

Worlds of Experience



No. 32 (October 2013)

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'This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.'

"PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL INCLUSION"

Dear Friends,

Connecting with others, a sense of belonging, a feeling that one's view are valued and taken into account – are needs shared by all of us. A sense of belonging can shape one's identity and influence one's participation in society. Nonetheless, many people experience barriers to social inclusion and face marginalization and discrimination. Volunteering programmes attempt to reach out, raise awareness, empower and provide support to people leading precarious lives and with limited access to opportunities. We could therefore consider social inclusion through volunteering as an optimistic approach.

In the 32nd issue of the ICYE Newsletter on volunteering "Perspectives on Social Inclusion", we would like to understand how this promising strategy works in practice. Thus how volunteer engagement becomes the bridge within and among communities around the world. In the section "Volunteers Voice", we present the views and perspectives of seven volunteers from around the globe on social inclusion: A French volunteer in Vietnam writes about her role facilitating the integration of an autistic child in the Friendship Village. An Ecuadorian describes how her volunteering experience in India made her see the world from a different perspective. A US-American volunteer in Finland questions who we are and what identity is made up of, stating that although one is well prepared for the journey and challenges to come, "the reality of it isn't so simple". A Brazilian volunteer in the UK draws our attention to how simple life can be if we valued what really matters. An US-American in Iceland makes a sharp critique of the internet, reminding us to detach from the "imaginary ephemeral cloud of information with no inherent existence" and start caring about others, and cooperating with others. A UK volunteer in Kenya explains that volunteering abroad makes you to leave your comfort zone and in the end, it is what you make of it! Last but not least, a Japanese volunteer in the UK explains that inclusion comes through mutual support, an equal relationship, a give and take. Through the spectrum of their volunteer engagement, these seven volunteers narrate how being informed and open to learning, being supportive and proactive, and cooperating with others, they promote inclusive practices and shape the communities within which they are engaged.

News from International Organisations feature: • UN High-Level Panel: A new Global Partnership to eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development; UNICEF Policy Brief: International migration & generation 2025; State of Urban Youth Report 2012-2013; UN Online Platform for Youth Launched; and UNDP: Working with Civil Society in Foreign Aid - Possibilities for South-South Cooperation?

News from NGOs report on: VSO Document on women in power and gender equality; A Call for Justice for Post-2015; UNOY thematic pages on "Youth and Peacebuilding" and "Youth, Justice and Social Media Activism"; IAVE: Open global survey on youth volunteerism; and CIVICUS' forthcoming campaign: Be the change!

ICYE Programme News include: the 28th ICYE General Assembly in Uganda; Evaluation of a Volunteering Research Training; Learning Forum "Youth Leaders in Action" in Peru; Group visit in Vietnam: What can a group of French teenagers with difficulties do at a centre for children with disability?; EVS: "InterACTIVE Citizenship"; project "Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism".

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", dedicated to "Linking Cultures, Sharing the Future". Please send your contributions to icye@icye.org, before 31 January 2014.

Warmest regards!
ICYE International Office

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

“SOCIAL INCLUSION”

VOLUNTEERS VOICES

“Social inclusion: How an autistic kid can be integrated in the Friendship Village”



The Vietnam Friendship Village is a centre located in Hanoi that provides medical care, physical therapy and education to Vietnamese children with diseases caused by Agent Orange. It has been six months since I started volunteering at Friendship Village, and I have developed the feeling that this place works like a small community, where everyone takes part in the daily life of the place, as much as they can depending on their physical and mental conditions. The tasks are done with or by the kids (like cleaning the classrooms). Moreover, the kids who are able to take care of themselves are also expected to help the younger or the more disabled ones (to go to school, to take a shower, etc). Thus, by counting on everyone's responsibility, even towards mentally disabled individuals, the centre offers a possibility of inclusion for children who cannot find it in the « outside world », a chance for all of them to be useful in a way. But this place also welcomes autistic kids; children who have more difficulties to integrate in the social world. Can those kids find a minimum of social relationship in this community despite the empty world they build around them?

Việt is 10 years old and still doesn't speak. When I first met him, his main hobby was hitting people, pushing adults and kids to their limits by annoying, stealing, etc. He is always spoiling his chance to build a link with someone, to be accepted, at least by his classmates. But the teacher, instead of focusing on his behaviour, tries to focus on his abilities. For example, Việt likes to go take the rubbish to the bin at the opposite side of the Village. And this is no problem; he can do it, even during class. First, Việt was surprised, took the rubbish outside and came back to start over his « jokes ». But after a while, he was able to decide for himself the right moment to do this work. Now, when his own breaking limits are getting closer, he can ask the teacher to take a « rubbish break»!

Furthermore, Việt found some other strategies to handle his relationship difficulties, especially during the free time activities that the teacher allowed the kids every morning and afternoon. Instead of asking to go outside to the bin, Việt is now developing some itineraries inside of the classroom: he uses a chair that he pushes to carry many different objects from one side of the room to the other, and often asks my help, or sometimes just uses my arms as shells. He is careful to not touch anyone while moving his things. This is positively the first time I can see him avoiding physical contact, which still often leads to fights. He stares at me at those moments, maybe to call me as witness. Some other kids started to play this “game” with him a few weeks ago and ever since then things changed slowly. He has finally found, by himself and thanks to the teacher's comprehension, a way to be with his classmates. Of course, not everything is solved for him yet, and it will probably never be the case. But the work that Việt is doing right now, even if it is still not scholarly work, at least helps him to be included and allows him to experience new things, also with others.



Of course, Việt's case must not be generalised. He was probably ready, even if he didn't know it, to find his way to a community life instead of always making himself excluded by hitting the others. He finally found a «job», his job, the job that actually no one wants to do: he is now the “rubbish man”! Also, my presence and that of another volunteer in the class may have helped as well. We were mostly useful in giving the teacher a hand when he was out of control, always free to go outside with him for a minute. But as it is often said, I don't see our work only like the one of a teaching assistant. First of all, we bring in another way of being with the children. But, most importantly and like we did for Việt, we can start to think together with the teacher about a child's work. Also, the international presence in the centre brings a piece of this outside world that some kids decide to use to start the inclusion process.

Việt's story shows us that we should never give up on the most difficult kids. Social inclusion, even at a small level, can always begin for them: we have to let them develop their little solutions when they face problems. I think that in the centres like Friendship Village, where there is very limited staff, the presence of volunteers is important. The more adults the kids can find around them, which for

each of them provides different ways to behave, increases the possibilities for them to find someone to work with.

Yet, even if social inclusion in the centre is possible, the way to inclusion in the outside world is still very long. Perhaps, it is not only the children who have to change, but everybody's mentality as well, to welcome them in the best way in the world, their world.

Julie Duvert, French volunteer in Vietnam

The Other Side of the World

Being part of a so-called third world country has always been hard, but the experience is not the same here in Latin America as in Asia. Ecuador is a small country and travelling from here to India, one of the biggest and most populated countries in the world, was just the best experience I've ever had. I learned so many things from the people, religion and in general a totally different culture and world from mine. I didn't really have any expectations because I knew that it was going to be something that I could never have imagined, and indeed it was like that.

The best part for me and the things I will never forget are the moments I spent with the kids at the APD SIS. The Association for People with Disability became my home; antis, the kids, the teachers and everyone who used to help there are part of me now. I left a piece of my heart every second I



played and that I taught the kids... Every smile and every laugh is deep inside of me not only because they made me happy but I think they taught me more than I did. They changed everything inside of me.

When I arrived in Bangalore so many thoughts started coming to my mind and I didn't really know how to feel, I was afraid, excited and motivated to do so many things in the six months that were waiting for me... I don't know if I meant as much to them as they meant to me or if they will remember me. The only thing I'm sure about is that travelling and volunteering in India was the best thing I've ever done, not only because meeting new people and living in totally different places and at the same time helping someone else is the perfect opportunity to understand other realities. It is

about having a totally different view of the world and the people because you start living in those cultures that even if they are hard to understand they start to become a part of you with every



second you spend there.

This time in India helped me see the world from a different perspective. I had the chance to see the dissimilar realities of people, allowing me to appreciate everything I have and every moment that I spent in my project. I think that the idea of volunteering in your country or in another country helps to unify cultures and to learn from each other. While I was in my project, all of us were the same; we were humans sharing laughs and joy together. All of us together became a whole. This helped me understand and experience the life of other people and how kids with disabilities could be included in activities that kids are usually involved in. What is amazing is that it doesn't matter if you are a boy or a girl or your social or economic reality, being a volunteer is just having a heart to help and be helped by others, to teach as well as to learn from others. I grew as a person during my 6 months in India and a piece of India is always with me. It was my beautiful chaotic experience... it was my Incredible India.

Daniela Aliaga, former Ecuadorian volunteer in India

We are all human

When comparing the many cultures around the world you will find countless differences that can be viewed in many ways. Skin color, religion, language, and geographic location are just a few of the many aspects which can create social and cultural barriers throughout the world. Whether we choose to believe it or not these social and cultural barriers are a part of each and every one of us. It's how we live our everyday lives and it helps us put a definition to our own name, to our own social identity.

If you were asked to describe your own personal identity what would you say? I'm going to make the assumption that most people would give answers describing their occupation, where they live, sharing their values, etc. These are all the characteristics in which we define ourselves. These characteristics also cause social and cultural barriers. Now what happens when you take all those descriptions away? Strip away these social and cultural barriers? The same barriers which give a sense of identity, give us a definition. Who are we then?



When I was first presented with that question, I couldn't give a conclusion. I was left searching for an answer which should be so simple, yet there was no answer to be found. That is when I made the decision to become a volunteer in a foreign culture.

Having the knowledge of the vast amount of differences between cultures, I decided to keep an open mind and have a positive outlook. As a volunteer in a foreign country I was forced to stripe away all aspects of my own life that were familiar. It's not as easy as flipping a switch to let go of your own values and lifestyle and to absorb the new.

I work at Fallkulla Domestic Animal Farm, a branch of the Helsinki Youth Department. It is a place where children have the opportunity to care for the animals as well as many other projects. At the work place there is always a welcoming environment, yet there are times when I feel the cultural barriers, especially when it comes to the language. The staff members and children at Fallkulla put in tremendous efforts to promote social inclusion make me feel a part of the team in as many ways as possible. For example, by not only teaching me, but willing to have me teach them and share different aspects of my home.

There is no doubt there are differences between this new culture and my own back home. I felt as though I was well prepared for this journey and to face the challenges of the different barriers and social inclusion, although the reality of it isn't so simple. It is a difficult transition but having the ability to see beyond those challenges can be extremely rewarding. I feel extremely lucky to have such a kind group of people to work with at Fallkulla, and despite our social and cultural disparities we are all essentially the same: we are all human.

Hanna Persson, US volunteer in Finland

What really matters?

Take the bus to go out or simply do shopping does not seem very important to me or to you, because we can do it easily. We know how to communicate very well, we can read the number or the name of the bus, we can ask people on the street when we are lost and we can manage our money.

I never thought about how my life would be if I couldn't do some simple things. This is my work as a volunteer in Outward Housing (London, England): help people in need to be more independent. Some of the sweet ladies that I am working with have learning disabilities. I can see how I am important in their lives. Once a week they need help to do their shopping lists. One of them has a paralysis and she has difficulty to walk, to write, to wash her dishes, to clean her room, to cook her dinner and unfortunately she doesn't speak.

Some time ago in Brazil I learned the alphabet in sign language. When I started my work with this lovely lady, I was just spelling the letters of the alphabet to her and she could write her shopping list. Now I don't need to speak and spell the alphabet. I can spell doing the sign language and day by day I am sure that she is learning and remembering how to write her shopping list. Looks like something so ridiculous, but I can't describe to you how happy she is when she finishes the list.



One of the other ladies has Down syndrome, she doesn't care about her shopping list, because she doesn't know how to read, but in her case I can see how important I am for her when she wants to go out. Taking the bus is something amazing for her. She can feel an important person in society, doing things that everybody does. She doesn't care about anything, she is just proud to be there. It is interesting to see how the other people react when she is there. They smile at her and they are friendly. They really know how to respect her and the driver is always helpful. This is one of the best things to be in England, because you can be respected in the British culture.

Another lady has mental challenges. She has the same feeling as the other lady: to be a part of society, particularly when she is doing shopping. She knows what she wants to eat for dinner, she has preferences for milk, and she has her favourite cereal, like everybody else. And she wants to be there, doing her shopping, once a week. It is very important for her to feel included; she needs to be seen as a normal person. It is just significant to sit on the bench in the corner and enjoy people's lives. I guess "we", considered "normal people", forget how simple life can be if we value what really matters. I am just somebody helping them to feel better, and they just opened my eyes, they showed me colours that I didn't know, feelings that I was wasting, songs that my ears couldn't hear. And for you, what really matters?

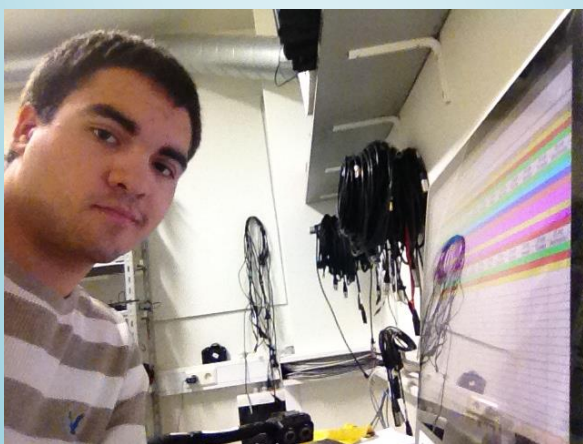
Mariana Passos, Brazilian volunteer in the UK

Are We Coming Closer, Or Drifting Apart?

As the Internet becomes more and more global, now reaching nearly every corner of the planet, people become more connected. The wonderful thing about the Internet is it allows anyone to contact anyone else at any time, no matter how far apart two people are, and the speed of that contact is only limited by the technology. The result is nearly instantaneous contact. It would be thought that this would bring us together, anyway. However, in my opinion, although it has the power to potentially do this, it does not. Our society is drifting apart. Here are some of the reasons I posit:

- 1) Our society values competition over cooperation.
- 2) Our society would rather be individually comfortable than collectively sustainable.

Kids are from a young age told to succeed. They are encouraged to "succeed" by being the best. This means always winning soccer games, hitting the hardest in a football game, being the fastest in a track meet. Later in life, it means being corporately successful at the expense of others and the environment. Competition is stressed so much that it leads to all sorts of psychological disorders and inferiority complexes in adults and children alike. Some of them learn to deal with it, but many don't. What should be valued is cooperation. Rather than trying to get the nicest car or the best looking mate for our ultimate goal, we should be simply cooperating, looking out for one another; basically focusing on what is in front of us and helping those around us.



With the Internet, you'd think that people would be cooperating more than ever. You'd think that people would come together and make all sorts of great and lasting friends. Indeed, people do make friends online and organize events through this medium. But instead of making a few quality friends, more and more often it is a menagerie of shallow friends. Rather than having people focus on what's in front of them, the Internet encourages people to focus on some imaginary ephemeral cloud of information with no inherent existence. The Internet is founded in convenience and comfort, which makes perfect sense in a culture that is always trying to become sleeker, faster, and more efficient. We don't want to call up every single one of our friends, so we send a group message.

For society to care about the individual, the individual has got to start caring about others. Instead of finding meaning in competition, if we all found our meaning in cooperation and compassion, maybe there would be just a little less loneliness, a little less war, and a little more happiness. We are all connected, all united, and to ignore this fact is to cease to be human. However, there's a cure. I am currently a volunteer at a film school in Iceland. The great thing about this work is that I get to be selfless, which is a learning experience in itself, as well as cooperate with others on a daily basis. Although computers and the Internet are heavily involved in this work, the school emphasizes cooperation and teamwork in order to complete projects. I see this, and I see the positive results in the students like care for one another and more of a selfless mentality.

I am often asked what I am doing at the school. When I say I'm a volunteer, there's often a little chuckle as the inquisitor thinks along the lines of, "Why would you work for no pay?" When not paid for a job, when not having an excess of wealth or worldly possessions, I am able to fully blossom. I learn that it is silly to constantly lament about some other place and time, about hopes, fears, doubts, and a whole menagerie of other thoughts and feelings when the eternal present is right here in front of us. The mind that comes with volunteering is the cure for the problems that I have described. It teaches us that the most important person in our lives should be the person right in front of us. The Internet has taught us the best way to not be present, and that's the real reason it's damaging. Be present, and the problem subsides. This is the mind of the volunteer: devotion to one task at a time, that is, the task at hand.

Eric Mosley, US volunteer in Iceland

Leaving your comfort zone

On 11th August 2013 I moved to Kenya for six months to begin life as a volunteer in Nairobi. I'm working for an organisation called WOFAK (women fighting aids in Kenya), and I am based in an area called Kayole. WOFAK has seven branches across Kenya making it the biggest NGO in Kenya, helping those both affected and infected with HIV/AIDs. I've been involved in many of their projects including visiting clients of an IGA (income generating activities) project - where I have been conducting home visits and checking on both the well-being of the clients and their families and the businesses.

I have also been involved in helping to set up a Youth Friendly Services centre in the local health centre near our office. We have a resource centre and a VCT (voluntary counselling and HIV testing). The youth centre aims to provide access, services and knowledge to young people in relation to sexual and reproductive health issues and their rights as youth within these areas. It has been a real eye opener and a challenge but we have seen that services like this are really needed in the community - and it is great to see that we are able to reach out to so many young people providing them with both a youth centre and a place where they can feel comfortable talking to one of our team.



This week I have also had the opportunity to be involved in some outreach programs in the community. We set up a mobile VCT in Dandora - a nearby slum, where we were targeting those who may otherwise not have access to a VCT or who were too afraid to know their HIV status because of the stigma attached to it. We managed to test around 150 people and really felt we had reached out to the community, particularly some of the many street children.

The thing I love most about Kenya is how friendly everyone is, and how welcome I have felt here. I'm learning Swahili, I'm eating new foods every day, and I've learnt how to cook ugali, mandazi, chapati, mtoke, to name a few! I've eaten cow intestine, witnessed chicken slaughtering and spent an afternoon tearing heads off small fish! Living with a host family has been the best way to be submerged in the culture. Most of all I've loved being a part of a project where I can really see that they are making a positive difference to the people they are serving. Volunteering is what you make of it. It's one of the most rewarding things I have ever done and I am learning so much every day. It has also enabled me to challenge myself, put myself out of my comfort zone and just get stuck in!

Emma Kreeger, UK volunteer in Kenya

Inclusion through Mutual Support

Since I came to England as a volunteer, a month has passed. There have been a lot of new things for me and I have got many fresh ideas from these days. There are two big themes I am thinking through about my volunteer days so far. First is about what support should be. Second is about the role of the foreign volunteers. I will explain what I mean.

"If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime". It is said to be a Chinese proverb from Lao Tzu, the Chinese founder of Taoism, 4th century BC. The volunteer's activities for the disabled remind me of this proverb. We tend to want to do everything for the people who need our support. It is quite simple. If you do everything well, you can get gratitude and self-satisfaction. However, such an attitude can have a negative effect on the people being supported. In our care home, my work place, "be independent" is the goal of all the disabled residents. Indirect support is important in order to do that. Supporting eating is a good example. We should just provide support for them to eat, not feed them easily. Supporting too directly can get in the way of them being independent.



For that, the foreign volunteers can work well because they also need to be supported. For example, if they are not good at the local language, those around them have to support their language. It is the same as well in my case. All my disabled residents support my English and I also support them to do something. This relationship is equal. We, the foreign volunteers, cannot support one-sidedly. To give people with disabilities opportunities to be the supporters and not the support targets means we can engage in our volunteer activity without hurting the pride of the people who need to be supported.

I have gained these ideas about what support should be and the role of foreign volunteers from my volunteer days in the UK. Some people criticize volunteer activities as simply a self-satisfying thing. However, I think that interactive support is not just self-satisfying. Supporting someone should be equal, a give and take. This is what support should be about.

Shuya Wakayama, Japanese volunteer in the UK

MORE ON “SOCIAL INCLUSION”

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, 3 DECEMBER 2013 THEME: “BREAK BARRIERS, OPEN DOORS: FOR AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY FOR ALL”

More than 1 billion people or 15% of the world population are living with disabilities - the world's largest and most disadvantaged group - most of which, are in developing countries!

Around the world, persons with disabilities face physical, social, economic and attitudinal barriers that exclude them from participating fully and effectively as equal members of society. They are disproportionately represented among the world's poorest, and lack equal access to basic resources, such as education, employment, healthcare and social and legal support systems, as well as have a higher rate of mortality. In spite of this situation, disability has remained largely invisible in the mainstream development agenda and its processes. [Read more](#)



E-DISCUSSION ON YOUTH MIGRATION, EQUITY & INEQUALITIES

How can migration be beneficial for adolescents, young people and countries of origin, destination and transit alike? Following the 2nd [High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development](#) in New York on 3-4 October, civil society and the UN are jointly hosting this online discussion on the positive impacts migration can have on young migrants and countries of origin and destination, and how this can be realized as part of the post-2015 development agenda. To participate in the e-Discussion [click here](#)



YOUTH MATTERS: EQUIPPING VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LITERACY AND LIFE SKILLS

Youth matters: Equipping vulnerable young people with literacy and life skills is a policy brief published by the **UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning**. The publication focuses on challenges faced by vulnerable youth. Young people who have never been to school or those who have dropped out (or been “pushed out”) are among the most vulnerable. Being excluded from basic education puts a wide range of opportunities beyond their reach. In today's world of disparities in social, economic and technological resources, this is not only limiting their life chances (including access to formal quality education, technical and vocational training and employment) but also their potential contribution to their own country's development. Find the brief [here](#).



NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

A NEW GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP: ERADICATE POVERTY AND TRANSFORM ECONOMIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.



A report that sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030, and deliver on the promise of sustainable development.

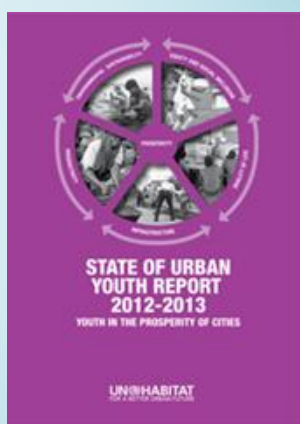
The report calls upon the world to rally around a new Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to every person in the world. The Panel was established by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and co-chaired by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron. To download the report [Click here](#).

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION & GENERATION 2025



On October 31, 2011 the global population was estimated to have reached 7 billion. The demographic changes between developed and less developed regions will be readily felt in the next decade – by 2025 – when the world's population hits 8 billion. More developed countries are simultaneously facing fertility rates at their lowest levels and aging populations, while less developed countries, in contrast, are and will be experiencing higher birth rates and a significant “youth bulge”. The majority of the next billion will be born in low- and middle-income countries where those with the lowest per capita incomes will be more likely to experience higher fertility rates if current trends continue. To download the UNICEF policy brief [click here](#).

STATE OF URBAN YOUTH REPORT 2012- 2013: YOUTH IN THE PROSPERITY OF CITIES



This Report builds on the 2010/11 edition, “Leveling the Playing Field – Inequality of Youth Opportunity” and its insights into the state of urban youth. Much like the findings of the previous report, this one provides further evidence of the fundamental importance of job oriented education to the development of urban youth. At a time when the global economy is looking for paths to recovery and seeking innovative ideas to rejuvenate itself, young people may offer the best hope. To view or download the report [click here](#).

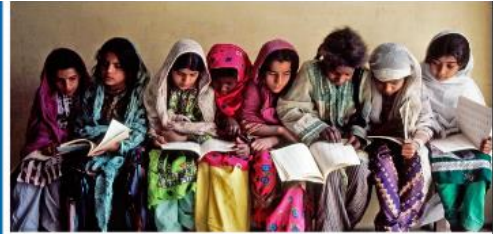
UN ONLINE PLATFORM FOR YOUTH LAUNCHED

On 5 September, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth launched a new UN Online Platform for #Youth! The website provides a space to learn about the UN's work with and for youth, and to discover how young people can engage with the United Nations on youth development, and for achieving the world we want. The website will also be launched in Spanish and French, and will be expanded to the other official UN languages in the near future. More opportunities and initiatives associated with the Envoy on Youth will follow in the near future, so be sure to check the [website](#) regularly!



WORKING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN FOREIGN AID - POSSIBILITIES FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION?

While South-South Cooperation has been expanding significantly over the past decade, for the most part, this cooperation has not included Southern civil society organizations (CSOs). The book reviews experiences and roles of CSOs in development cooperation, drawing out some common themes and good practice from various aid providing countries. It analyses this experience through the optic of principles guiding South-South cooperation: social solidarity, mutual benefit and respect, a shared development experience and equitable partnerships. It puts forward potential issues and questions to consider for possible future engagement with civil society in the framework of South-South cooperation. To download the document in English [click here](#).



WORKING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN FOREIGN AID POSSIBILITIES FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ?



NEWS FROM NGOs

WOMEN IN POWER: BEYOND ACCESS TO INFLUENCE IN A POST-2015 WORLD

The international process under way to develop a post-2015 development framework provides an opportunity to address this deeply rooted and persistent inequality in our society; an inequality that is not only a violation of women's rights, but also a barrier to the eradication of poverty. To be successful the framework needs to take into account the obstacles to gender equality; how and why these are being perpetuated; and evidence of measures that have proved successful in addressing them.

Click [here](#) to access the full document.



A CALL FOR JUSTICE FOR POST-2015



New York, September 23, 2013. "The economy is growing, but poverty is increasing. Clearly, we need to change the way we define progress", said one participant in a community meeting in Nigeria on development priorities. This was among the key messages shared by civil society representatives from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe at the United Nations Headquarters today, ahead of the UN Special Event on 25th September where Governments debated what should follow the Millennium Development Goals after their 2015 deadline. [Read more](#).

YOUTH AND PEACEBUILDING

The thematic pages Youth and Peacebuilding of the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) explore the important but often sidelined nexus between youth, conflict, peacebuilding and policy.

Although youth are often at the forefront of peacebuilding efforts, the positive role youth play in processes of peacebuilding has not yet been adequately explored. Youth have agency, youth are resilient and have the capacity to become productive and peaceful citizens in post-conflict contexts. [Read more.](#)



YOUTH, JUSTICE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM

Social media is sometimes perceived as just being a “cool tool” for young people and providing them with swift and easy means of communication for contacting friends worldwide. Thus, people are quick to judge the legitimate and informed uses of social media platforms. However, having quick worldwide lines of communication and predominantly involving young people, is exactly how social media should be used, especially for effective activism! [Read more.](#)



OPEN GLOBAL SURVEY ON YOUTH VOLUNTEERISM



The **International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)** is promoting an open global survey to establish the ten (10) most important areas of interest that youth volunteers of different regions worldwide are more active and/or interested in. This is one of the steps to the development of their Global Youth Volunteers (GYV) initiative, an envisioned platform that seeks to engage and connect every young volunteer and their initiatives worldwide, through strategic regional partnerships, with three focus areas: 1. Follow your passion; 2. Build your skills; 3. Multiply your Impact.

To answer the Survey, please go to: <http://es.surveymonkey.com/s/BKYZXPM>



BE PART OF AN EXCITING NEW GLOBAL CAMPAIGN!

CIVICUS is launching a public awareness campaign called BE THE CHANGE that will seek to inspire and celebrate citizen action and thereby raise awareness about civic space, the importance of it and our need to protect it. There are 2 parts to the campaign, an online platform and an international day of citizen action. The online platform will invite organisations and individuals from around the world to tell us about actions or campaigns they have undertaken, or that they find inspiring, that have successfully led to positive social change (and thus demonstrated the power of citizen action and the importance of civic space).

The content on the platform will be shared via social media, multiplying its reach to thousands more people around the globe. For more information email CIVICUS at bethechange@civicus.org



ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS

The 28th General Assembly (GA) of the ICYE Federation will take place from 18 to 23 November 2013 and will be hosted by ICYE Uganda /UVP, in Kampala, Uganda and will be attended by 65 participants from around 40 different countries across the five continents.

Main themes will be: challenges and opportunities for the next 4 years; development of south-south exchanges, a new budding system, impact assessment of international long-term voluntary service; future training and capacity building activities.



"EVALUATION OF A VOLUNTEERING RESEARCH TRAINING" HELSINKI, FINLAND, 14-18 OCTOBER 2013

The multi-phased volunteering impact assessment project, which began in April 2013 with the "Training on Cross-Cultural Volunteering Impact" in London, UK, came to a successfully close with the Evaluation Meeting in Helsinki. The overall project aimed at training youth workers to support studies and carry out impact assessment of long-term international volunteering. Participants of the training in London developed tools for volunteering impact assessment, tools that are easy to use and adapt in different countries and contexts. ICYE Finland – Maailmanvaihto and Dansk ICYE presented the sample assessments they had undertaken on home ground, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, to help us gain insight into the effective functioning and the challenges and benefits associated with the impact tools developed with the scope of this project. As a final product, the group of eight participants in Helsinki worked on the toolkit – "IMPACT-ICYE: Practical Guide for Assessing the Impact of Long-Term International Volunteering," expected to be published on the ICYE Federation website in February 2014!

PERU –LEARNING FORUM "YOUTH LEADERS IN ACTION"

2013 is the final year of the 5-year project "Youth Leader in Action". At the **International Learning Forum**, held in Lima, Peru, from 21 to 26 October 2013, sponsored by **Canada World Youth** and hosted by the **Brigada de Voluntarios Bolivarianos del Peru / ICYE Peru**, the impact of this CWY project, which involved organisations in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Indonesia, Vietnam, Ukraine, Nicaragua, Honduras, Bolivia and Peru, was measured.

At the 5-day meeting, the participants documented best practices, lessons learned and results, with special focus on the Young Leaders Initiative and the work of women and men in response to the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the 70 delegates representing the member organizations of Canada World Youth, participated in the International Forum, exploring future collaboration between organizations CWY network.

Programs of this magnitude and impact are seldom! This project included ways in which youth participation through volunteering in health, gender and environment could be motivated and encouraged, bringing young people closer to the reality of the world, and encouraging initiatives and actions that confront the difficult challenges that are yet to be overcome in the world.



WHAT CAN A GROUP OF TEENAGERS WITH DIFFICULTIES DO AT A CENTER FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY?

Can they teach them how to read? Can they do the gardening? Can they take care of the children? The answer is - more than that. They not only worked as volunteers, but also showed their love and compassion to the children. During their 20 days in the Vietnam Friendship Village, eight teenagers and five teachers from Le groupe Arc-en-ciel (meaning Rainbow), Paris, France, together with Volunteers for Peace Vietnam (VPV) brought fun and happiness to children in the village. Every day, they woke up earlier than usual and started to work in the organic garden at 8 a.m. Under the instruction of local teachers and coordinators from VPV, they learnt how to plant vegetables and realized how hard it is to make food. In the afternoon, they went to the classes for disabled children and there they learnt how to interact and play with the children even though they couldn't speak Vietnamese. It was difficult at first, but after a while they found it really easy to communicate with the children. Somehow, there was a link that helped them to make friends easily. That is the compassion between people who face difficulties. Nearly three weeks in the Friendship Village, maybe it was too short for the teenagers to change or improve anything in the village because far more time is needed for changes or improvements. But the teenagers, they have learnt a lot from this trip. They realized that there are many children who face more difficulties in life than them, and no matter what their backgrounds, they can still be useful in this world. All in all, the purpose of this trip was accomplished when it helped these French teenagers to realize the value of their life and inspired them to work hard towards a better future, not only for themselves but also for the people around them.



EVS PROJECT "INTERACTIVE CITIZENSHIP"

"As citizens, we all have an obligation to intervene and become involved – it's the citizen who changes things." Jose Saramago, Nobel-laureate, novelist, playwright and journalist

And that's what 11 young volunteers in the multilateral EVS project, "InterACTIVE Citizenship", which started in September 2013, will be doing – becoming involved and initiating change! Two of the volunteers are still awaiting their visas; the other nine are currently engaged in the most diverse range of civil society projects addressing community development (UK), human rights, refugees and the homeless (Italy, Iceland), people with disability (Spain, India), health and education (Nigeria), street children (Bolivia), the elderly (Indonesia), poverty alleviation, empowerment and education (Uganda, India) and voluntary service and active citizenship (Poland). "InterACTIVE Citizenship", a 9-month EVS project, takes up the motto of the 2013 "European Year of Citizens" by empowering young people to become interactive agents of social change, creating awareness and stimulating debate on citizenship issues around the world.

ACTION 3.2 PROJECT "CITIZENSHIP FOR CHANGE: EMPOWERING VOLUNTEER ACTIVISM"

We are delighted to announce that "Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism", an Action 3.2 project of the ICYE International Office, has been approved for funding by the European Commission! Campaigning as a core activist strategy will work towards deepening, widening and sustaining active youth participation in socio-political processes of democratic society. Supported by their host organisations, young volunteers will drive campaigns at the local and/or national level in 19 countries worldwide. We look forward to an energizing and action-packed year ahead!

ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

NEW ICYE NATIONAL CORRESPONDANTS

- **Japan:** Ayako YAMADA (Ms)
- **Sweden:** Maja JACOBSSON (Ms)/Sofia GADELII (Ms)
- **Switzerland:** Florence SAVIOZ (Ms)