

Worlds of Experience

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"Volunteering and Activism – Two sides to the same coin?"

Dear Friends,

As a member of the Volunteer Corps of the International Movement ATD Fourth World said: "Volunteering for us is a demonstration of activism; it is inevitably 'political'". It encompasses the potential to widen participation in governance and promote more equitable outcomes for people. Though volunteering and activism are often regarded as separate spheres of activity, there is in fact a dynamic relationship between the two. Both are motivated by the desire to bring about change in local environments and communities. This newsletter seeks to examine the relationship between the two, taking up the theme "Volunteering and Activism – Two sides to the same coin?"

Through our current Action 3.2 project "Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism", supported by the European Commission's Youth in Action Programme, we have sought to deepen, widen and sustain youth participation in socio-political processes of democratic society dealing with social inclusion and equality of opportunity and thus contributing to social change. One of the key objectives has been to open up new and diverse opportunities that reinforce volunteering programmes and volunteer action and activism.

In Volunteers Voices, you will find seven articles by volunteers, who in one way or another participated in the international volunteer activist project mentioned above. Their articles describe their experiences and the events and activities they led and/or participated in, as well as how they understand the link between volunteering and activism in their day-to-day lives as volunteers. In the end, as a former Swiss volunteer in Honduras states "only few volunteers are (conscious) activists but many activists are volunteers. Nevertheless ... [the] combination ... is positive for both sides. And this is what the volunteer activist project sought to do - Make volunteers more active and conscious citizens for positive social change!

News from International Organisations, amongst others, feature: the 2014 Human Development Report 'Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerability and Building Resilience'; the World Population Day 'Investing in Young People'; Partnering for Youth: UNV Success Stories; and the ILO report on Global Youth Employment.

News from NGOs report on: Amnesty International's report on "Human Rights for Human Dignity"; OXFAM's Campaign "Even it Up!"; DEVEX article on 'Recognising the role of volunteer action in sustainable development'; and the 2014 Nelson Mandela - Graça Machel Innovation Awards!

ICYE Programme News include: the Evaluation Conference of the project "Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism"; the "Soy Voluntario, me siento joven – I Volunteer, I feel Young" campaign in Bolivia; the Meeting of ICYE European NCs in Berlin, and the South-North Weltwaerts scholarship programme offered by ICJA/ICYE Germany.

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 **"Assessing the impact of long term international youth volunteering"**. Please send your contributions to icye@icye.org, before 31 January 2015.

Warmest regards!
ICYE International Office

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

“Volunteering and Activism – Two sides to the same coin?”

VOLUNTEERS VOICES

Rally up!

I arrived in Viet Nam as a volunteer almost four months ago. As a small town girl coming from a country with less than 350.000 inhabitants, arriving in Hanoi with its nine million citizens and even more motorbikes was a tremendous culture shock. The streets were overly crowded with people on mopeds going anywhere and nowhere in a cloud of smoke. There seemed to be no structure, no rules but one; every man for himself. To be honest, I was petrified. But it didn't take long before I could see the structure within the chaos, feel the flow within the violent stream, and I have come to love this city dearly. But as I have gotten to know and love it, as well as its variety and beauty, I can also see its many flaws. As the economy and population grows rapidly, the nation is having a hard time keeping up with the pace and the infrastructure is more or less in shambles. One example: The streets are filled with trash and no one seems to know what to do with it.

A couple of weeks in, I started working for an NGO called The Centre for Sustainable Development Studies (CSDS). CSDS organises a range of projects, which promote education for sustainable development in Vietnam. They help poor communities build better schools and education systems; they help empower women and youth and raise awareness on environmental problems. Since my arrival I have worked on a variety of projects, the first one being a campaign where we encouraged people to reduce their use of plastic bags, focusing on a local market in a busy area of Hanoi city. This is a much needed campaign seeing as Hanoi alone produces around 70 tons of waste from plastic bags each day. Together with a team of experienced international volunteers, we organised many events to advertise our campaign for environmental protection. Though our message has been carried far and wide, it begs a significant question: Has it been heard, and, more importantly, will it be heeded?



An army of environmentalists heading off on a foot-rally for the plastic bag campaign

I then joined a week long project known as the Global Green Camp, a project organised by my host organization Volunteers for Peace Viet Nam (VPV). This project focused mainly on promoting environmental sustainability in the An Lac region, a rural district in the north of Hanoi. Together with volunteers from around the globe I travelled to An Lac, where we lived and worked with the villagers, dug holes for compost in their back yards, swam with water buffaloes in the stream and put up signs in the beautiful forest, instructing tourists on how to dispose their trash.



As an art student, I have often been entrusted with the designing of posters and such for the promotion of our various causes.

Recently, I helped organize a creative writing journey together with my co-workers and fellow volunteer. On this journey we relied on the AWA-method (short for Amherst Writers & Artists), created by the American writer Pat Schneider. With a small group of participants, we organised four workshops in Hanoi and the journey ended with a camp in Ba Vi National Park. This was a very enlightening experience, working closely together with a small group of Vietnamese women and enjoying the priceless opportunity to see the world from their perspective.

Right now I'm working on two main projects: One is the Green office project, a project my co-worker and I were asked to oversee by the director of CSDS. Sadly, she has already left, but in her honour we are slowly turning CSDS into a model of the environment friendly office. Soon enough I'll be doing the same for my home, the VPV house. My other main project is organising a hybrid of traditional lecturing and creative expression via sketch-note taking. Sketch-noting is a process of capturing information and portraying it in your own unique and creative way, making it easier for you to remember and think more creatively. In these various projects I have taught many things and learned even more; coming from a completely different environment and culture has been an obstacle and a blessing.

This is what I'm here for, to work together with the people in this huge society to find creative and sustainable solutions to the rapidly growing problem of waste management and pollution in this otherwise wonderful city. Together we learn from each other and move forward, towards a cleaner, even better city. Even if our steps are small they are many and we encourage others to join our rally. I'm not sure if all or any of this really counts as activism. What I am sure of, however, is that this has been a very active time in my life and that the remainder of my stay as a volunteer in Viet Nam will be full of (voluntary) action as well.

Edda Karólína Ævarsdóttir, EVS volunteer from Iceland in Vietnam.

Cross-Roads led to World-Missions via ICYE

Bangalore, India: I, Justin E. Joseph, a strong follower of peace, and an equality and human rights activist wanted to make a small impact in the life of others. It all started years ago when I used to work for Apple Inc. as an Engineer and during my free time used to teach at schools for little kids and teenagers. I loved these creative processes and the joy of seeing children smile was what ultimately made me decide that I wanted to spend my spare time helping and supporting the community, and later volunteered full time at schools and in many organisations. This desire to contribute to our community led to volunteerism and became a global loop, connecting different people across the globe with the same focus. This eventually gave me the opportunity to become an outgoing volunteer of ICDE-INDIA where I was told about the ICYE Federation in Germany and their focus in bringing out international volunteer exchanges in different countries across the world. I then decided to go to the PeaceWorks in Stockholm, Sweden, which led me to experience what global citizenship is really about.



I had an incredible opportunity, working with multicultural young people from different parts of the world and creating a new era in volunteering and activism. This added global insight in progress of supporting human rights by utilizing social media and new communication technologies. I spent my time trying to understand different languages. However, the most important factor for me is for the World to be united on one common language that everyone can understand; which is music. So I selected a music school to volunteer at in Sweden with the help of ICYE in India and Sweden.

PeaceWorks helped me to become part of various volunteer activities that all sought to promote world peace, human rights and anti-racism. PeaceWorks, being recognized for their dedication in helping improve the lives of millions of people from different countries across the globe to actively participate as a volunteer for Anti-Racism movement was noticed by world leaders and Swedish Government Party Leaders. This gave me the opportunity to meet the Swedish External Foreign Affairs leaders.

I had the opportunity to participate in an event on peace, world-music and human rights at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, France. It is a great honour to have met the Assistant Director General for External Relations and Public Information, Mr. Eric Falt and Mr. Patrick Gallaud at the event and share ideas in the same location where world leaders gather for General Assembly meetings.

I have learnt to enjoy the process of little things in life. Now when I look back and realize that they were the best times in the journey of life, I will continue to volunteer in the future. I would like to motivate everyone to take the time to volunteer, as there is a great joy in making PEACE WORK! I thank the ICYE Federation for their immense support behind the scenes.

Justin E. Joseph, Indian ICYE volunteer in Sweden

The Power of Giving a Hand

Change one world or change the World?

Volunteering is like an idealistic picture of any kind of relationship. It's about sharing rather than giving. Activism seeks to do the same, but it feels as if the bid is somehow raised. The intention is to create a chain reaction, or spread something as much as possible. The question is, if the two approaches are really that different and whether or not they actually lead to the same point; if we change one world, don't we change the whole world a bit?

First of all, we should draw another parallel between the two concepts. The word 'activism' encompasses the word 'active' and can thus be said to imply a state of active behaviour. However, being a volunteer is based as much on active behaviour as being an activist is. Both of them are about 'being ready to do' something as a natural state of mind, and above all sharing your best – knowledge, opinion, energy – in a responsible way. Once you consider yourself a volunteer or an activist, you can think of the act of sharing like the act of controlling ones breathing – it will happen anyway, but if you do it with awareness you can be the spectator of the nicest changes.



From my point of view, it's impossible to be a volunteer without being an activist. When we give a hand to someone we also set an example. Those who have experienced how it feels to be helped will most likely have a desire to make the same move and give a hand to someone else. It's a positive domino effect. Especially in my case, because I use a wheelchair, so asking for help is an essential part of my everyday life. I have learned how much it means to count on others and this motivated me to become a rock for the people around me. They know that they can always count on me, and in exchange I know I can always ask for their help as well. This means, even before my EVS exchange I was constantly surrounded by 'volunteers' and was therefore always a 'volunteer' for someone in return.

My theory is that this is the way sharing works, and at the end this chain reaction of helping hands will create an embracing web around the earth. The help you gave may have changed one life directly, but unknowingly you may have changed the lives of many. This is the part I have learned during my EVS in Vienna. According to this theory, you are not 'just' a volunteer- you are actually (knowingly or not) an activist.

Your help will definitely reach more people than those you can actually see, in this view. This is something that we can experience in progress. People who call themselves activists probably also notice that spreading great and helpful ideas in the world come together with giving a hand. To sum up, the hand of an activist and the hand of a volunteer will reach each other inevitably, and combined become one big willingness to make positive change in the world.

Mira Budafoki, Hungarian EVS volunteer at Grenzenlos Austria

From Volunteering to Activism?

Germany, 2013/2014: In the preparation time, I heard many meanings about my voluntary service: Sabbatical, phase of orientation, waste of time, do-gooder, etc. Which one applies? Which opinion do I have now, after working 8 of 12 months in Colombia? I think that each description could apply as a definition of a voluntary service. At least, the significance of volunteering depends on the volunteer, what he/she makes of it.

I organize and pass out lunch for the children almost every day. My project is located in an area called "prostitution-zone" or "tolerance-zone", which is in the centre of Bogotá. There we receive children between the ages of 7 and 17 in an improvisational home. They mostly come from displaced families, can go to school for about four hours and after school they come to us. We help them with their homework, we give them room to play and we give them lunch. Social workers, educators, students, etc. also come to us to do several activities with the children. Through activities we come closer to the term "activism", as it plays an essential role in my voluntary year. My time here is a very important experience, for me as well as the children. I don't want to use this time just to pass out lunch. Let's review our own position: We travel to other countries, learn from diverse people about diverse cultures. We have the chance as well, to shape a project with the influences from our culture. Exchange ideas, accept challenges and develop activities for common welfare. I was working as a volunteer with children before knowing about ICYE. However, my first try to give English classes wasn't that good. Further experiences brought me to my third try, in which I tried to teach English by preparing theatre plays. And I have to say, that functions really well.

Although I was relatively flexible with my expectations for this year, it was really important for me to do classes with children for my project. That's my type of activism. I'm not going to protest on the street for a better education system, and one year would also be too short an amount of time for this. Instead, I'm taking on the role of a teacher and I get involved in that sense. In my opinion, volunteering is closely connected to activism because the volunteer shapes the project as an active part. A German ex-volunteer recently told me about his football project in Germany, which after six chaotic years became a successful and sustainable project. Maybe – or for sure, it's not always that easy but these are valuable experiences from which we learn and eventually continue working on.



Me at my project by bike

Thus I'm a friend of the current ICYE project "Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism". True to the issue, ICYE Colombia participated in the activities of "Bike FOR LIFE", which promotes the use of bikes as a mean of transportation. Bogotá has many similar events to offer, one simply has to make use of it. Nevertheless, I know many Bogotans, who don't like to identify themselves with their city of residence, and who complain about the living situation.

There are some things the megacity can't offer, which we volunteers also recognized on our arrival in February, and one of them is fresh air to breathe! As I'm interested in environmental topics, Bogotá's massive traffic problem, which you can't solve easily, occupies my mind. Due to this, I already started to use a bike for my 14 kilometres to work and I feel glad because I got to know groups such as "Bike FOR LIFE" by ICYE. I like their activities, which I consider very important for sustainable "green" mobility. Moreover, it was interesting to deal with the topic "Volunteering and Activism". It made me reflect on my own voluntary service and gave me the additional impulse to become an active part in shaping my project for my remaining four months.

Daniel Jaramillo, a German UFD volunteer in Colombia



My Understanding of Volunteering

The term volunteering had always sounded very pleasant to me, unlike the sound of the word activism. But what I understand now after serving time as an EVS volunteer at a shelter for the homeless at Reykjavik is that, both volunteering and activism go hand in hand to achieve an interest. I had always wanted to be a volunteer and not an activist because I had always had the wrong impression about activism, but what I did not understand is that being a volunteer needed me to express my thoughts through actions, and that expression made me an activist.

What I understand now is that activism does not necessarily mean waving huge banners, shouting slogans or boycotting something. The very gesture of initiating to feel, empathising, lending a helping hand, and raising a hand to help a fellow being in the small way I can, is activism at its best. What I understand about volunteering is that if I have a thought to express what I think would be beneficial for anybody, and unless I express it, I shall not be heard nor would the issue be addressed nor will the thought that has grown in me have life. But when I express my thought and start to work on it by putting it in action is when my thought turns into reality and progress is bound to happen. As an individual, the moment I make an initiation of any action, without expecting anything in return, is when I voluntarily turn to be an activist and not just confine myself to being a spectator. Perhaps the forms of action may differ, but yet the gravity behind the idea and the expression of thought through the simplest of action, makes way for good to be achieved. To me, volunteering and activism cannot be separated; either it's being a volunteer who expresses action or being just a spectator. I believe in the motto, 'Actions speak louder than words', and this is exactly what an activist believes and does to bring about the desired change, and I think all of us have an obligation to volunteer to do something for the neighbour. After all, isn't volunteering the rent that we pay for our room on earth?



Ralph Maria, Indian EVS volunteer in Iceland

Running with the change

I've now been in Hanoi for 6 months already and I am no longer just an observer; I'm experiencing Vietnamese lifestyle firsthand, and I feel the Vietnamese daily routine like any Hanoian born in the city between the rivers. I'm part of this unique craziness, the scents and colours are no longer strange to me; Hanoi is my hometown now.



In these last 4-5 months I've taken part in several projects. The most important one was the 'Plastic Bag Campaign', which I coordinated together with Aleksandra from Poland. We started working on it back in May. After having conducted a survey in the market, we had enough information to know where to start and how to conduct the campaign. We started with children. Kids are the most valuable members of all societies even if they don't have a big impact in some societies like the Vietnamese, but we believe that this will change with time. We conducted several workshops in five schools in the "Cau Giay" district and surrounding areas. The kids were really happy to see some foreigners; one with crazy hair and a big beard (the beard is not really popular in Vietnam) and one with golden blond hair.

We could feel their curiosity toward us, and through this curiosity we tried to get them to join our workshops and explain to them the issues revolving around not only the usage of plastic bags, but also the environment in Vietnam in general, and we played some games like "fish the fish" or "draw your favorite place". We also screened a funny short video about plastic garbage in the oceans. The children were really happy and at the end I filmed them shouting out a message to adults. I have used it for our Campaign video clip.

We've conducted several bike and walking rallies in and around Dong Xa market as well, with the help of local and international volunteers. Basically we all gathered in front of the office and walked to the market, while wearing t-shirts with the logo of the campaign and the Action 3.2 project "Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism", and playing some music and messages about the issue previously recorded in Vietnamese by children and adults.

We attracted the attention of many people who were curious about what we were doing, and we distributed 500 echo bags with the campaign logo and slogan, along with 1000 flyers and posters. The people living within that district definitely knew us and knew about the campaign.

We organised many activities for the campaign, probably for the first time in that district (and probably all Hanoi districts), an Open Air Cinema (AKA Summer Cinema) as a tribute to the environment. We screened for one and half hour, showing several short movies about the environment. Many people came over, foreigners and locals, and enjoyed the movies and the atmosphere.

I would say that the campaign was a success, despite all the barriers we faced such as the language, police permits, cultural differences, and the Vietnamese way of working, and the most important thing is that we draw on this experience for similar future projects. Many of the people we met during the campaign thanked us for what we were doing, and were amazed and thankful when they discovered that we were doing this as volunteer activists. It made us very happy and proud of being volunteer activists.

After ending the Plastic Bag Campaign, I started to run my own projects: "Creative Writing Workshops" and a "Creative Writing Camp and Journey". In Spain, I was one of the coordinators and youth leaders of successful cultural exchanges between European countries within the theme of creative writing, in which we used a method developed by an American writer named Pat Schneider. Based on that, I decided to organize a series of writing workshops and a camp for youngsters in Vietnam who wanted to develop themselves through writing. The camp was mainly about creative writing. Each session started off with an exercise and an amount of time to write in. When the time was up, everyone read their piece of writing out loud and always received a positive and constructive feedback. This was extremely important and is the essence of the workshops. With all of the knowledge about these issues, I wanted to contribute my experience and enthusiasm together with CSDS to give a change for young Vietnamese. Edda from Iceland, Julie from France and Thuy from Vietnam helped me in this project as trainers and staff.



The camp "Creative Writers Camp: Writing for our Future, Writing for our environment" was the conclusion of the Creative Writing Journey. Similar workshops were conducted, this time inside a national park surrounded by forests, mountains and rivers. | the chance to play for the Hanoi Dragons!! Yes!! Rugby in Vietnam!! Who can imagine it?!!), they were a little bit scared and lost at the beginning but afterwards they were so happy. We had some walks deep in the forest; we did some swimming in a stream and team building activities. In the end, I received lots of comments and wishes from the guests and the participants. The whole programme included 12 training workshops in unique locations in Hanoi and a 2-day work camp in Ba Vi resort in Ba Vi National Park. Right now I'm editing short films of both experiences and making a book with pictures and the participants' writings. It will be ready soon and I'm going to share it with all the volunteer activists.

I'm really glad and proud that I could share my experience and knowledge with so many young people from Vietnam and other countries. I had the chance during this project to explain more about volunteer activism and the impact it made in our life and the lives of others. My Creative Writing Journey matched the Volunteer Activism project perfectly, and during the camp and the workshops, we were able to create positive change through creative writing.

If we can feel our words, we can also change our life... My adventure in Vietnam is reaching its end. I already feel sad; it's like a beautiful dream I do not want to be awoken from...

Amine Nadir, Moroccan-Spanish EVS volunteer in Vietnam

Volunteers should have the courage to be a little more "activist"!

Being a volunteer is not something extraordinary among my friends and family. I would even say in the culture I was born and in the country I live in, Switzerland. Due to the high salaries people earn, many services would not be possible without people doing it for free. In my everyday life – which can be stressful and exhausting – voluntary work has always been a welcome change.

I do not remember when I first volunteered as a child, whether it was by selling stickers for WWF or when I made flower wreath for a bazaar. Nevertheless, my first long-term volunteer experience happened in 2008 and 2009 when I travelled with ICYE to Honduras, where I worked as a volunteer. Going to Honduras was to me one of the best experiences I have had so far in my life. The experience of being a complete foreigner, of being the one attracting attention because of your otherness and questioning your lifestyle is an extremely enriching part of your life. My daily life changed completely when I first touched Honduran ground. The freedom I had had was lost because of a very high crime rate, food I used to eat everyday could not be bought and people I loved and missed were far away. However, I adapted quickly and could discover myself by discovering a new world.

My volunteer work in a small town called La Esperanza in the middle of hills, lagoons and strawberry fields never felt like a duty or burden I had to bear. Sincerely, it never felt like work at all. Almost every morning we drove to the indigenous communities in the surroundings of La Esperanza, where I supported teachers at school by cooking lunch, playing with the children or looking after the garden. All these timid smiles, every tortilla I could form and every grateful mother were the whole salary I received and it was more than enough to me.

This surplus of motivation led to a further involvement of my part for ICYE. I really wanted people to have the experience I had and still remember every day. After some years of being responsible for the program of the incoming volunteers in Switzerland, I decided to go to Madrid to participate in the first meeting of "The Volunteer Activist", because I thought it was a very inspiring combination of volunteering and activism, and, at the same time we got the chance to create our own campaign and carry it out. With the campaign "CONTACT – Live intercultural exchange" volunteers of ICYE Switzerland and myself could spend a good time together, always facing new goals, bringing new ideas in and learning a lot about campaigns. In our campaign about intercultural programmes in the European Union and Switzerland, we faced a political problem and this made my work seem more like the work of an activist than it used to do before.



To me volunteering and activism can easily be connected but it is not the same at all. Volunteering is something I do because I am convinced of the work and the contribution I can make to society. At the same time, I completely agree that I should not earn any money for the work I do as a volunteer. A friend of mine defines this as "circles" – you act and it does not need to bring any profit for yourself, but the person you help might be inspired by what you do and help another person and like this it goes on and on – until in the end someone might help you and the wheel has become a full circle. By being an activist, I am facing a goal or change and although it might be hard sometimes to do what has to be fulfilled, I continue because I always think of the goal I pursue. This is the reason why I would say that only few volunteers are (conscious) activists but many activists are volunteers. Nevertheless, I think it is a great combination, which is positive for both sides. Maybe I should start combining it more often and spread the word among friends and family. Like this we could maybe not just go on living like we have always done, but also change political facts we do not like.

Katharina Boerlin, former ICYE volunteer from Switzerland in Honduras

NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



'SUSTAINING HUMAN PROGRESS: REDUCING VULNERABILITY AND BUILDING RESILIENCE'

The 2014 Human Development Report 'Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerability and Building Resilience', launched in Tokyo on 24 July 2014, provides a fresh perspective on vulnerability, proposes ways to strengthen resilience and highlights the need for both promoting people's choices and protecting human development achievements. It explains that vulnerability threatens human development and, unless it is systematically addressed, progress will be neither equitable nor sustainable. The Report also provides an update to the Human Development Index (HDI).

According to income-based measures of poverty, 1.2 billion people live with \$1.25 or less a day. However, according to the UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index, almost 1.5 billion people in 91 developing countries are living in poverty with overlapping deprivations in health, education and living standards. [More](#)



WORLD POPULATION DAY "INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE"

On 11 July 2014, as communities everywhere observed [World Population Day](#), UNFPA called for investments in support of the largest-ever generation of young people. Today, there are about 1.8 billion young people - those aged 10 to 24 - comprising roughly one quarter of the world's population. Their aspirations and achievements will shape the future. Yet too many youth continue to grapple with poverty, inequality and human rights violations that prevent them from reaching their personal and collective potential. An estimated 515 million adolescents and youth, aged 15 to 24, live on less than \$2 a day, [according to UNESCO](#), and millions more face gender discrimination and other forms of marginalization. See more [here](#).



PARTNERING FOR YOUTH: UNV SUCCESS STORIES – NEW FREE DOWNLOAD!

A new publication showcases a number of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme's successful partnerships at the national and regional level to support peace and sustainable development through youth volunteerism. In it, you'll learn about how UNV and its partners have been able to bring complementary technical skills, resources, and networks together to create highly successful partnerships that have achieved real results to improve the lives of people, young and old, around the world. [More](#)

VOLUNTEERING MUST BE RECOGNISED IN UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Countries with high levels of volunteers are more economically and socially vibrant and better placed to meet global challenges.

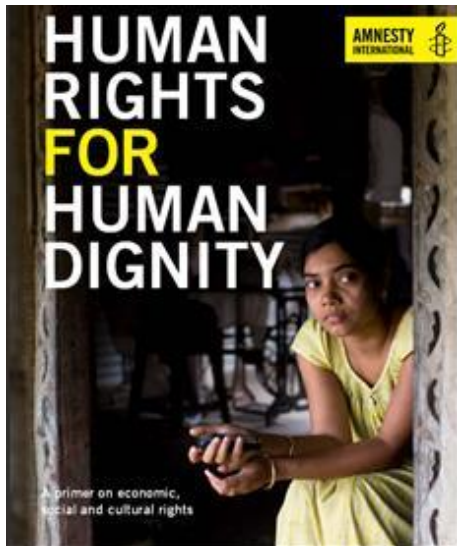
UN youth blogger and VSO volunteer Kate Turner, reports from the United Nations conference for civil society in New York. "This time last month I was in New York, filing my last piece as a UN youth blogger at the 65th United Nations conference for civil society. I'd been selected to write about disability and inclusion, gender and volunteering – my three interest areas in my current role as a VSO volunteer in Rwanda." [More](#)



GLOBAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT: HOPE IN A BLEAK LANDSCAPE

The International Labor Organisation (ILO) released its latest report on global employment trends and it paints a grim picture of the world's youth. Over 74.5 million young people are unemployed - a figure more than the entire population of the UK. They are also three times more likely to be unemployed than adults - a ratio that has "reached a historical peak". 21-year-old Arbie Baguios, who works for UNICEF UK's Building Young Futures programme, describes his generation's struggles to find employment. [More](#)

NEWS FROM NGOs



HUMAN RIGHTS FOR HUMAN DIGNITY: A PRIMER ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Amnesty International's publication outlines some of the key features of economic, social and cultural rights. It presents an overview of these rights, outlines their scope and content, and gives examples of violations and what can be done to address them. It highlights the obligations of governments and the human rights responsibilities of other actors, including international organizations and corporations. To view and download the publication click [here](#).



THE POWER OF PEOPLE AGAINST POVERTY ECONOMIC INEQUALITY HAS REACHED EXTREME LEVELS - [It is time to Even it up!](#)

From Ghana to Germany, Italy to Indonesia, the gap between rich and poor is widening. In 2013, seven out of 10 people lived in countries where economic inequality was worse than 30 years ago, and in 2014 Oxfam calculated that just 85 people owned as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity. Extreme inequality corrupts politics and hinders economic growth.

[Watch the video](#) [Read more](#) [Take action](#)



AGENTS OF CHANGE: RECOGNISING THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEER ACTION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

There is growing recognition that the development framework that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals must ensure a more bottom-up approach to development, one that puts people at its heart and [leaves no one behind](#). To be able to achieve this, it is important that the post-2015 framework looks beyond traditional development approaches and actors. [More](#)



WORLD YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2014

In August (9th to 15th) 130 young people from 20 Nations gathered in Germany, near to Berlin, to the World Youth Parliament 2014. The final document "Magna Charta of youth in the school of hope" presents the ideas of thousands of young people involved in this Project, through a global forum for dialogue promoted by the International Identity Youth. The outcome document was presented at the Humboldt University in Berlin on August 14th. [More](#)



2014 NELSON MANDELA - GRAÇA MACHEL INNOVATION AWARDS!

The CIVICUS Innovation Awards is celebrating its 10th year of awarding civil society activists and organisations for their excellence, innovation, and brave risk-taking. As of September 27th, public voting has closed for this year's 2014 Nelson Mandela - Graça Machel Innovation Awards! We thank all our nominators as well as our voters who participated in this year's awards. Will be tallying the votes in the following days and the finalists from each category with the highest number of votes will be declared the winner this November during the [2014 International Civil Society Week in Johannesburg](#). [More](#)

ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS

EVALUATION CONFERENCE: CITIZENSHIP FOR CHANGE: EMPOWERING VOLUNTEER ACTIVISM LIMA, PERU, OCTOBER 13 – 17, 2014



The final phase of the Action 3.2 project “Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism”, supported by the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission took place from October 13 – 17, 2014 in Lima, Peru. The Evaluation Conference brought together volunteer activists and regional coordinators of the project from Austria, Bolivia, Colombia, France, Kenya, Peru, Sweden, Vietnam and Nepal.

The large and small, on the ground and social media campaigns were presented, discussed and analysed in-depth. Many of the 17 participating organisations (all were not present at this meeting) had implemented campaigns for the very first time, which has given impetus to continue doing awareness raising, action-oriented campaigns in the future.

The Volunteer Activist website (<http://activist.icye.org/>), created specifically for this project, will continue to exist and will be updated regularly. For campaigns that are still running or new campaigns in 2015, please contact us and continue to send us material for the website.

SOY VOLUNTARIO, ME SIENTO JOVEN – I VOLUNTEER, I FEEL YOUNG

On August 12 the Inter-agency network on youth and its member organizations commemorated International Youth Day all around the world. **ICYE Bolivia**, in cooperation with UNV Bolivia, amongst others, developed a campaign to promote a ‘Culture of Volunteering’ as a symbol of active citizenship in the area of La Paz. It sought to change the perception of volunteering from “giving time for free” to “serving your community and yourself”. It aimed also at strengthening relations among volunteering organisations through the promotion of volunteer activities. The campaign included also a flash-mob involving more than 500 young people to promote volunteerism among youth in La Paz. ICYE Bolivia’s campaign was part of the above mentioned EU co-funded Act. 3.2. Project “Citizenship for Change: Empowering Volunteer Activism”. [More](#)

MEETING OF THE ICYE EUROPEAN NCS IN BERLIN



15 representatives of the ICYE National Committees in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Moldova, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom met in Berlin from the 3rd to the 4th of November 2014. The meeting - hosted by ICJA/ICYE Germany - was a sharing of good practice cum training event for ICYE staff. The main topics included: how to improve recruitment and selection of outgoing volunteers; new and fresh intercultural learning methods for volunteers and host families/projects; risk management; how to involve and train co-workers; and intra-European cooperation projects. During the event a visit was paid to the ICYE International Office.

ICYE GERMANY LAUNCHED THE SOUTH-NORTH WELTWAERTS PROGRAMME



As of this year, ICJA-ICYE Germany offers the South-North Weltwaerts Programme. What is the South-North Weltwaerts? Weltwaerts is a developmental volunteer programme launched by the Germany Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in 2008. It allows German young people with fewer opportunities to carry out a long-term voluntary service in the Global South, that is, in countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. As of 2014 the South-North component of this programme – which is possible thanks to the financial support from the German Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth – offers partial scholarships to young people with fewer opportunities from the Global South to volunteer in Germany. The exchange and intercultural learning are at core of this experience.

Up to now, 10 long-term volunteers from Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal and Nigeria are currently volunteering in Germany. By way of example: one volunteer is working in a rehabilitation clinic for young accident victims, where he organises free time activities with the patients. Another volunteer helps out the pupils of a special school with English lessons and with workshops for small groups in the afternoon. And one is working with a work camp organization to organize and take part in work camps.

ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

NEW ICYE NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

- Austria Sara PAREDES (Ms)