

Worlds of Experience

No. 33 (February 2014)



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"Linking Cultures, Sharing the Future"

Dear Friends,

Volunteering can be seen as an ever-expanding spiral of the contributions of volunteers from the far corners of the world, connecting people from different walks of life and inspiring them to be creative, to exchange ideas and share understandings of our diverse cultures, our religions and lifestyles, and in general the world around us.

In this 33rd issue of the ICYE newsletter entitled "Linking Cultures, Sharing the Future", we are pleased to present seven articles from young volunteers, expressing their views and thoughts on how their volunteering in practice brings people together to learn from each other in our joint efforts to build a global community that cares and shares a common future.

The first article is by an Ecuadorian volunteer who narrates her experiences in India, her host country, and explains why it's about learning about our differences and using one's curiosity, a wise ally, to link cultures. The second is by a volunteer from Taiwan in the UK, who discusses the differences in the philosophy of family life versus the individual self between the UK and Taiwan, in the end dreaming of linking the two to the benefit of the generations to come. The third is from a German volunteer in India, who takes a first small step by walking a mile in the shoes of others – these steps bringing us closer together towards a common future. In his article, former Swedish volunteer, currently intern in Ecuador, talks of the challenges of linking cultures and also of the rewarding outcomes that the resultant linking of different thoughts, ideas and perspectives can achieve. An Austrian volunteer in India examines her own impressions, moving from the superficial to the more profound understanding of a culture. A Mexican volunteer in the UK describes how simple actions lead to great rewards and how much she gained, learnt and shared with the clients of her project. Another volunteer from Germany in India tells us that we can and should influence our environments and local communities, not just in the host country but also back home, so that together we can make a larger and lasting change.

News from International Organisations, amongst others, feature: UN Economic Prospects 2014; UNDG "A Million Voices-The world we want"; Towards an AIDS-Free Generation, and UN Habitat: Advancing Youth Civic Engagement and Human Rights.

News from NGOs report on: Human Rights Watch World Report 2014; European Forum Youth Policy Watch; The Green Cities Campaign; and Education to Employment: Getting Europe's Youth into Work.

ICYE Programme News include: 28th ICYE General Assembly in Uganda; ICYE Practical Guide for Assessing the Impact of Long-Term International Volunteering; Kick off meeting of the campaigning project "Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism"; EVS project: "From Awareness to Practice: Volunteering for a Sustainable Future"; and ICYE UK "I see Why (I.C.Y.)" Photography Competition and video "See why people volunteer with ICYE"

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 "Volunteering for a Sustainable Future". Please send your contributions to icye@icye.org, before 31 May 2014.

Warmest regards!
ICYE International Office

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

"Linking Cultures, Sharing the Future"

VOLUNTEERS VOICES

Learning about our differences

We are often afraid of not fitting in, of being surrounded by people so different that it would be impossible to share common ideas, or worse, a common future. The cultural difference between societies is something that cannot be avoided; nevertheless, the feeling of alienation is entirely up to each one of us to let it remain or not. This is something I have learned while working as a volunteer in India, a country so vast and so beautiful yet so different from my own that it would have been rather incredible not to feel out of place at the beginning. My name is Daniela Dahik, I come from Quito, Ecuador and I have been volunteering for the past six months in Bengaluru in a school for children with mental disabilities.



A day at work would consist in prayer in the morning, yoga or physical exercise with the kids for half an hour, improvement of motor skills comes right after, and then we continue with basic math and basic English. After lunch it's time either for recreational activities, physiotherapy for those who also possess a physical disability, or more "intellectual" learning. In between, I find myself trying to cope with the cultural differences between the kids, teachers and myself. Five different languages are spoken within the school; the majority of the kids come from Muslim families although there are a few that are fervent Christians; boys and girls shouldn't interact that much with each other and too much physical contact might be taken in the wrong way; dress code: what would be appropriate or normal for the western world might not be the wisest choice of wardrobe in some parts of India, what jewelry means, rings on the toes, bracelets in both ankles, etc. Not to mention that given the fact that there are also other volunteers working with me, their culture is also very much present. However, I dare say that it is precisely these differences that have brought us all closer. Curiosity can be a wise ally if used correctly.



For instance, the language has played an important part in bringing us all together. Each kid speaks his/her own language and, if we are lucky, they also speak English. Same goes for the teachers. But while working the necessity to communicate surfaces; that is how we ended up with improvised mini language classes of Tamil, Hindi and Kannada. German, Polish and Chinese have also been included in these so-called language classes due to the fact that the volunteers come from all over the world. Then suddenly the topic diverts from grammar to local cuisine to traditions and what is typical to each country. Before you know it - before I myself became aware of it - the people that were merely your co-workers in the beginning are now your good friends; the teachers become people you can trust and are also a good connection to the country you're volunteering in. With the kids, the link is established in a simpler way. Whether it is because of the facial and body features that we have which are completely different from Indians, or because they are simply kids and curious in nature, they opened up to us quickly and selflessly. Again, sooner than expected, I found myself completely attached to the kids.

After these few months as a volunteer in India, I've come to understand that the differences we have don't matter at all and are not in any way a reason to feel distant or unconnected to one another. We are a global community; I feel like a part of India now even though I come from far away and I believe this feeling of belonging to this place was achieved so quickly and easily thanks to the volunteer work. Volunteering does not consist only in teaching or helping immigrants or protecting the fauna or a place, etc., it is about the link you can create between your native culture and the one that surrounds you, it is about being together with people that are completely different to you; it is about sharing.

This comes from a volunteer that could find that link between cultures and fell in love with her host country.

-Daniela Dahik, Ecuadorian Volunteer in India

Family Bonding and Individual Life

My volunteering project offers care for elderly people (approximately 80-95 years old) who suffer from Alzheimer's, Parkinson's or strokes. I have many chances to talk about the issues that they are facing and how they are dealing with them. After 5 months here, I have realised the cultural differences of how different elderly people in the UK see the next generation compared with Taiwan. Becoming old is natural, death is as well. The most difficult thing is to realise that you're no longer able to do the things you could do so easily, yet you don't want to be a burden on your family. In the UK, due to their ages, they've been married for decades, so when their spouses passed away, they became very depressed, yet they always have many pictures around them and they love to talk about what they have been through. This is the way they're dealing with the situation now, by living with their memories.

However, that seems very different to the Taiwanese; people in Taiwan don't have pictures around and don't really talk about them, they choose to ignore it and concentrate on other things, so they won't mourn too much. To distract them from the sadness of loss, they'll focus on their children or grandchildren. They will do as much as possible to make sure the coming generations having a better quality of life. They keep all the properties, fortune, and even build a lovely path toward the future for their children. The reason is that they choose a better way of life for their children, from their own life experiences.



On the other hand, young people in Taiwan are required to take on the responsibility for the whole family when they are able to work and earn money. Filial piety (Confucian philosophy, a virtue of respect for one's parents and ancestors) is one of the most important things to be followed. So most of them do what their family wishes instead of what they want. There is a saying for this, "The salt I've eaten is much more than the rice you've ever had." It means that they have more life experiences, so you'd better listen to them. When talking about people in the UK, they encourage their children to be more independent and support them to do what they would like to do. They don't push their children too much and believe they should have their

own life experiences. They are not really expected to be in charge of the family.

So family bonding is one of the main important cultural aspects in Taiwan. No matter what the relationships are between couples or parents-children, the family is considered as a whole instead of individual life. And here in the UK, family seems to be just a relationship. It doesn't really bind your lives together; the most different thing is they give you all the support to manage your life.

I've seen so many different ways of dealing with becoming older, sick, dying and the loss of family members. I believe that I have more inspiration for relationships with the family. It's still a tough issue for me as I haven't really lost someone in my life so far. And I can't imagine if I do, what kind of thoughts or feelings I'd have, but there's one thing for sure, I can now see how they see, now I know I'm not alone when I feel lonely as I have all the memories and great times with those people I care about. If I have children afterwards, I will encourage them to pursue their own dreams but also participate in family days, to get the balance between independence and filial piety. This is how I see the linking of cultures in my life, and with a new vision emerging for the future.

-Chun Yi Chien, Taiwanese Volunteer in the UK

Running a mile in their shoes

"Lorena aunty, how is the weather in Germany now? What kind of food do you eat there? What is your father's name? And why don't you wear a bindi and a saree?"

These are all questions that the children in my school (Ananya Trust in Bangalore, India) ask me very often and plenty more. They are so interested in learning more about my home country and never get bored to ask. But the same happens the other way round – I still have so many questions to them: "Why and how do you celebrate this festival? Can you show me how you wash your clothes? Why do the people here in India act like this and not like in my country?"



Automatically, when people from different countries and backgrounds come together, they try to understand each other and their different lifestyle, culture and opinions. And exactly that happens every day when I work in my project. I live together with the children during the week, so we are together 24 hours a day and get to know a lot about our personal and cultural backgrounds. Even if the children might have little chances to visit Germany, they learn so much from these situations and experience an international and intercultural exchange.



But not only the children and the other people in my surroundings, also we as volunteers learn so much during our voluntary service. I get to know a completely different way of life and not only read about it in books or on the internet, but experience it very intensely in daily life during one year. I eat what the people here eat, I do the activities they do, I live how they live and sometimes "walk for 10 miles in their shoes". Or rather run in their shoes, because in our school, we have a running - programme, where the children train for a 10 km run. Even though I was not really a marathon runner before I came here, I more and more enjoy joining them and participate in that programme – they have so much fun and are so motivated that I love to run with them.

I will bring all these experiences back home in 6 months, when I return to Germany, and I will share them with my family and friends. In my view, this is the way we can build links between different people and countries: by learning to experience how others feel and by appreciating and respecting the different cultures and views in the world. Every participant of an exchange programme takes one small step by walking a mile in the shoes of others. All these steps can come together to bring us closer to each other and to create a common future for the world community.

-Lorena Schwab, German Volunteer in India

Linking cultures together in a most rewarding way

Being a part of Fundacion VASE (Voluntariado para la Ayuda Social del Ecuador) and on a daily basis working with volunteers from different corners of the world enriches my perspectives in many different ways. People sometimes ask me why Ecuadorian youngsters volunteer in Germany or in the United States. "Is there really any need for volunteer work in Germany?" they ask me curiously. I tell them that sometimes it's not all about the direct work itself but rather about sharing and linking cultures together and sharing the future. For me the most rewarding aspect of being a part of ICYE is all the influence I get from different traditions, cultures, behaviors and ways of thinking. Working in a multicultural environment generally includes a lot of benefits but also, normally, some obstacles. My involvement with Fundacion VASE has taught me that those obstacles can usually and easily be overcome with an open-minded view and a broad perspective. Consequently we can get the most out of a multicultural group or team and by linking cultures together in a rewarding way. Collaborating with volunteers and staff in Fundación VASE has highlighted up some essential issues for me that every participant or volunteer can keep in mind. Awareness of these circumstances can help a multicultural environment function in a more satisfying way and thus positively link cultures together.

Different views of authority: in some cultural environments people tend to pay great respect to individuals in positions of great authority. Persons from other cultures are more eager to question an authority if they find him or her doing things "incorrectly". Authority is definitely built on different principles in different cultural environments. For example, in some cultural environments the esteem towards older people is vast. That's something very obvious to me after my experiences with Fundación VASE and in Ecuador. Other cultures confer authority created more upon a person's achievements, experiences and actual knowledge. It will be helpful if the structure of an organization or a team in a certain cultural environment is made apparent to the participants or future volunteers towards linking the different cultures together in a positive way. Certain cultural groups are generally very cooperative with a horizontal perspective while other groups have a more distinct chain of command.

Language barriers: learning a new language in a proper way usually requires a lot of patience and understanding from the environment. Working in Fundacion VASE and with volunteers from all over the world I every now and then encounter complications caused by language barriers. Therefore, when participants of a multicultural environment perceive a variety of languages as a chance to learn something new, they will take more advantage of the collaboration with the team.

Interpretations of Conflict in a multicultural environment conflicts will, after all, probably occur, particularly since volunteers live in unfamiliar family settings and work in new, for them, unknown projects. And when conflict

does happen within a group or team, persons from diverse cultural backgrounds may respond to it in different ways. Some persons may be more eager to argue and stand up for their opinions while others may have a greater “fear of conflicts” and therefore be quieter. Different reactions are most likely, to a large amount, built on individual personality but as well based on a person's cultural background. Solving conflicts, and linking cultures together, in a multicultural environment involves an understanding of everyone's cultural background as well as everyone's personal view of what produced the conflict. These are the two sides to a coin. My experience is that working with multiple cultures in a multicultural environment can be a mayor challenge (with different religions, traditions, language and approach to work in mind) but the outcome of linking culture and different thoughts and perspectives together can also be rewarding as nothing else.



-Kristian Ekman, Former Swedish Volunteer and currently Intern at Fundación VASE, Quito, Ecuador

A little story of saris, rickshaws and understanding

It is 8.30 in the morning. After a quick coffee I am on my way through the village to school. I wish my neighbours, who are busy cleaning their breakfast dishes in front of their houses, a good morning, walk by the green ground, where everybody leaves their waste, cross the small shop at which we always buy milk and eggs, make a circle around the goats, who block the way every morning and arrive at my project three minutes after leaving my house. My project is a small school somewhere in the middle of this huge, crazy country India.

It has been some months since I arrived here, totally overwhelmed and confused by all the impressions. First

the clothing: What was going on with the bright colors of the Saris, striped tops combined with dotted scarves and glittering details all over the dresses? Was no woman here annoyed by the bangles, always jingling around their wrists? And how could these wide trousers, combined with those long shirts become fashion? Then there was the traffic. Crossing a street by foot became an impossible mission for me. I put one foot on the street; suddenly there was a motorbike racing in my direction from the right side, on it an entire family, including father, mother and two children. In the same moment, an auto rickshaw was approaching me from the left side, constantly beeping to get me out of the way. I jumped back, started a second attempt and failed again, being scared off by a bus driven by a man who speeded up even more when he saw me. Plus, there were those loud noises and sounds around me everywhere. So that was me in the first weeks in India, constantly not knowing what was going on.

And now, a couple of months later, I am sitting in our house with two other volunteers. The one to my left is dressed in a Sari, the one to my right is wearing purple, glittery bangles and anklets – two, of course. I would never exchange the comfortable Indian trousers I am wearing at the moment for a pair of jeans. And I am thinking that it is not very loud today, since there are only some constructions going on in front of our apartment.



However, there are not only these superficial points about India I have started to like, but after some time in another country, I have also started to understand the different ways of handling situations when it comes to more serious themes like, for example, marriage. Before I came here, I would never have thought that I could comprehend why arranged marriages are still a common way to find your life partner in India. But after talking to some young girls or parents, I came to realize that being married is essential in this country, especially for women. And at the point, India is right now, letting the parents arrange a wedding is a way to guarantee an

easier life. It is not that I think that this is the best solution, but I can at least understand why marriages here are handled like this.

But it is not only us volunteers learning from our host country. There are obviously some matters in which we can still teach our hosts a little bit. For example, when it comes to the way our village handles the waste problem. Like I mentioned in the beginning, the people here leave their garbage on the grassy ground and sometimes burn it here - not the environmentally friendliest method. So we try to at least to make the children in our school a little more aware of the importance of waste watching and their environment in general.



In the end, the point of cultural exchange is neither only adapting to a different lifestyle nor us coming to another country to try to solve all the problems there in our western ways. In my opinion, the importance of bringing people from different cultures together lies in realizing that the ways of dealing with problems and situations can vary from country to country. But there is never only one right way, there are many different approaches which are just as good, or may even be better than the own one.

-Sarah Yolanda Koss, an Austrian EVS volunteer in India

SIMPLE ACTIONS, GREAT REWARDS

My project consists of working with people with slow learning problems. When I say this I'm not suggesting that I must teach them to read or to write. The purpose of my project in general is to integrate persons with such disability into society and carry out a normal life with enjoyments, duties and everything which involves being an adult.

One day upon arriving at work, the only thing I heard was my client saying that Nelson Mandela had passed away. In the beginning, I was surprised that she knew how important this man was, but after she had repeated it every 5 minutes for 3 hours, I tuned it out, and it even became tiresome. I took my client shopping as I do every week; whilst in the vegetables aisle, she mentioned again the incident of the death. For me, it was listening to the same thing once again, and as I turned away a black woman started to observe her. When my client repeated the same phrase, the woman smiled and each



time my client mentioned it again, she smiled more and more, and even said it to the group of persons who were accompanying her, and they smiled as well, portraying a big happiness. At this point, I understood that my client had gained the affection and respect of a group of persons that she didn't even know. I understood the value of equality and moreover the solidarity when seeing that the respect at this same occurrence could link persons with different ideas, skills and cultures.

Furthermore, the clients in my project already have their own friendships, family who visit them, acquainted staff in charge of helping them out, and are also integrated in certain activities in society. Everything is very educational but at the same time somehow routine-like. I am in charge of helping them so they see each other with their loved ones, that they visit their friends, etc. I am like the means so they can socialise with the rest of the people. One day, trying to incorporate new ideas, I had a chat with another volunteer, who commented that he had become part of the aerobics classes with his client to do some exercise and for motivation. He invited me to join, and it seemed like a very good idea to be part of something new, something that I knew my client will enjoy. The following day I asked her if she wanted to go, and as expected, she agreed. We went to the place and along the way we came across the other volunteer with his client. We introduced each other, we got to the place, we took the class, we said goodbye. Everything went well. Generally my client greets all people but her disability does not allow her to remember names and faces unless she sees them quite regularly. The next week, my client insisted on going again to the class, which apparently she had enjoyed a lot. She put on her tennis shoes, we took the bus, got to the place and the other volunteer and his client were not there. The class started and she did not stop looking towards the entrance door, and I started asking her if she was okay, if she wanted to leave. She said she was okay until she approached me and asked me where the other client was, calling her by her name. I answered that surely she would come soon. But the fact that she had asked me stayed in my mind. For any person it could be just a question, but for me it was more than that, she was capable of remembering the name and asking for someone with who she does not have any type of connection beyond the aerobics class. When finally the other client arrived, I noticed an immense happiness in my client and she started to focus on the class. When we finished, we said goodbye, we went home, but she didn't stop mentioning her name. I share this incident because it made me realise that it does not matter what our colour of skin is, whether we have or do not have a type

of disability, whether we come from different cultures. It does not matter how different we may be one from another – with the simple fact of working as a team we can achieve a better outcome. We can focus on our next aerobics class when our new friend is there with us.



We sometimes think that the clients learn more from us than we do from them, we think that we have so much to give to them, maybe even more than what they could understand; but this is an erroneous thought. They have so much to give us, so share with us, so much we can learn. In the beginning, you think they are the persons you look after, they are the persons you help, but with time you realise that they are much more than that, you start seeing them as the reasonable human beings they are.

-Valeria Olaya Valdiviezo, Mexican Volunteer in the UK

Bringing mankind closer together by volunteering around the world

For half a year now, I've been living and working in India and enjoying this unique time in my life. So until now, I can only make presumptions about the effect that my experiences here will have on the people in India and in my native country, Germany. But of course, it is beyond question that by being abroad in a new culture, the volunteer first has to fight his or her way through. Because of that, you have to come closer to one another – ideally by mutual understanding, and if this doesn't grow out of the encounter, you will at least learn to accept other things. Moreover, by getting to know different perspectives and ways of life, people will stop to think of their home country or region as the hub of the universe. Consequently, more tolerance will develop.

When a volunteer comes to a host family and project and settles in the local community, always both sides will get new impetus, ideas and learn about each other's culture and point of view. In my case, I experienced that although there is a long tradition of volunteers in my work placement and my host family, there are still many new things to learn and share. For example, personally, I talk very much with my Hindi teacher and find so interesting what she tells me about India, its inhabitants and her other students from around the world.

When you have friends around the world, you understand that we are all human beings with more or less the same needs and emotions. Therefore, you will care more about people in different parts of the world. For example, it will no longer be just some abstract fact that we are all connected, but you can really feel how we belong together. This is also the reason why volunteering and intercultural exchange prevents war and conflicts. Furthermore, people can develop the important skill to deal with difficult situations and conflicts. For me, it's great when they even start to work together on common political aims, e.g. more democracy, sustainability and fighting for human rights.

It is evident that those who have some experiences with people from another culture can also have a big influence on their own social environment, like their family and friends. Even more people may be reached when the volunteer writes a blog about his or her thoughts and development, as I do. So I hope that every volunteer can change small, small things and together we can make a bigger change!

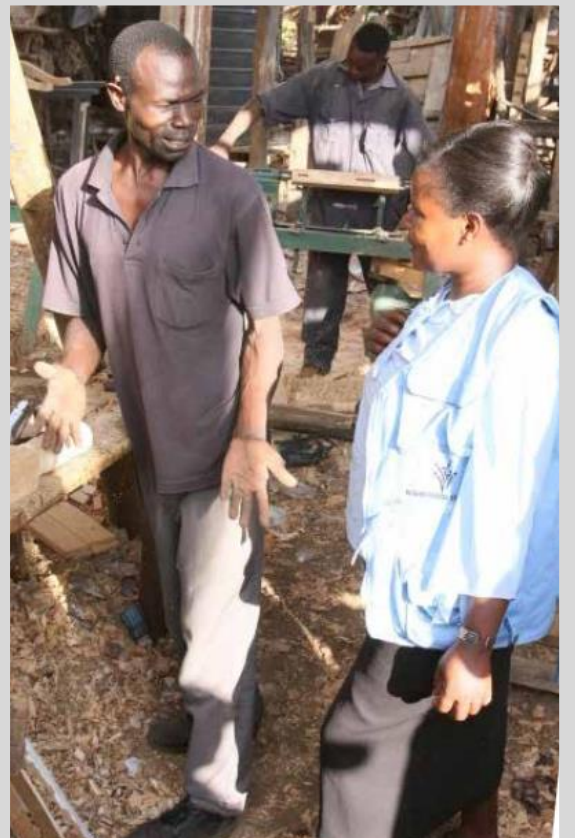


-Victoria Zimmer, German Volunteer in India

MORE ON “LINKING CULTURES, SHARING THE FUTURE””

PEACEBUILDING AND VOLUNTEERISM: CONSIDERATIONS FOR POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

A growing number of organizations and countries are advocating for the issue of ‘peace and security’ to become integral to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The engagement of citizens through volunteerism can be powerful in promoting social cohesion and reconciliation and helping to develop national civilian capacities, all of which make a critical positive difference to peacebuilding processes and initiatives. It is widely recognized that peace and stability require legitimate institutions, a strong security sector and rule of law and justice. Peace is not limited to the absence of war, and ongoing peace requires that long-term institutional and regulatory changes find concrete expression in people’s perceptions and actions. Civic engagement, particularly volunteerism, is an important complementary mechanism in this regard. This Issue Brief demonstrates, using evidence from post-conflict situations, how volunteerism can be a key means of supporting the progress of national peacebuilding and, ultimately, global sustainable development. [Read more](#)

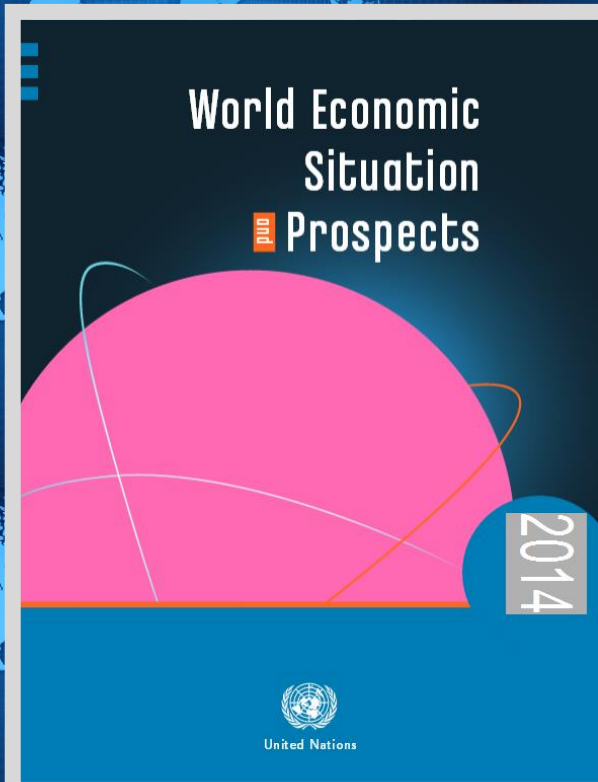


INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE - UNESCO

In this new, turbulent international globalized landscape, a central message must be heralded: peace is more than the absence of war, it is living together with our differences – of sex, race, language, religion or culture – while furthering universal respect for justice and human rights on which such coexistence depends. Therefore, peace should never be taken for granted. It is an on-going process, a long-term goal which requires constant engineering, vigilance and active participation by all individuals. It is a choice to be made on each situation, an everyday life decision to engage in sincere dialogue with other individual and communities, whether they live a block or a click away. [Read more](#)



NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION AND PROSPECTS 2014

Global economic growth should increase over the next two years with continuing signs of improvement, according to the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects 2014 (WESP) report. The global economy is expected to grow at a pace of 3.0 per cent in 2014 and 3.3 per cent in 2015, compared with an estimated growth of 2.1 per cent for 2013. The world economy experienced subdued growth for a second year in 2013, but some improvements in the last quarter have led to the UN's more positive forecast. The euro area has finally ended a protracted recession. Growth in the United States strengthened somewhat. A few large emerging economies, including China and India, managed to backstop the deceleration they experienced in the past two years and veered upwards moderately. These factors point to increasing global growth. [Click here](#).

A NEW WEB PORTAL ON GENDER, YOUTH AND MIGRATION

UNESCO announced the launch of an online knowledge platform on Gender, Youth and Migration (GYM), as a sub-community of practice of the Gender Community of UN Solution Exchange. The GYM initiative hopes to bridge the gap and link researchers, practitioners and decision makers working on gender, youth and migration in India.

The GYM webpage provides access to over 200 resources on internal migration, gender and youth, at policy, research and case-studies level.

To visit the Gender, Youth and Migration's New Web Portal [click here](#)



A MILLION VOICES: THE WORLD WE WANT

This report by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) collects the perspectives on the 'world we want' from over 1 million people around the globe. For almost one year, people have engaged energetically in 88 national consultations, 11 thematic dialogues, and through the MY World global survey. As member states consult on the shape and content of a successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) beyond 2015, it is hoped that the opportunity to listen to these voices will contribute to reaching consensus on what is needed to move towards a common sustainable future. [Read more](#)



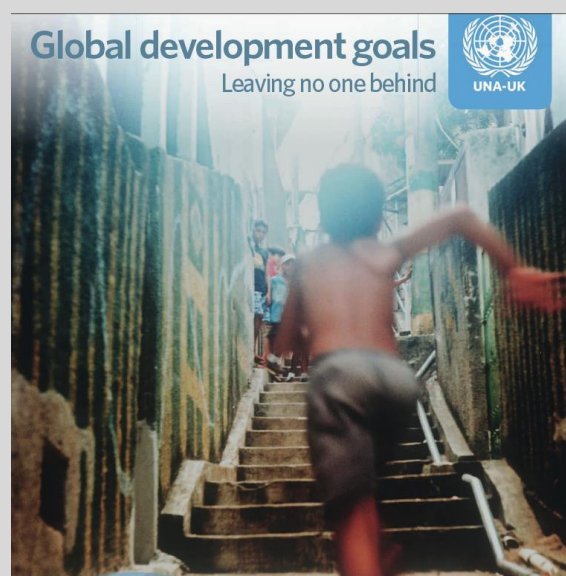
YOUTH VOLUNTEERS ENGAGING COMMUNITIES, CHANGING LIVES

This publication consists of stories collected by UN Volunteers from different parts of the world. They capture the journeys of young people transforming themselves and their development realities in remarkable ways through volunteerism. When properly facilitated, volunteerism opens opportunities for young people to address problems that affect them, and participate innovatively in shaping a world they inherit. The volunteer initiatives in this publication highlight how volunteerism can be particularly effective in facilitating youth engagement in community life. They also underline how peer-to-peer exchange amongst those with shared concerns and experiences can be catalytic for joint action. [Read more](#)



GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS - LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND REPORT BY UNA UK

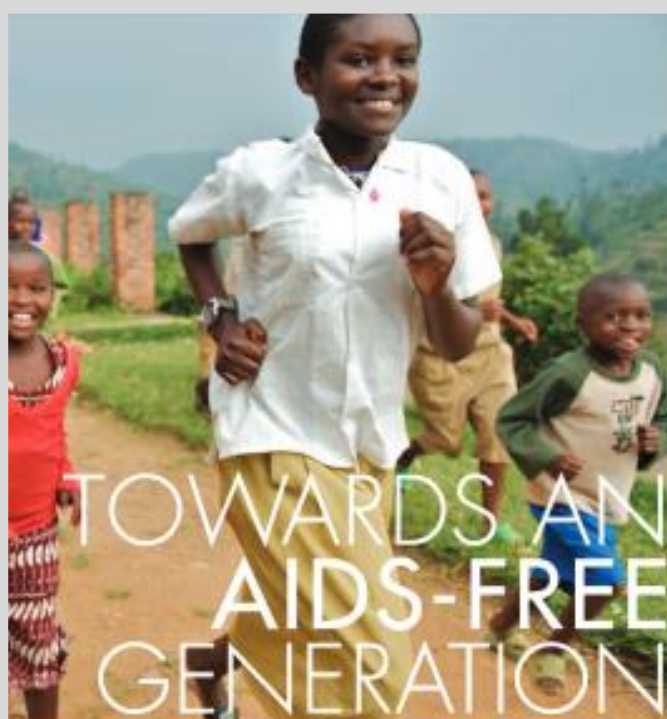
The paper 'considers the context in which the MDGs were developed, assesses progress to date, offers views on achieving the 2015 targets, and provides insights into the creation of the post-2015 agenda. Particular emphasis is placed on those factors that have yielded the greatest advances.' The publication features contributions by over 50 officials and experts from around the world, including the UN Secretary-General. [Read more](#)



TOWARDS AN AIDS-FREE GENERATION CHILDREN AND AIDS: SIXTH STOCKTAKING REPORT, 2013

An AIDS-free generation means a generation in which all children are born free of HIV and remain so for the first two decades of life, from birth through adolescence. It also means that children living with and affected by HIV have access to the treatment, care and support they need to remain alive and well. For the first time in the history of the HIV epidemic, the global community has accumulated the knowledge, experience and tools to achieve an AIDS-free generation. [Read more](#)

UNITE FOR CHILDREN  UNITE AGAINST AIDS



UN-HABITAT: ADVANCING YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

UN-Habitat recently released the report 'Advancing Youth Civic Engagement and Human Rights'. This first of its kind of publication demonstrates youth citizenship and engagement in governance is about more than political engagement. It is as much about dealing with limited access to economic resources and socio-political assets. UN-Habitat through this publication and the workshop seeks to highlight how youth are taking leadership roles, and explore how governments can support youth to become active and responsible citizens now and in the future. [More](#)

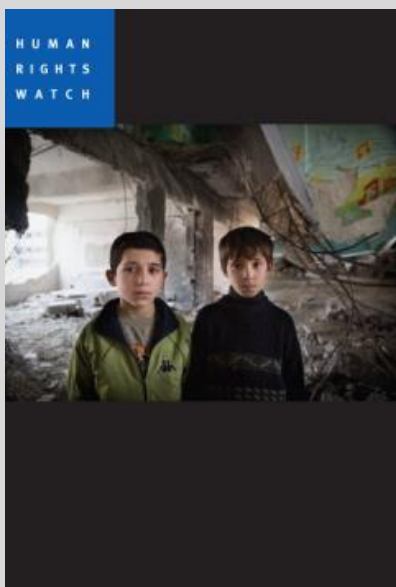


NEWS FROM NGOs

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH WORLD REPORT 2014

World Report 2014 is Human Rights Watch's 24th annual review of human rights practices around the globe. It summarizes key human rights issues in more than 90 countries and territories worldwide, drawing on events through November 2013. The World Report reflects extensive investigative work that Human Rights Watch staff undertook in 2013, in close partnership with human rights activists on the ground.

[Read more](#)



THE GREEN CITIES CAMPAIGN

Earth Day Network launched the Green Cities campaign in the fall of 2013 to help cities around the world become more sustainable and reduce their carbon footprint. Focused on three key elements – buildings, energy, and transportation – the campaign aims to help cities accelerate their transition to a cleaner, healthier, and more economically viable future through improvements in efficiency, investments in renewable technology, and regulation reform. [Learn more](#)



YOUTH POLICY WATCH - UPDATES ABOUT YOUTH POLICIES

If you want to know more about youth policies in Europe, don't miss any issue of Youth Policy Watch, the European Youth Forum newsletter! You will find updates about youth policies, what the European and international institutions do for youth rights, or the work of youth organizations. So don't wait any longer and read the latest issue [here](#)!

MCKINSEY CENTER FOR GOVERNMENT: EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT: GETTING EUROPE'S YOUTH INTO WORK

On The European Union has the highest unemployment rate of anywhere in the world apart from the Middle East and North Africa. In 2013, almost a quarter of young people in the EU labour market were unemployed. This report focuses on measures that can be taken to tackle the skills element of the youth unemployment problem and help young people find the jobs that they want and deserve. [More](#)



ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS

28th ICYE General Assembly 2013

The last biennial General Assembly (GA) of the ICYE Federation took place from 18 to 23 November 2013 in Kampala, Uganda, and was attended by 65 participants, representing 38 different countries, including partners in Argentina, Spain and Tanzania. The GA highlights were: keynote speeches on Africa's predicaments & challenges; Federation's mid (2017) and long-term (2021) action plans; workshops on how to ensure a more global and reciprocal youth exchange; development of south-south exchanges, bi-country programs and National Committees peer support systems; elaboration of regional meetings and trainings for 2014; and plans for trainings on how to assess the impact of the ICYE program on volunteers, host organizations and families.

The 29th ICYE General Assembly will be held in Goa, India, in October/November 2015.

For more information about the XXVIII ICYE General Assembly please contact the ICYE International Office at icye@icye.org.



IMPACT-ICYE” – PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF LONG-TERM INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING

We are pleased to announce the release of the practical guide “IMPACT-ICYE” for assessing the impact of long-term international volunteering. “IMPACT-ICYE” has been produced through the support of the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission, and specifically by way of the Action 4.3 “Training for Cross-Cultural Volunteering Impact” (London, UK, April 18 – 22, 2013) and the “Evaluation of a Volunteering Research Training” (Helsinki, Finland, October 14 – 18, 2013). The guide offers tools and guidelines that are simple, easy to use and adaptable in keeping with the diverse contexts within which long-term volunteering plays out. It comprises the sample studies conducted by Maailmanvaihto – ICYE Finland and Dansk ICYE to test the tools developed during the project. The final publication comprises the learning that came about as a result of these two sample studies. We hope that the guide will encourage and assist host and coordinating organisations to assess the impacts of international volunteering on the different stakeholders within their local and national contexts.

The practical guide can be downloaded from the following link on our website: www.icye.org/news-a-activities/current-and-past-activities#seminars

“IMPACT-ICYE”

Practical Guide for Assessing the Impact of Long-Term International Volunteering

**A publication of the ICYE International Office
With the support of the Action 4.3 Grant
of the European Commission’s Youth in Action Programme**

April – October 2013



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.

CITIZENSHIP FOR CHANGE: EMPOWERING VOLUNTEER ACTIVISM “– KICK OFF STOCKHOLM

The ICYE worldwide campaigns project entitled “Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism” commenced on a positive – albeit freezing – note in Stockholm, Sweden, from January 20 – 23, 2014. The team of facilitators and regional coordinators – from PeaceWorks Sweden, AFAIJ Spain, Frauensolidarität Austria, ICYE Colombia, ICYE Kenya, Volunteers for Peace Vietnam and the ICYE International Office – worked on the training programme and organisational aspects of the forthcoming international activism training seminar in Madrid, Spain, from March 31 – April 4, 2014 and the campaigns to follow in 18 countries around the world. We invite you to check our website from May on for information on the new web portal “The Volunteer-Activist” presenting the campaigns in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. This project has been made possible through the support of the European Commission, and the Action 3.2 of the Youth in Action Programme.



"Sustainable development is a moral precept as well as a scientific concept. It is closely linked to peace, human rights and equity as much as to ecology or global warming. And if it obviously concerns the natural sciences, economics and politics, it is also a cultural issue." Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO from 1999-2009

"FROM AWARENESS TO PRACTICE: VOLUNTEERING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE"

ICYE's new multilateral and reciprocal European Voluntary Service (EVS) project on sustainable development starts in April 2014. The 11 young volunteers from Austria, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Spain, Poland, Argentina, Brazil, Vietnam, Kenya and Mozambique will have the opportunity to explore and to familiarize themselves with the wide range of issues related to the concept of sustainable development over a 8-month period. Through their practical work in host projects dealing with sustainable development, the environment, health and community development, poverty and marginalization, disability, etc., the volunteers will be able create awareness and stimulate debate on sustainable choices and lifestyles within a larger framework that connects local action to global reflection.



'Youth in Action' Programme

ICYE UK "I SEE WHY (I.C.Y.)" PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION – "SEE WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER WITH ICYE!"

ICYE UK asked their national and international (current and returned) volunteers to participate in a Photography Competition to create a fantastic visual representation of the impact of international volunteering and the great variety of volunteering activities/experiences. The photos were judged by the ICYE UK staff team - the WINNER being the photo below that got the highest number of LIKES, with the caption: *"I see why... my feet can take me everywhere if I start leaving my home to see the world"*. The photos received with 'I see why.....' quotes about what volunteering means to them were collected and published in the new "I see why...." campaign movie: [click here](#)



ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

NEW ICYE NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

- New Zealand Heath INGHAM (Mr)
- South Africa Natasha SIMONS (Ms) & Nozuko MASIBA (Ms)