

# Worlds of experience



No. 9 (Oct/Nov 2005)

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"Young volunteers working with children and youth"

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Dear Friends,

"Young volunteers working with Children and Youth" is the theme of this issue of Worlds of Experience. Young people from different walks of life and nationalities, describe their first experiences of living and working alongside children and youth in a foreign country .

Be it in Taiwan, Ghana, Colombia or Russia, in spite of the predicaments most of these children and young people face, what prevail are feelings of fulfilment, privilege, happiness and curiosity which stem from living and working with them.

The intercultural experience appears to be much more intense, eye-opening and refreshing when mediated through the eyes of children, or as Vincent in Taiwan says, "kids speak a language that knows no frontiers".

Every year over two hundred young people volunteer in long-term voluntary service placements offered by ICYE worldwide, which deal and work with children and youth (mostly) living in difficult circumstances.

News from International Organisations include, among others, the 10 Year Review of the UN World Programme of Action for Youth, the 4th UNESCO Youth Forum, and the declaration of 2008 as European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

NGOs news feature Youth Advocacy for the Decade for a Culture of Peace, Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS, and Europe for a Change II, a campaign & research to explore youth opinion towards the enlargement of the European Union.

The ICYE programme news section contains an article from a Belgian volunteer in Lagos, reports from the 3rd Africa-Europe Training Course, a Study Visit to Macedonia and Albania that ended with a meeting with the Albanian Youth Minister, the launching of a new Intergenerational Volunteer Exchange for senior volunteers, and reports of celebrations & activities from India and Russia.

Please note that the next issue of "Worlds of Experience" , to be published at the end of February 2006, will focus on Youth and Health Education.

Kindly email your contributions, in form of articles/pictures, to [icye@icye.org](mailto:icye@icye.org) before 31 January 2006.

Enjoy the reading!

Best regards,  
ICYE International Office

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

## “Young Volunteers working with Children and Youth”

### VOLUNTEERS' VOICES

#### “THE SUNRAYS OF MY DAYS”

Their names are Qia Fong, Hui Yu, Pei Shuen. They are between three and eleven years old. They live in Taidong, on the eastern coast of Taiwan, and every day I have the incredible privilege to spend time with them.

At the "Dongjia Kindergarten", the day always starts with a ray of the sun, or rather with rays of the sun : those from the sky and the smiles of the children. From 8am, the first students arrive at school. They are not completely awake - neither am I - but it doesn't matter, since nothing nor anyone wants to rush us out of our dreams.

We greet each other with a "good morning", a "zao zan", but most importantly a smile. Every morning, we build a pyramid of toys higher than the previous day, reaching heights that seem more spectacular to the kids every day. Slowly, our eyes go higher to reach the summits of those one-minute Babel Towers. And who knows... One day we might reach the stars.

We have fun, we wake up ; we talk too. My Chinese is not great but it doesn't matter - the kids speak a language that knows no frontiers. So we quickly forget who is Taiwanese and who is not : what matters now is to spend time together, and to make this time as good as possible.

When you are thrown into a civilisation whose language, culture and customs you barely know, and whose ways of thinking are foreign to you, there are small treasures whose looks make you understand that despite all the hostility in this new world, you belong there as much as anyone. And you are welcome.

Those treasures are priceless. Their names are Qia Fong, Hui Yu, Pei Shuen. They are between three and eleven years old. And unexpectedly, they have become the sunrays of my days. Not so surprising after all, they say it rises in the East.

**Vincent Brunet**  
**Volunteer from France to Taiwan**



**Sarah und Anna in Ghana**

#### “THE LUCKIEST GIRLS IN THE WORLD”

We are Anna from Iceland and Sarah from Belgium. For the last two months we have been living in a home for boys from the streets in Ghana. We have four young boys to take care of, from the ages nine to eleven. We live with six older boys as well (ages fourteen to twenty-one) who are like our brothers. So now we have ten new brothers. Maame lives close by, but she is always here cooking food and taking care of the home. She is our Ghanian mother.

Our main concern is on the four smaller boys. In the morning we help them get ready for school (which means waking up at 5 o'clock). They brush their teeth, bathe, get dressed and eat breakfast. When they are off to school we have our free time.

When the boys come home from school we help them do their homework.

When the work is finished, they can go play and football is often their first choice. In the evening, all dirty after the day, they bathe again before eating dinner. And because they wake up early, they go to bed early. So at 8 o'clock everybody should have brushed and be in bed.

We have our free time when they are off to bed, but we are often tired, just as they are. Working with children is demanding, but it's also very rewarding.

We face some difficulties working here. Because of their situation and history the boys have specific problems. Sometimes they don't seem to listen to us at all and we feel like we have no influence on them.

Other times they can be the sweetest boys and we feel so privileged to have the opportunity to work and live with them. It's satisfying when we see they are open to us, when they do their homework well and are learning new things. And we feel like the luckiest girls in the world when they come for a hug.

We are happy with the project we got, this is the kind of work we wanted to do. We don't feel that we are facing any great problems because of the cultural differences. Still, it's very good to have each other. We can share our feelings, our hopes and fears, talk about the differences and any problems we might be having. In general, we like Ghana, the people here and the fact that we are in Africa.

***Sarah LAST NAMES & Anna  
Volunteers from Belgium & Iceland to Ghana***

### **"WORKING WITH KIDS IN BOGOTÁ"**

My name is Jenny , I am from Finland and I am volunteering in Colombia through the European Voluntary Service (EVS) program.

I am working in Bogotá in a kids club run by YMCA. It was created as a result of projects and programs proposed by former participants of local youth groups.

It gathers young people aged 15 – 28 in approximately 200 youth groups and projects, with new groups starting each semester. Most of the participants of youth groups are workers, many unemployed, some are former offenders and few are students due to the high cost of university education.

In work in the area of Bogotá called Kennedy, where there are 36 clubs for kids, whose families face problems like poverty, family violence, lack of education etc. In the clubs these kids learn things that are not usually taught to them at schools, values like respect, responsibility or tolerance, they develop as well artistic skills and creativity in the form of working and playing with other kids.

In every club the kids can develop their own projects in which they discuss the needs and problems of their neighborhoods and decide what to do to improve life in their own community.

During the first weeks I worked a lot with Juan Carlos, my supervisor and the coordinator of the clubs - I learned a lot by observing, and attending the evaluations in which kids express their opinion about the work of the club and its leader.

Learning the language has been very important at the beginning. Thanks to the children, after one and half month I was able to understand conversations and to express my ideas and thoughts in Spanish. Already after two months I got more responsibility and started working independently in Kennedy as a coordinator of the clubs.

I was interested also in working with teenagers who had been with "guerrilla" or "paramilitares" and a week ago I made a workshop with them about different values and preparation to the normal life in society. Once a week I'm responsible to bring the snacks/meals for all the clubs in Kennedy. At the office I help in different tasks and where I may be needed.

Working with these children is interesting and beautiful, although many of them have serious problems, their happiness, energy and curiosity are amazing. I also enjoy working with Juan Carlos, whose creativity and passion motivates me a lot and has helped me to understand the importance of this project.

***Jenni Kivistý  
(EVS)Volunteer from Finland to Colombia***



**Joshua and Sandra with a Babushka in the streets of Voronezh**

### **"INEXPLICABLE FASCINATION"**

One thing I have noticed over the last couple of weeks is that it is really more Russian here than I could have anticipated. Usually you expect somewhere to be authentic and when you arrive you feel disappointed as it doesn't fit the bill. There is no chance of that here! Voronezh is a city of around a million people and is built on both banks of the river that passes through.

I am volunteering for an organization called Passage Zebra who have been in operation for 8 years. It is a small but intimate office with 3 members of permanent staff and a fellow EVS volunteer, Sandra, from Germany. We are both teaching our native languages 4 evenings a week and are trying to instigate a number of other groups which aim at bringing students of all nationalities together from the many educational establishments here. These include a film group along with an international social group. We are conducting most of our work at the Academy of Art in Voronezh. It has, in true Russian form, a mix of immensely talented people.

In Voronezh there is a large student population and many of them are from overseas which gives us great scope in terms of what we can try to organize. The city itself is large and fairly modern due to near complete destruction in World War 2. It boasts many cultural outlets from theatres and the opera house to the art galleries and the puppet theatre.

Some things seem to be quite complicated (such as buying stamps) and the red tape and bureaucracy are apparent at every point of life. The differences here are noticeable in almost every context but the one thing that certainly strikes a chord is the warmth of the Russian people. Their level of sincerity is striking and this, without question, out ways any problems. There is lot more than just Moscow, St Petersburg and Siberia.

Maybe not surprising the one thing that is true are the gangs of 'Babushkas' (grandmothers) who converge in what can only be described as gangs on every street and could intimidate the KGB and seem to know things before they have even happened.

This country has always provided inexplicable fascination and continues to do so. If anyone has thought or is thinking of coming to Russia then I can strongly recommend it. There is no room for disappointment and so much potential it will blow you away.

**Joshua - Laurent Dodsworth  
(EVS) Volunteer from UK to Russia**

### "FROM TÜBINGEN TO BOGOTÁ"

Coffee, cocaine, guerrilla - these are unfortunately the most usual associations that come to mind when thinking of Colombia. But I packed my things and left for one year my safe home town, Tübingen in Germany.

In Bogotá I work for a program run by YMCA Bogotá for young people in conflict with the law. These young people have committed offences of different kind, but being minors are sent to different governmental institutions for their rehabilitation and re-socialization.

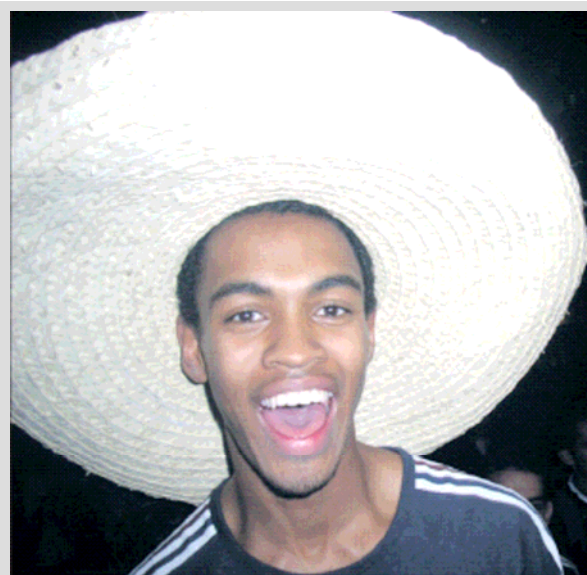
At the project I provide support to the staff, but are also encouraged to develop and carry out recreational activities for the youngsters to increase their self-confidence, to learn to respect themselves and the others, in a pleasant atmosphere.

Bogotá is in all its facets a city of the superlative. Convenient on over 2600 Meter and with nearly 8 million inhabitant, the heart of Colombia. I can say that Bogotá is in first line more or less a normal big city, those, in contrast to the hinterland, is more western than expected. Bogotá is more secure than it is known in the media. I have however learned that I should avoid some "barrios", neighbourhoods, where is rather dangerous to be, especially at night.

Thanks to ICYE Colombia and its co-operation with the national university, during my free time I can attend several culture and sport events.

I want to recommend to all, to consider themselves one year abroad, since a new culture and a foreign language make an extraordinary experience in life.

**Daniel Gyamerah  
Volunteer from Germany to Colombia**



**Daniel in Colombia**

### NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

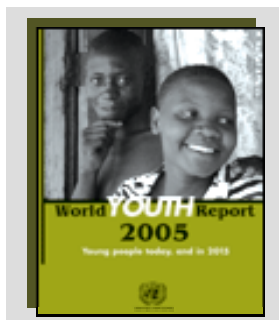


#### 10-YEAR REVIEW OF THE UN WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH

Ten years have gone by since the General Assembly adopted the World Program of Action for Youth in 1995. With over 200 million youth living in poverty, 130 million youth illiterate, 88 million unemployed and 10 million young people living with HIV/AIDS, the case for a renewed commitment to the goals of the World Program of Action is clear.

After an informal, interactive roundtable discussion on the theme *Young People: Making Commitments Matter*, two plenary meetings an evaluation of progress made in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, Members States, many of which were represented by National Youth delegates, presented their views, while delegates from youth organizations and UN Agencies attended as observers.

On 4 October 2005, the World Youth Report 2005 was launched. This report argues that youth policy is driven by negative stereotypes of young people, including delinquency, drug abuse and violence, forgetting that that young people are a positive force for development, peace, and democracy. The short official version, entitled "*World Youth Report 2005 - Report of the Secretary-General*" is available for download now in all official languages: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr05.htm>



#### 4<sup>th</sup> UNESCO YOUTH FORUM

From 30 September to 2 October 2005, young people from all over the world gathered at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris for the 4<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum. The theme of this year's Forum, held in connection with the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference, was 'Young people and the Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations - ideas for action in education, the sciences, culture and communication'.

235 young people participated in this event; 190 delegates represented 129 Member States and 45 observers from international youth organisations, intergovernmental organisations and UN agencies and programmes.

As at previous sessions of the Youth Forum, the theme was debated in plenary sessions and three thematic working groups:

- 'All different, all unique: celebrating cultural diversity through dialogue'
- 'Safeguarding the future: practising dialogue for sustainable development'
- 'Learning to live together: promoting dialogue for peace and reconciliation'

The Forum resulted in a final report outlining young people's recommendations and proposals for concrete action to further the dialogue among cultures and civilizations. To read the Youth Forum Report please visit: [http://unesco.takingitglobal.org/documents/YouthForum\\_EN.pdf](http://unesco.takingitglobal.org/documents/YouthForum_EN.pdf)



## POVERTY REDUCTION: CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

UNESCO is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary for 60 weeks from 5 September 2005 to 4 November 2006. Each week will be devoted to a particular theme. Of the 60 themes selected, 16 involve the Culture Sector in particular.

Contexts and needs differ widely, whether among the Hmong minority in Laos, Tuaregs in the Sahara, Afghan peasants or fishermen on Lake Victoria. Every culture's particular know-how helps decision-makers to formulate truly human development policies.

For more information please visit the following address:

[http://www.unesco.org/bpi/pdf/memobpi07\\_p\\_overty\\_en.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/bpi/pdf/memobpi07_p_overty_en.pdf)



## WORLD HERITAGE TODAY AND TOMORROW WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Section for Youth in the Bureau of Strategic Planning have published a trilingual brochure (English, French, Spanish) entitled "[World Heritage Today and Tomorrow with Young People](#)" that aims to make young people aware of the need to protect world heritage.

Taking action for world heritage is above all about being open and therefore being tolerant and considerate of other peoples, their cultures, their values, their way of life, and of everything that constitutes their "identity".

This brochure seek to make clear to young people that safeguarding heritage is an important and daily challenge not only because it encompasses our roots and our identities but it is also a means of understanding others.

For more information visit the website: [http://portal.unesco.org/en/file\\_download.php/12e027d1ef0e2b49972fce1cfa94ec76publi\\_young\\_hands\\_en.pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/en/file_download.php/12e027d1ef0e2b49972fce1cfa94ec76publi_young_hands_en.pdf)



## 2008 - EUROPEAN YEAR OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The European Commission adopted on 5 October 2005 a proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council to declare 2008 "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue".

This idea had initially been put forward by the European Commissioner with responsibility for culture, Ján Figel', during his hearing before the European Parliament in September 2004. With an overall budget of € 10 million, the European Year will draw on the wealth and diversity of a series of specific projects to be implemented during 2008 through programmes and other Community actions. Culture, education, youth, sport and citizenship will be the main areas concerned.

Proposal for a DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL :

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/portal/events/pdf/proposal\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/portal/events/pdf/proposal_en.pdf)

Annex :

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/portal/events/pdf/annex.pdf>



## YOUTH VOICES AND IDEAS FOR TAKING ACTION

Do you know what the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) are all about? Do you know what your country has been doing to work toward these goals? Delve into these issues and more on the website created by UNICEF's Voices of Youth entitled "The Millennium Development Goals: What can you do to help end poverty?".

Young people can engage in lively discussions in English, French and Spanish about the MDG's and find audio and video messages from youth all around the world. You can also find posters, fliers, postcards, sample MDG projects, and real life stories about Voices of Youth members who are contributing to the fight against poverty.

Add your voice and ideas for taking action. Visit the website at

[http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/mdg/explore\\_mdg.php](http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/mdg/explore_mdg.php) or email [voy@unicef.org](mailto:voy@unicef.org)



## YOUNG DIGITAL CREATORS

“Being creative and collaborative” is the motto of UNESCO’s Young Digital Creators (YDC).

YDC is a web-based programme designed for young people of different cultures to gradually construct, through a collaborative process and creative tools, a deeper understanding of each other’s cultural values and shared perspectives on global issues of our time.

Young people can communicate and share their ideas in the next sections:

- Youth creating and communication on HIV/AIDS
- Scenes and sounds of my city
- The sound of the water
- History and culture of peace in Africa (only in French)

Please visit: [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=9465&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=9465&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

## NEWS FROM NGOs



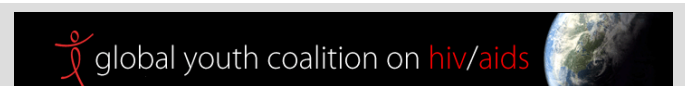
## YOUTH ADVOCATE FOR THE DECADE FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

A Youth Advocacy Team, coordinated by UNOY Peacebuilders, and including a GYAN representative, participated in a lobby effort from 1-14 October to promote the Civil Society Mid-Way Report on the Decade for a Culture of Peace.

The 3,000-page report contains submissions by 700+ organizations from 100 countries. The group met with 48 Permanent U.N. Missions to present civil society accomplishments, and the UN General Assembly meeting on the Decade’s resolution (20 Oct.) saw co-sponsoring countries rise from 66 to 105. Please read the report at the following address <http://decade-culture-of-peace.org/>.

The publication was launched at the United Nations in New York on Tuesday 7th September by two of the young journalists that contributed to the magazine. Following this launch we have produced a website which aims to encourage other young people to take action by writing to their leaders.

For more information please see: <http://www.plan-international.org/ourfuture/>



## GLOBAL YOUTH COALITION ON HIV/AIDS (GYCA)

GYCA is a youth-managed alliance of over 700 youth leaders and adult allies in HIV/AIDS. It provides young innovators with the resources, connections, and support needed to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS amongst our peers. The Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA) believes that by networking HIV/AIDS youth leaders and adult allies worldwide, can strengthen and empower the youth movement against HIV/AIDS.

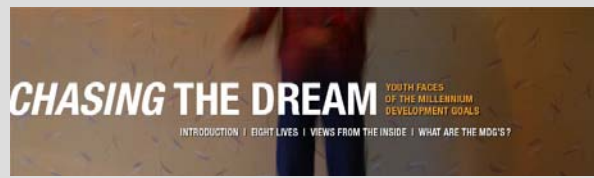
Free e-courses are being offered each month with priority to the Regional Focal Points (RFPs) but also open to GYCA members at large. E-courses are on: 1) Project Management; 2) Political Advocacy with a focus on UNGASS; and 3) Grant Proposal Writing and Fundraising. Join GYCA to find out more about GYCA and its work please visit the website at <http://www.youthaidscoalition.org/> or contact by email: [info@youthaidscoalition.org](mailto:info@youthaidscoalition.org)



OUR FUTURE, OUR SAY

## OUR FUTURE, OUR SAY

Plan International recently launched a publication ‘Our future; our say’ at the UN which documents young people’s views regarding the lack of progress made by governments on the Millennium Development Goals



## CHASING THE DREAM

We would like to inform you about the *Chasing the Dream* exhibition and website. Profiling the lives of eight young people in eight places - Brazil, Cambodia, India, Jamaica, Morocco, Uganda, the Kyangwali Refugee Settlement in Northern Uganda, and the Ukraine - the exhibition *Chasing the Dream* explores their difficult living situations and their intense desire, whatever the odds, to lead better lives. This exhibition - a United Nations Interagency Initiative supported by UNESCO- is on view at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 12 August to 30 October 2005.

The corresponding *Chasing the Dream* <http://www.chasingdream.org/> also examines how each of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) - including the reducing extreme poverty, improving maternal health, preventing and treating HIV/AIDS, and ensuring universal primary education - can be accomplished to allow these highly motivated young people not only to survive, but eventually to flourish.



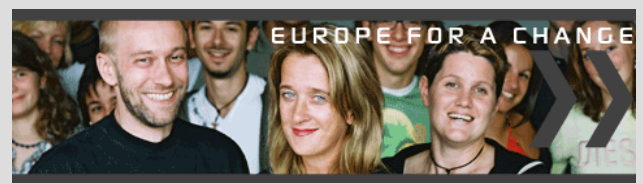
## DEBATING GLOBALIZATION: YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORDER

GYAN launches a publication on Globalization "Debating Globalization: Youth Perspectives on the International Economic and Social Order."

This book is a compilation of selected articles from an international competition among youth who have expressed their voices on the global world order.

This project will bring together articles with a variety of opinions from all regions of the world into one publication. It will be published with one of our partners that will oversee distribution of the book throughout the world, as part of GYAN's world-wide Youth Participation Initiative.

For more information please see the web page: <http://france.youthlink.org/fr/publication.htm>



## EUROPE FOR A CHANGE II

Europe for a Change II' is a pan-European campaign and research initiative of the European Youth Card Association, supported by the European Commission. It uses qualitative research methods to explore youth opinion towards the enlargement of European Union.

Together with the 27 young people, EYCA has created the Europe for a Change II campaign material: short television documentaries, print layouts, video/audio files of the young people's statements, a viral clip and the new website [www.change-europe.org](http://www.change-europe.org), which features: web logs, video snippets, a vote and win contest.

The campaign will run until end April 2006, and aims to reach at least 13 million young people in Europe through: magazines, websites, newsletters, radio, TV, schools, discussion groups, events, festivals... in fact, anywhere that young people meet and gather information. Interested organisations can receive the campaign material free of charge for non-commercial use by contacting: [contact@change-europe.org](mailto:contact@change-europe.org)



### 3<sup>rd</sup> AFRICA-EUROPE TRAINING COURSE. FOR YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

From 2 to 9 July, 2005, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa-Europe Training Course for Youth organizations was organized by the North South Centre of the Council of Europe, in Coimbra, Portugal. Youth participation for poverty reduction was the main theme of this event.

It was a great privilege for me to have represented ICYE Nigeria, as one of the 30 participants coming from both Africa and Europe in representation of their organizations and countries.

During the one week training, participants were encouraged to share and contribute their views and opinions on how extreme poverty and hunger can be eradicated from within our societies, and how active participation of Youths in the decision making process in both continents can be fostered.

The main aim of the training course was to strengthen the role of Youth organizations as actors in civil society and their capacity to take action in relation to poverty eradication, social cohesion, human dignity, and the identification of educational principles to promote global citizenship of Young people in Europe and Africa.

I must say that the most interesting part of the training course were the various workshops in which participants were asked to come up with project proposals.

I worked together with other 5 participants from Portugal, France, Rwanda and Tunisia. Our project proposal was the creation of an "Africa-Europe Youth Forum for Sustainable Development", which would culminate at an international youth event to be hosted by ICYE Nigeria in Lagos, in summer 2006.

Present in our midst for a session was the Portuguese Secretary of State for Youth and Sports, who shared with us the level of commitment of the Government in enhancing youth mobility towards an increase in understanding of the cultural, social, economical and political context of the Africa –Europe relations.

The information market organised by the participants also fostered a better knowledge of each other and our organizations, and encouraged partnerships for possible future cooperation as well.



**Julius presenting ICYE Nigeria**

The outcome of the training course was impressive as expressed by the participants. Terms like, strategizing, reflections, planning, local resources, action plan etc became the talk of the course.

It was quite impressing to see how aware and equipped we felt at the end of the training course.

*Julius Omoloye  
ICYE Nigeria*

### "I WILL LEAVE NIGERIA WITH A BIG HEART"

When ICYE-Belgium told me that my voluntary work placement would be in Lagos, Nigeria, I was a little bit shocked because of the negative stories I heard in the European media, but I accepted it in order to actually find out if what I heard is true, and of course I left Belgium with a small heart.

As I landed at the Murtala Muhammed Airport I was faced with the hustling and bustling of Lagos. The people are always in a hurry and there is a lot of traffic. I think this is normal as Lagos used to be the capital of Nigeria with the population of about 8 millions.

On of my first rides on one the local buses, together with Andre, another ICYE volunteer from Germany, was an incredible experience. Street vendors trying to sell water, food and anything you can name. The "Okadas", motor bikes are a faster means of transport, but cost a lot more. I am happy that my project is not far from where I live, so that I can enjoy the nice African morning walk with my colleague Tolu to the office.



**Yves with friends and colleagues in Lagos**

The project name is ANWAB (Anglo-Nigerian welfare Association for the Blind) and the Director, Mr. Danlami Basharu is blind. It is a non-profit making and non-governmental organization which render services to the blind at a subsidized rate, such as:

- transcribing and printing books into Braille;
- selling guide canes;
- providing access to library services,
- offering Braille typing and mobility lessons and also
- teaching them how to be independent.

I admire the people I work with; the longer I work here the more respect I have for them especially the blind because they actually believe there is ability in disability.

I would like to say thank you Mr. Danlami and the other staff members for giving me the opportunity to work here.

After two months, I can already conclude that most of the negative things people say about Nigeria are false because I have actually experienced the good side as the people are warm, friendly and helpful. The families have strong bonds-they are close and tight. They help each other whenever they can by sharing food and visiting of one another regularly.

Although I can not deny the fact that Lagos is a rough city to live in, it's real survival city with a lot of people who struggle to survive I have positive memories and experiences in Lagos probably also because I am an ICYE Exchangee and ICYE Nigeria welcomed, guided and helped me very well.

I hope you know a little bit about my experience in Lagos and like I said in the beginning, I arrived in Nigeria with a small heart but I think I will leave with a big one.

Thank you ICYE Nigeria

*Yves Pauwels  
ICYE Belaian Exchangee to Niaeria )*

## GANDHI JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS

Gandhi Jayanhti celebration was enthusiastically and joyously celebrated by ICYE India and VIPF on 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 10.15 am at the M.G. Statue, M.G.Park., in Bangalore. The theme was : "BAPU, We shall always visualize you in our hearts".

Dignitaries, together with visually impaired students, ICYE India international Volunteers and members of FISA- B offered floral tributes at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi.

All speakers exhorted the audience to follow the ideals and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and encouraged the young students to follow the life and practices by Gandhiji.

The cultural programme included patriotic songs, Bhajans, Dances, mimicry, and instrumental music and traditional dances of Africa, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

The programme ended with vote of thanks and a fellowship lunch.

*ICYE India*



**On-arrival camp in Samara, Russia**

## VOLUNTEERS ON-ARRIVAL CAMP 2005 IN SAMARA, RUSSIA

After a warm night welcome by Swallows/ICYE Russia at Samara international airport, the camp began and the first joint adventure was a traditional dinner at a local restaurant. During the first few days Russian lessons, combined with practical information about transport, money, postal, telephone and internet services quickly turned out to be very valuable for getting around Samara, finding the way back to the host families or keeping contact with relatives and friends at home.

The program entailed also discussions about definitions and meaning of voluntary services, participants motivation, individual expectations, volunteers rights and obligations, and an interactive exchange of tips about conflict and problem solving and overcoming culture shock. On a special 'Russian afternoon', volunteers learned a lot about the Russian Federation, its culture, traditions, and life style in Russia and the city of Samara. Another day the chairman of Population Services International (PSI), an international health care NGO, spoke about the HIV and AIDS situation in Samara.

The arrival camp of ICYE Russia ended with a beautiful Sunday excursion to the Samara Luka, a large national park in the hills surrounding Samara.

"What I enjoyed most were the group activities like workshops or the interesting excursions. A good opportunity to find out about other volunteers." ANNE, GERMANY

"A warm 'thank you' to all of our volunteers for their active participation in the on-arrival camp and to all of our partner-organizations that helped in the planning and realization of this activity".

*Olga Savina,  
Swallows/ICYE Russia*

**" STUDY VISIT TO MACEDONIA AND  
ALBANIA"  
MEETING WITH THE ALBANIAN YOUTH  
MINISTER  
19 TO 25 SEPTEMBER 2005**

This study visit was organised by the ICYE International Office in cooperation with the [YMCA Macedonia](#), [Youth Forum EYE Struga](#) (Macedonia) and Albanian Society in Development (ASD). It aimed at enhancing the co-operation between youth workers from EU countries and Albanian and Macedonian youth NGOs, voluntary service organisations, public institutions and local authorities, on youth work and youth policy, with a particular focus on youth exchange and voluntary service opportunities provided by the EU YOUTH programme.

The itinerant study visit, which involved youth from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds, provided a safe space for dialogue and intercultural learning. Project visits and meetings with local authorities and NGOs, such as the Roma Children Center run by Balkan Sunflowers Albania underlined the importance of promoting the participation of youth minority groups in activities which foster interethnic tolerance and understanding in South Balkan

The group had also the the honour of being warmly welcomed by Mr Bujar Leskaj, Albanian Minister of Youth, Culture, Sport and Tourism, who offered his cooperation and expressed his full support for future EU Youth Programme activities in the benefit of Albanian youth.

Participants discussed also policies and priorities of youth work in Albania with representatives of UNV and the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Tourism and Sport. The Study Visit resulted in a renewed commitment and cooperation proposals with Albanian and Macedonian partners organizations,. Along these lines, a multilateral EVS project to empower young people to actively participate in local development has been recently submitted to the YOUTH programme.



**Reception at Ministry of Youth, Culture, Sport and  
Tourism, Tirana (Albania)**

**INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEER  
EXCHANGE**

ICYE Germany and like minded German voluntary service organizations have launched a government supported Intergenerational Volunteer Exchange, which aims to promote volunteer exchanges for different generations.

This programme is targeted at German and foreign volunteers above 40 and 60 years of age, as well as to young volunteers wishing to volunteer in German and foreign institutions working with the elderly. A scholarship scheme is available for both incoming and outgoing volunteers. For more information please contact ICYE Germany at: [icja@icja.de](mailto:icja@icja.de)

## EU- EECA EVS MULTILAREAL PROJECT

With the support of the Youth Programme  
of the European Community

The "Youth and Social inclusion" multilateral EVS project aims to enhance youth mobility between EU and Eastern European and Caucasus countries, in particular with Armenia and Georgia. Voluntary Service placements include projects dealing with young people of disadvantaged background / with less opportunities, such as SOS Children villages, child care centers, after school activities, and youth volunteering organizations.

The pre-departure seminar took place in Berlin on October 14-17, 2005, bringing together a total of nine EVS volunteers from Austria, Armenia, Finland, France, Georgia, Italy, Lithuania and Switzerland for a two day program, after which they left to their various destinations and started their EVS projects.



**EVS Volunteers at the EU-EECA  
Pre-departure Seminar**

## ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

New ICYE National Correspondents:

- Belgium : Els STISSIS (Ms)
- Germany: Sabine PFHUL (Ms)

## ICYE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**20-26 November 2005:** XXIV ICYE Federation's General Assembly, Parc d'Ohlain, Arras, France

**4-10 Feb. 06 :** EU-Latin American Seminar in Porto Alegre, Brazil

**Mar- Dec 2006:** New EVS Multilateral in EU and EECA countries