakeholders. Volunteer activities are implemented by the government, academic institutions, civil society groups, the corporate sector and foreign volunteer agencies. The Volunteer Act of 2007 has been a useful document to get insight to the policy framework that controls the sector. The Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) was established by the law in 2007 and is the government agency that promotes volunteerism and coordinates volunteer programs at a national level. Volunteering is supported as a tool for socioeconomic development, and the strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are documented in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

My expectations for the next months are to know more about the impact of volunteering and to implement activities to celebrate the IYV+10 and EYV 2011 with my host organization. Interviews will be done with volunteers, host organizations and local communities and the result will be published in a second report with focus on international volunteering.

Greetings from Cebu City!

Mimmi Viviana Clase Hagman
Swedish EVS volunteer in Philippines

Volunteering in Costa Rica

My name is Susanna and I am an EVS Austrian volunteer working at ICYE Costa Rica. After having been here for over a month, I have gained lots of impressions of living in another country, speaking another language and seeing very different social standards from my home country.

Concerning my research I am still collecting information for the country profile on voluntarism, but have already started making a few interviews. The contacts and interactions with the international Volunteers I feel that it contributes a lot my research and this is the part that I like the most.



My first interview was really nice! Carlota, my mentor, and I went to an elderly home which is headed by nuns, in Guadalupe. I could interview Therese, an international volunteer working there. She feels very comfortable and has a very good communication with the people of the elderly home (residents, staff, and coordinator). Every Friday she organizes has a Yoga class with the residents there. She adapted it for people using wheelchairs and even a blind woman is joining the class. This project works very well and it was a warm and teaching visit.

I am also preparing my "Volunteer Day" - one of the highlights that will celebrate the EYV2011 and the IYV+10! The "Volunteer Day" is on the 2nd of July and will take place in the office of ICYE Costa Rica. Many different people that are volunteering in different areas, i.e. Red Cross, a girl from the Community, Scouts and young "Ticos" (Costa Ricans) have been invited. I will start making First I make a presentation about EVS, ICYE, ACI and then there will be forum to discuss volunteering in

general and what is the impact in the community, as well as in Costa Rica as a whole.

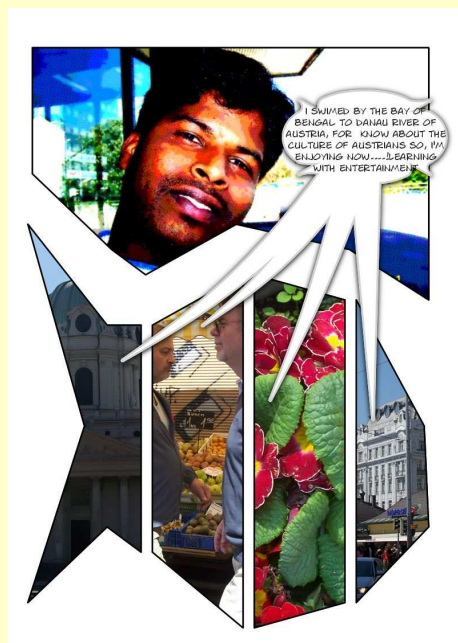
*Susanna Muehlberger
Austrian EVS volunteer in Costa Rica*

Volunteers with disabilities matter!

I am Thipparaju, an Indian EVS volunteer in Austria, with a special interest in investigating the situation of volunteers with disabilities in Austria. I have been in touch with the projects to get to know the environment and have the contacts of the volunteers in order to get an impression of the circumstances in which volunteers with disabilities work.

In particular, I am interested in finding out more about these volunteers' education and livelihood; mobility challenges, and the opportunities provided by their organizations and the government. All this will be achieved through interviews with the volunteers, projects and communities.

Moreover, I would like to lively up my action research and share his experiences with comics like the one below.



*Thippajaru
Indian EVS volunteer in Austria*

Volunteering in Spain Matters!

My name is Carlos Murcia and I am an EVS volunteer from Costa Rica in Castuera, Spain. In the special 2011 year, Spain is a significant country for many reasons. A lot of progress was made in social and cultural fields, and in this context the EVS project "Volunteering Matters" is a unique space to reflect and add new perspectives to the process, everything as result of efforts and creativity.

Volunteering in Spain is a privilege, is the place where any person may discover incredible

traditions, nature, cities with great history and very open-minded people, and find excellent conditions for a very good learning experience.

Volunteering in big cities and the countryside is quite dynamic and every day there are new projects and ideas.

In this multi-cultural and intricate nation, people images about volunteer's participation are usually very positive: the volunteer is received as a very important support, the feedback is positive and the opportunities to serve and act become a pleasant and exciting journey.



New technologies offer new opportunities to involve people in volunteering. In addition, due to the economic crisis affecting the country, the situation of young people has been difficult, and they value more and more the chances offered by volunteering, as means to contribute to positive changes in the country.

The voluntary sector in Spain is acquiring new strength and is now advancing to new phases. The project "Volunteering Matters" provides a promising space to systematize information and facts some important facts that are not easy to find in the usual organizational reports, evaluations and other formal documents.

I am confident that my EVS project will help to raise awareness and contribute to improve the information and coordination systems for volunteering in Spain! It is also an invitation not to forget what we are doing and why.

*Carlos Murcia
Costa Rican EVS volunteer in Spain*



Working Together: The European Year of Volunteering (EYV2011) and 10th Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10)

EYV 2011 and IYV +10 have many common goals. The European Union's Council Decision on the EYV 2011 cites the IYV anniversary as a contributory factor and there is no contradiction in being active under both umbrellas as they are conceptually linked together. The EU and the UN have a history of working together to promote volunteering through a partnership between UNV and the European Commission - the two institutions responsible for IYV+10 and EYV. This focus on volunteering during 2011 will lead to a greater awareness of its added value, highlighting the link between voluntary engagement at local level and its significance in the wider European and global contexts. EYV 2011 and IYV + 10 both aim to involve all levels of civil society – regional, national and local. In this way the ownership of EYV 2011 and IYV + 10 should remain with the volunteers and the volunteer organizations. EYV 2011 and IYV+10 provide an opportunity for engagement with both the EU and UN policy debates about volunteering and to celebrate and promote volunteering in all its forms through different governmental and non-governmental structures. For more information on IYV+10 and EYV2011 visit:

www.worldvolunteerweb.org
www.europa.eu/volunteering

Global voices shared as volunteering entities convene

The international volunteer community has joined hands for a "north-south-east-west" meeting of minds. Representatives from the European Year of Volunteers met with their national volunteer committee counterparts from countries in Africa, Asia, South America and Oceania in perhaps the first meeting of its kind. For full story follow the link: <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/iyv-10/doc/global-voices-shared-as.html>



Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work

A new manual will help agencies track the amount, type and value of volunteer work. The manual was drafted by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies in cooperation with the ILO and an international Technical Experts Group, and with the support of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program. It provides the first-ever internationally sanctioned guidance for generating reliable, official data on volunteer work using a common definition and approach.

"Volunteer work is an enormous renew-able resource for social, economic and environmental problem solving throughout the world... but the lack of solid data on volunteering has left it undervalued and its full potential un-realized," said Lester M. Salamon, director of the Center for Civil Society Studies. "This manual promises to change this fundamentally. The challenge now is to secure government commitments to implement it."

Previous work by the Johns Hopkins centre has shown that, even conservatively estimated, the value of volunteer work in countries throughout the world is roughly double the value of contributions from volunteers.

"This manual responds to a key mandate established by the UN General Assembly at the conclusion of the International Year of the Volunteer in 2001," said UNV Executive Coordinator, Flavia Pansieri. "In the process, it will boost the visibility of volunteer work, encourage more volunteer involvement, provide a basis for gauging the effectiveness of volunteer promotion efforts and create a more enabling policy environment for volunteer activity, all of which will allow volunteers to expand the already notable contributions they make," she said.

The final approved pre-publication version of the Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work is available online on the Centre for Civil Society Studies website at:

<http://ccss.jhu.edu/index.php?section=content&view=9&sub=12&tri=106>



The European Volunteer Measurement Project

The CEV - European Volunteer Centre, Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies, SPES - Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio, Italy, together with the EYV-2011 Alliance will organise the European Volunteer Measurement Project (EVMP) Training Workshop, on July 16, 2011, Brussels, Belgium. The Workshop will focus on three topics: First, why measurement of volunteering is important and needed; Second, how the ILO Manual defines volunteering and proposes to measure it; and Third, the steps to be taken to encourage implementation of Manual in various countries and the materials that you can use for this purpose.

Recognizing volunteer's skills



During the Annual Conference of The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning ([EUCIS-LLL](#)) on the role, place and value given to volunteering in education and training on 9th May 2011 in Krakow, participants discussed the recognition and validation of volunteer's skills and competences, the transnational dimension of volunteering and on volunteering as a way to develop citizenship and democracy. [SOLIDAR](#) made clear that it will support [EUCIS-LLL](#) in its work on skills and competences recognition and push for tools that help recognize soft skills, such as the student skills portfolio developed by ANIMAFAC and the EU-wide principles and value framework from FICEMEA. [Read more.](#)

http://www.solidar.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=13947&langue=EN

Celebrate with us! MÉXICO



In this very important year, to celebrate the IVY+10 SIJUVE- ICYE Mexico has been preparing different events that will help us to show what we do and highlight the importance of voluntary service in our country and around the world.

Together with Foreign Affairs Department, other governmental and non-governmental organizations, we will organize a big event combining conferences, exhibitions, stands to display our work and show the impact of various forms of volunteering. It will also be a great opportunity to join efforts with other Mexican organizations that work with national and international volunteers. The event will take place in September 2011, in the state of Chiapas.

As part of the celebration, to improve the quality of voluntary service in Mexico for volunteers and host organizations, this year we have decided to invest part of our resources to train and offer free seminars and workshops to our host organizations. We are planning to have 5 trainings in different states: Estado de México, Chiapas, Jalisco, Mexico City and Puebla. In May we already held training courses in Jalisco and in Puebla.

The results have been very positive. The participating organizations were very happy to have a space to talk about their experiences and how to solve different situations. They learnt about our programs, the ICYE minimal conditions for hosting international volunteers and we provided them with a guide to create their own volunteers' handbook and a guide of best practices.

We will continue to celebrate this year to show and re-affirm our commitment to international voluntary service!

"Volunteer! Make a difference"



We took part in the second EU-level thematic conference for the European Year of Volunteering 2011, 23-24 May 2011, in Brussels, under the motto "Volunteer! Make a difference". The idea of this conference was to look at the world of volunteering through the eyes of the individual and discuss topics of personal interest in order to explore possible steps to further develop volunteering in Europe.

On the first day, over 350 participants engaged in analyzing the conditions that benefit or challenge volunteer work and how to improve those conditions for the future - from motivational factors to legal frameworks. In our opinion, the biggest

challenge is to match volunteers' skills with the projects' needs in order to make the best out of this experience.

On the second day, we participated in the workshop about "Corporate citizenship" at the European Economic and Social Committee, in which the value that corporate employees working as volunteers can have, and the need to match employee skills with not-for-profit requirements were highlighted.

We believe that the very first two questions posed to the participants: "Why did I choose to be here today? What makes volunteering so special?" are crucial ones that should continue to be asked and answered. The reasons why people do volunteering go far beyond technical questions such as the visa and the (monetary) recognition for their work. We believe that, in order to promote volunteering, we need to look back at what made us want to volunteer in the first place, and transfer that feeling to others, who will serve regardless of the conditions.

*Diana Vargas Solano & Magdalena Dec
Costa Rican and Polish volunteers at the ICYE
International Office*

News from International Organisations



United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development

The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) is a network consisting of UN entities, represented at the headquarters level, whose work is relevant to youth. The aim of the Network is to increase the effectiveness of UN work in youth development by strengthening collaboration and exchange among all relevant UN entities, while respecting and harnessing the benefits of their individual strengths and unique approaches and mandates. In the framework of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) and its 15 priority areas, the Network advocates for, supports and reviews progress on the implementation of UN Resolutions, Conventions and the internationally agreed development goals that are youth-related. The Network also contributes to increasing the understanding and visibility of the UN System's work on youth development. In particular, the Network:

Provides a forum for cooperation and support; Provides an opportunity for ongoing exchange of information on the UN system's work on youth development, including through knowledge management initiatives and tools; Strengthens and supports cooperation to promote youth development, through joint advocacy, initiatives and other forms of cooperation; Draws on the members' networks and relationships with governments, youth-led and youth-focused organizations, donor agencies, civil society organizations, multilateral organizations and others, to advance youth development; Facilitates and supports youth involvement and participation in the UN System and its programs or initiatives at all levels.

Read more:
<http://social.un.org/youthyear/unianydn.html>

64th Annual DPI-NGO Conference: Sustainable Societies; Responsible Citizens, Bonn, Germany, 3-5 September 2011

The 64th Annual DPI/NGO Conference aims to highlight effective ways in which citizens and civil society, in partnership with other stakeholders, can contribute to creating and maintaining sustainable societies – economical, cultural and environmental. The 2011 edition, held in Bonn, Germany, could be considered as a major civil society contribution to the Rio+20 Conference taking place next year, and will provide valuable network-building opportunities for all participants.

<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/dpingorelations/Confinf>



News from NGOs

"Culture of Peace in Young People's View"



This is a publication stemming from the project 'Culture of peace in young people's view' that UNOY Peacebuilders implemented last year with five partner peace organizations from Italy (CEIPES, coordinating organization), Armenia, Hungary, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. It was funded by the Council of Europe and the European Youth Foundation.

In the framework of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), initiated by UNESCO, the project aimed at contributing to create a culture of peace through the powerful tool of peace education. The publication resulted from the activities of this project - interviews were carried out simultaneously in the six countries, as well as educational workshops with 121 youth people - is mainly directed to organizations working in the field of peace education, being a useful resource for youth workers and youth trainers whom plan to organize activities in this ambit.

The publication is complemented with a DVD containing the interviews (in English or with English subtitles) of young people in each country. It can be accessed on CEIPES' Website:

http://www.ceipes.org/Documents/Culture%20of%20peace%20in%20young%20people's%20view_CEIPES_EYF.pdf



Earth Charter Youth: e-Conference 'Building a global community for sustainable development'

The first Earth Charter Youth e-Conference brought together nearly 100 participants on April 14th, 2011. More than 30 countries were represented. The participants demonstrated a strong will and need for regular online meetings for Earth Charter Youth. The conference was voluntarily organized by the Earth Charter Youth in Heart in Action Enterprises' virtual multimedia platform. The three-hour conference was filled with inspiring and educative presentations. Participants were actively posting questions, comments and further networking opportunities in a specially designed chat box through out the session. Information about the e-conference and its themes: <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/articles/657/1/Earth-Charter-Youth-e-Conference-April-14th-2011/Page1.html>

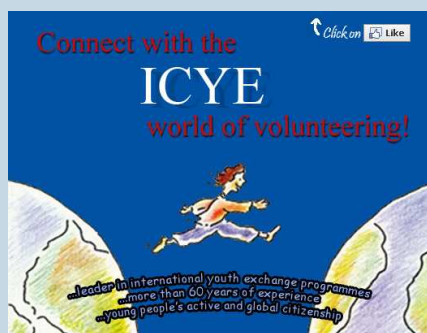


"Enhancing and improving program quality in partnership"

From 17 thru 24 March 2011, around 50 representatives from ICYE member and partner organization attended the Final Conference of the 2-year project "Dialoguing Together: to enhance and improve program quality in partnership. The project, organized by ICJA and supported by the Weltwaerts program of the German Ministry of Cooperation and Development, aimed at sharing experiences and critically reviewing guidelines, procedures, resource materials for the long-term exchange of international volunteers, as well as enhancing partnerships and networking within the ICYE Federation.

For more information, please contact ICYE Germany icja@icja.de

ICYE Federation Fan Page



As an integral tool for interaction with volunteers and partner organizations in a social network, the ICYE Federation can now be found in Facebook.

Do you like our work?
Did you like volunteering with ICYE?

Then "like" us under:

http://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/ICYE-Federation/187969991238368?sk=app_190322544333196

Feel free to comment and add your pictures!

"Promoting Tolerance and Greater Inter-religious Understanding"



I attended this training seminar organized by the International Development Alliance (IDA) Network that took place from 17th to 23rd of June in Brasov, Romania, and gathered young people from Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.

It was a great opportunity to analyze in depth the concepts of tolerance, religion, spirituality and society, how those concepts are developed in different contexts, and how to experience religion as a positive source in the work with youth and in society in general. The workshops and the contact with people from so many different backgrounds provided a space for cooperation and discussion. In addition to the main topics, we shared about our countries in an "Intercultural Evening".

Although I was unsure if there was a big difference in the way these issues and challenges are treated in Costa Rica and in Europe, I was happy to realize that the principles that should guide the intercultural and inter-religious dialogue are valid in every context, and I can apply them in any place I live in.

I was very happy to note how open the group was to sharing experiences regardless of nationality or age. I believe that we made the best of every moment during the training and in the free time to come closer and exchanged ideas on religion and intercultural work.

This activity underlined IDA's mission of enhancing educational processes, which promote understanding and goodwill. At personal level, the whole experience encouraged me to take a look at my own prejudices towards others, to measure my willingness to understand others – my degree of tolerance, but most importantly to reinforce the thought that in order to reach understanding you must never generalize. Tolerance can only be achieved analyzing one person at a time!

*Diana Vargas Solano
Costa Rican volunteer at the ICYE International Office*

South-South / A Costa Rican volunteer in Kenya

I am Gabriela Bonilla Rubí, a Costa Rican ICYE volunteer in Kenya at Motherly Care Children's Home (MCCH), an orphanage that houses 140 children and teenagers from 1 to 21 years old. MCCH gives them education, food, shelter and love. The organization has been active for over 10 years, and looks for donations, thanks to which kids now have a better quality of life.



Every child has an impressive story hidden behind their smiles and tears, but grateful for the support that MCCH offers. I am in the midst of all this; they share their reality and dreams with me. Although the children live in extreme poverty, with limited health services and education, and food just enough to keep them with energy, between the memories of their past, they can see with hope the possibility of achieving a college degree and getting a good job. Unfortunately, most of them cannot go to college after leaving MCCH because they do not get the required score for a scholarship, and would

not be able to pay for food, rent, clothing and higher education even with a basic job (\$ 50 per month).

I come from an underdeveloped country like Kenya, but for example in my country having a mattress is not considered a luxury. We have free education and medical insurance; here the boys dream of having a similar service.

Many people from the South travel to countries that are technologically advanced and return home saying that all what is national does not work. I think that if these people would consider global statistics of extreme poverty and be exposed to the reality of not having access to information and other basic needs, I am sure they would realize that they are complaining really about luxuries, while others in the world long to have a similar meal to theirs.

I think the biggest satisfaction come from voluntary work: it is not through money, but through life experiences, that one grows stronger and more sensitive, but also you grow side by side all those who benefit from your work. A free service of quality is so necessary both near your home and mine. I thank ICYE for my experience and the one of all the volunteers around the world that try to make a positive difference and to know cultures.

Gabriela Bonilla Rubí
Costa Rican ICYE volunteer in Kenya

Read more: www.facebook.com/MCCH.SDM

CCIVS Inter-regional Seminar in Nigeria



ICYE Nigeria and the Voluntary Work Camps Association of Nigeria played host for the CCIVS EU - Africa Inter-regional Seminar held in Lagos, Nigeria, from March 10th to 14th, 2011. Representatives from Mauritius, Nigeria, Togo, United Kingdom, Mozambique and Kenya took part in this event that was building on the successful

results of The International Congress of Voluntary Service in December 2010 in Barcelona, Spain.

The seminar focused on: sharing and understanding the interests and experience of each organization represented, both in the regional and the thematic cooperation; working from the basis of a SWOT analysis towards the design of strategies and short, medium and long term plans of action for the 2011-2021 period; giving visibility to the meeting with relevant authorities and media.

After three days of activities and discussions, the participants came up with a Common Plan of Action for implementation on the themes of cultural heritage and diversity; peace and human rights education; poverty reduction and health; environment and sustainability. Furthermore, a strategic plan for intra- and inter-regional cooperation to live up to the challenges of recognition, representation and visa issues, among others

DISCLAIMER: Please note that the statements and opinions expressed in this newsletter, although edited, are those of the authors and not necessarily the official standpoint of the ICYE Federation or of the editor.