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

Dear Friends,

Contemporary society is characterised by migration, affecting social reality to a decisive degree and linked therefore to processes of change. Be it Berlin, Bogotá or Bangalore, hubs of migration have tremendous appeal and draw large numbers of people from within and beyond their borders, people with their own very personal dreams, desires, skills and ambitions. Such hubs are dynamic, plural and complex, but they are also places where individual identities meet, and clash. It is therefore migration that leads to the question of identity, the question of who "we" are and how we want to live. It is therefore through migration that national, ethnic and cultural relations of belonging are taken up in the first place.

In this 31st issue of the ICYE Newsletter we focus on "Migrating Identities". If we take identity as free floating, dynamic and changing, then our identities can be seen as migrating over time and space. The dual meaning of the title merges within the context of international voluntary service: Volunteers can be seen as young migrants at the start of an integration process in their host countries similar to that of immigrants and refugees in their new homeland, albeit under different circumstances and for a specific duration.

In Volunteers Voices, five current and former volunteers reflect on different aspects of migration and identity linked to their interaction with members of the host community, how it brings about a change in their own and others' perceptions of the "stranger" or "foreigner", or of refugees and immigrants. A *Moldovan volunteer in Switzerland* writes of the progression of her experience from being "strange" to slowly being accepted. Through the example of the Emmaüs community, a *former Honduran volunteer in France* shows us the path to learning from each other and our differences, and including each other as "compagnons", companions on life's journey. A *Mexican volunteer in Sweden* talks about his experiences with immigrants and refugees who look to him for advice and help because they see him as part of them, as a foreigner in the country to help. An *Italian volunteer in Switzerland* renders a poetic narration of leaving a country, a space and her temporal self behind to discover wondrous treasures by opening oneself to another culture. A *German volunteer in India* talks about her involvement with an NGO fighting for the rights of the Dalits, which made her learn more about herself and her culture. With this experience, she writes, that she "can probably understand foreigners in her own country much better and be more helpful to them". We hope that these voices and reflections take us a step further in dealing positively with *difference* and accepting others as *compagnons* on our life journeys.

News from International Organisations feature: Human development Report 2013; Youth shape the 2013 UNESCO Youth Forum; the new Youth Guide to Biodiversity; and the UN Peacemaker website.

News from NGOs report on: Youth and World Governance; Toolkit for post 2015 youth consultations; 2013 CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report; VOICE: A global youth magazine; and the OXFAM campaign "Grow.Food.Life.Planet".

ICYE Programme News include: EVS on Volunteering Agents of Citizenship: "A Reflection of Peace"; Social Inclusion of Youth; On migration and integration: An international discourse and Local Action; "Zusammen Leben" – Mentoring for immigrants; ICYE in action – A Training in London; Anti-Racism Curricula for schools in Sweden; and Let's make Kimchi in South Korea!

Wishing you an interesting and inspiring reading! We would like to encourage readers to send us articles and pictures for the next issue of "Worlds of Experience", dedicated to "Social Inclusion" and to be published at the end of October 2013.

Please send your contributions to [icye@icye.org](mailto:icye@icye.org), before September 30<sup>th</sup> 2013.

Warmest 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)

## “Migrating Identities”

### VOLUNTEERS VOICES

#### “From strange to acceptance...”

New places, new people and a new culture met me in Switzerland. Coming from the Republic of Moldova, I had to face cultural differences which appeared more or less strange to me. And at the same time my habits and life conceptions made me a stranger among them. Before coming I was very excited about my volunteering experience in Switzerland. Being in contact with the local people I had to experience a new way to look at things around. I took and still take time to get to know the culture and the particularities of life here. I would say it is not easy, but it is good training for becoming more and more open-minded.



Honestly, I did not expect so many nationalities in Switzerland. And my first questions were: Are they all Swiss? Why are they here? And it pushed me to find the answer. I met people from all continents, from different countries, cultures, and lifestyles, who migrated here for a better life. Beside their differences, the immigrants have common wishes and hopes. They come here for health, economic, social and secure life reasons. Being here they try to follow the local culture, but the link to their traditions will never be forgotten. They listen to their traditional music, cook traditional food and wear traditional clothes. It seems it is not easy to cut off the traditions we are born with.

I met a lot of immigrants at Arc-en-Ciel, the association where I work. I cook together with some of them, and it is a very nice opportunity to get to know their traditional food and lifestyle. Also I share my cooking skills and traditions with the local people who come and help. I was faced with some difficulties while integrating because attitudes and behaviours sometimes differ from Swiss to Moldovan culture. I also had to learn to use a lot of machines, which are present everywhere. It isn't really easy; I get confused when managing them sometimes. But I will get so used to them that I will be disappointed when I return to my country. I had to understand that it takes time to get to know people, also the time it takes to learn French, but slowly, slowly I'm getting there.

Coming as a volunteer, it is a kind of migration as it generates feelings of confusion, difference and excitement. Moreover, I got to appreciate and take a sidelong look at my Moldovan culture and social life. It probably wouldn't have happened if I hadn't

come abroad. And in general, volunteering in Switzerland aided my self-reflection a lot and enriched my knowledge and social experience.

So my wishes and reasons to be a volunteer abroad continue to be achieved. And from “strange” I am on the way to “acceptance”!

*Anastasia Doroftei, Moldovan volunteer in Switzerland.*

#### Companions on Life's Journey

I want to live in a city with multi ethnic neighbourhoods that are a global pottage, a shake of immigrants' life seasoned consistently with successive generations of newcomers.

This is what I consider my 'self', my 'migrating identity', after my experience carrying out an international voluntary service involved with immigrants.

My name is Rodolfo Bueso Clark, I'm from Honduras, Central America, and I was an ICYE Exchange/Volunteer during 2006-2007 in France. I volunteered in a small town called Étoile sur Rhône located in the south of France, in one of the communities of a movement named “Emmaüs”. The Emmaüs movement was founded in France in 1947 by Abbé Pierre, promoting at a local scale fund-raising activities for the marginalised population such as immigrants and refugees, and at a global scale demonstrations of collective initiatives for alternatives to situations of injustice.

The Emmaüs community where I volunteered and lived carries out restoration and recycling activities of books, antiques, furniture and apparel to sell in a bazaar (bric-à-brac) and be able to fundraise for the community's sustainability. The French population in the neighbouring towns and cities donate all the goods and at the same time are clients of the bric-à-brac; a system which truly impacted on me as it accomplishes one of the main objectives of the Emmaüs movement, the exchange and sharing for equal dignity.



Nonetheless, looking back at my experience, I think that what impacted on me the most was partaking in all the moments whilst living together with the true essence of the Emmaüs movement, the beneficiaries, which amazingly I got to learn

are all simply called *compagnons*. This French word, *compagnon*, became so important in my vocabulary and acquired a very unique and powerful meaning in my life. Throughout my whole experience I got to meet, welcome and bid farewell to many *compagnons*, who represent a very important lesson in this great learning I had within Emmaüs. Many of them were French with financial problems or homeless, and many of them were immigrants fleeing from diverse problems from their home countries. However, I got to learn that all of them shared a common search; they were searching for a home.

My integration in the Emmaüs community became easier as I organised different cultural events and sessions to share Honduran and Latin-American culture and mostly get to know the personal lives of each of the *compagnons*. There is a quote of a *compagnon* in the 'Emmaüs literature' that states: "You know, we never come in Emmaüs by chance, we come for a story, regardless what that story is." I cherish all the various stories I got to know from the *compagnons*.



I appreciated my host project very much because I could somehow relate to the immigrants as we were undergoing a cultural adaptation process in the interesting French culture, but at the same time I learnt of their fear to adapt to the society outside of the Emmaüs community. At the beginning, I didn't understand why they were being reluctant to adapt to French society until the moment that I myself experienced intolerance and discrimination. It was shocking yet true, and made me realise that I want to dedicate the rest of my life to the pursuit of an open and more just world where we have the human right to migrate and understand that the most common characteristic that all human beings have is diversity.

As many immigrants and French taught me, by understanding this we will truly comprehend that we can learn from each other, learn from our differences, and as the Emmaüs movement promotes, rather than exclude each other, let's include each other as *compagnons*, companions on life's journey.

*Rodolfo Bueso Clark, Former Honduran volunteer in France.*

### **Volunteering in Sweden with African and Asian immigrants**

My name is Victor Rios Figueroa and I am from Mexico, I am 27 years old. I studied International Trade and a Master in Foreign Trade and International Business. Now, I am helping ICYE and PeaceWorks Sweden as a volunteer in this country.

I am working in a school in Karlskoga Town; my job consists mainly of having conversations with immigrants from Africa and Asia. I am also in charge of the Spanish class and help students who are interested in economics.



I can say that this is a very good experience that permits me to develop skills not only in a professional way but also in the personal because this insertion in different cultures gives me the opportunity to integrate well socially because it is not the same to travel around the world as a tourist as it is to live for a long time in a country. I am having the chance to share, learn and enjoy things, which if I were a tourist, I would never know. It is also very interesting to talk about my country and to explain that not everything in the media is true.

I am learning about the recycling system in Sweden, one of the best in the world, because it is something that I can apply in my country. A lot of people are helping me to learn how it works through websites and some books.



Within four months I have had great experiences by helping in this community. I was in the local newspaper with some people from Spain, as we organized a "Café Hispano" and cooked Mexican and Spanish food, listened to our music - that event was very nice for the students and the people that attended because they were able to taste and listen something "unknown". At the same time, I also have a very good relationship with the immigrants and refugees. They trust me and look to me for advice or help, which they usually don't ask other people because they see me as part of them. They know I am neither a teacher nor a student, and they know I am a foreigner who is in this country to help. They talk to me as a friend, they want to share their ideas with me and tell me how they feel about being in another country without their families. Some of them have an "issue" with social integration because of their religion and their way of thinking. However, talking



to them I have explained that the political system and their religion can work together, that they don't have to change their religion but they must to adapt to the circumstances and respect the rules in this country. After almost four months, they told me that I was right and now their coexistence with their national neighbours is better, that they have realized that life in Sweden is very good for them and their families, and this, for me, is priceless. Finally, I still know I have to learn and share more things but this experience is something I would neither change nor regret.

*Victor Rios Figueroa, Mexican volunteer in Sweden.*

### **Grenzenlos:**

#### *Identities without Borders*

*To awaken quite alone in a foreign country you've recently moved to can be one of the most pleasant sensations in the world. Every morning when I open up the red wood shutters of my room's window at my host mother's house in Faulensee - a small idyllic rural village magnificently located on the shores of Lake Thun - I feel the same beautiful terror of a performer waiting for the curtain to go up.*

I spent the last bittersweet month before embarking on my EVS venture striving to be somewhere, something, someone, other than where and what I was. I finally left my home country not fully aware of being truly given the incredible chance to live what in the midst of the catastrophic political and economic conjuncture in Italy seemed to be like an impossible dream: finding hope for the future and imparting a new purpose and a new direction to my life.

Rowing with both oars perfectly in sync, letting my heart wide open and keeping my mind clear, that very day I found the answer to my own questions regarding what is perhaps one of the most pivotal decisions I have ever made in my entire life: Why embark precisely on this project in the heart of Switzerland instead of choosing a more geographically distant and culturally exotic country that does not border Italy? This is because there comes a point in life when you feel the urge to ask yourself what role you play in the lives of others - in the lives of loved ones, in the lives of your community, in the life of your nation and in the life of your world. "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main", English poet John Donne Docet.

The mere fact of working as a volunteer in an international non-profit youth exchange organization - with all the exciting opportunities and challenges that that implies in terms of goals to achieve and interpersonal and teamwork skills to acquire: promoting European awareness and popularizing the Youth in Action programme among local youngsters, supporting the planning and coordination of cultural, educational and recreational activities during preparation and evaluation camps for the outgoing and incoming volunteers, taking active part in seminars and conferences as well as providing administrative support in all the varied facets of daily routine at the office, just to name a few - makes me profoundly convinced that there exists no stronger commitment, no stronger devotion than that of a young volunteer longing to be a primary actor in

his/her own life and to make a difference in the lives of others. To realize that volunteering is a two-way street - helping yourself by helping others - is to realize that you are not on the island called self, but instead are on the continent called humanity.

I look at my EVS as if it were a journey, not a destination: a dynamic, step by step process of cross-cultural learning during which hopes and dreams as well as challenges and difficulties finally merge into one life-enhancing and, why not, life-changing experience. If it is true that, as the Polish-born sociologist Zygmunt Bauman once put it, nothing is more gratifying and energizing than discovering an unexpected treasure, by exposing ourselves to another culture which beforehand "we thought of little and knew of even less", then it was more than a fortunate coincidence that I had never touched Swiss soil before my arrival in Bern about three months ago. So nah und doch so fern: this is in my opinion a truly perfect definition for the current diplomatic relationships between Italy and Switzerland.



If friendship is only kept alive by continuous dialogue, joint initiatives, regular meetings, this is especially true in relations between nations - in my own small way, I am extremely honoured to be a (temporary) member of the small but extremely engaged team of ICYE Switzerland which uses all its strengths and talents and does its very best to bridge cultural gaps between nations and finally contributes towards the accomplishment of what could be considered as an incredibly wonderful but also a very demanding task: to be at the forefront of creating a space where energetic and enthusiastic young people from different cultures meet, communicate and cooperate. An ideal space where each individual - native or immigrant - is allowed to negotiate his/her own identity which is, by definition, fluid, always changing, rarely static even in those who wish desperately to fix it in a place.

My EVS journey has just begun, fresh new chapters are waiting to be written and I intend to embrace the remaining nine months with the same optimism and enthusiasm of the great Norwegian

ethnographer and adventurer Thor Heyerdahl who once revealed: "Borders? I have never seen one. But I have heard they exist in the minds of some people". Due to their chameleonic nature, migrating identities like the ones of ICYE volunteers naturally break down frontiers and prejudices and build bridges of hope for our future.

*Laura Argentesi, Italian EVS Volunteer in Switzerland*

### **The new one in the Village**

Since August 2012, I've been living in a small village in the rural area of Tamil Nadu, India. Working voluntarily with a friend for one year in an NGO named READ (Rights Education and Development Centre) and participating in the everyday life of all the people here, I learned a lot about a distinct society and found out how to solve problems I've never had before. Power cuts (the regular absence of electricity) for 10 hours per day, no running water, sometimes even no possibility of getting new water for a week and organising drinking water at night from a water van with all the other villagers are some examples of the new challenges for me. So how do I feel after 10 months in my new surroundings? How did I change my perspective on myself facing different ways of life?



On the one hand, I made some friends in the village who I meet often and with whom I feel integrated. We sit and talk, play games, go to the cinema and cook together or for each other often. On the other hand, I still feel very much like a newcomer. Maybe it's because I can't speak Tamil.

Even after such a long time, I'm only able to say simple words and understand just a little bit although I have tried to learn much more. That means that I'm dependent on people's English knowledge that is often similar to my Tamil knowledge. Due to that conversations that go further than "How are you? Have you already eaten? What did you eat? Where do you go?" aren't often possible for me. It is no big problem if I want to buy some vegetables or milk or wait with the others for drinking water at 4 o'clock at night. But as a result, I'm unable to get to know them better and become part of their society.

Speaking their language would change much, although I'm not sure if it would be possible to start integrating within only one year. Why? Because I am from another country with a different

culture and almost everybody has that in mind. That doesn't mean that the people don't welcome me, sometimes it is even due to my different background that they invite me to their homes and many are very curious. But as a consequence, almost everything I do in the way they do it, for example cooking, opening a coconut, dressing, etc., is seen as something special. Many appreciate my doings and even are excited but that also means that my actions won't be seen as normal although they are. At least not within a year.

I think it is because many people here expect me to be different, to do things they would do in another way or not do at all. And I have to admit that they aren't totally wrong in their expectations. For example, I continue to wear my hair open and don't put it in a plait like almost every other woman around or I go jogging in the fields next to the village. It would probably take much more time to get used to these differences as well as to find common ground so that I wouldn't be that special anymore as I mentioned above. Having this in mind, I can smile about excited looks when I start making Idli (typical south Indian food) the next time and I'm very happy when they respect me when I go for running.

I really got to know more about myself and my culture while facing this new culture and the problems that exist. My workplace plays a very important role in this realisation. As part of my work in this NGO that fights for the rights of the Dalit community, I go to villages, conduct interviews with women, men, shoemakers, manual scavengers, school dropouts and child labourers. Their experiences show me so many aspects of life that I was never aware of before. For example, how important it is to have plans and dreams for the future. I have found out much about my weaknesses and my strengths. Within these 10 months, I have developed a lot, sometimes I'm aware of change, often it comes unconsciously and I realise it while talking to old friends or, I'm sure of that, I'll find out back in my home country.

Finally, I'm glad I got the chance to live one year in a different country because I could experience on my own how it is to live as a foreigner. With this new view, I can probably understand foreigners in my own country much better and be more helpful to them.

*Miriam Machill, German volunteer in India.*

## More on “Migrating identities”



### **United Nations World Youth Report 2013** *Youth Migration and Development*

The United Nations is in the process of preparing its 2013 World Youth Report (WYR) on Youth Migration and Development. The Report will offer a multidimensional account and/or perspective of the life experiences of young migrants and young people affected by migration. To learn more about the report [click here](#).

On **Wednesday 23rd January 2013** we launched a 5 week online, interactive discussion platform aimed at bringing together young migrants and other young people affected by migration to share with us, and each other, their stories and experiences. We are looking to engage with young people aged between 15-35. Have you or a family member been through a migration experience? How was your journey? What are your thoughts?

Learn more about how you can participate in our consultations and input to the Report by [clicking here](#).

#### **Ready to have your say?**

- Join the [Google + Hangout on Youth Migration](#).
- Fill out the [survey](#).
- Submit a [My migration story](#).
- Why not [get animated?](#)

### **UNDESA**

#### **15 July 2013: Informal Interactive Hearings on Migration and Development**

As part of the preparatory activities for the General Assembly [High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development](#) to be held 3 and 4 October 2013, the President of the General Assembly will hold one-day informal interactive hearings with representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations and the private sector at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 15 July 2013. The objective of the informal interactive hearings is to provide an opportunity for NGOs, civil society organizations including youth-led organizations and the private sector to interact with Member States and to provide inputs for the High-level Dialogue. More information is available [online](#)

### **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2013**

#### **THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S HUMAN RIGHTS: World increasingly dangerous for refugees and migrants.**



The Amnesty International Report 2013 documents the state of human rights in 159 countries and territories during 2012. While governments paid lip service to their commitment to human rights, they continued to use national interests, national security and concerns about public security to justify violating those rights. This report bears witness to the courage and determination of women and men in every region of the world, who stood up to demand respect for their rights and to proclaim their solidarity with those whose rights were flouted. It shows how, despite all the obstacles in its path, the human rights movement is growing ever stronger and more deep-rooted, and how the hope it inspires in millions remains a powerful force for change. Read [more](#)





### **Focusing on new trends in migration**

The past 10 years have seen a steady increase in the number of international migrants across the globe, now totalling 214 million people. Ahead of the upcoming Commission on Population and Development, which is set to focus on new trends in migration, John Wilmoth, Director of DESA's Population Division, highlighted the issues at hand as well as other demographic trends affecting development beyond 2015. [Read More](#)

## **News from international organizations**

### **"Rise of the South" transforming global power balance, says 2013 Human Development Report.**



"The rise of the South is radically reshaping the world of the 21st century, with developing nations driving economic growth, lifting hundreds of millions of people from poverty, and propelling billions more into a new global middle class" says the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2013 Human Development Report.

"The rise of the South is unprecedented in its speed and scale," the 2013 Report says. "Never in history have the living conditions and prospects of so many people changed so dramatically and so fast."

This phenomenon goes well beyond the so-called BRICs, middle income countries often represented by Brazil, Russia, India and China, the 2013 Report stresses. The Report shows that more than 40 developing countries have made greater human development gains in recent decades than would have been predicted. These achievements, it says, are largely attributable to sustained investment in education, health care and social programmes, and open engagement with an increasingly interconnected world. [Read more](#)



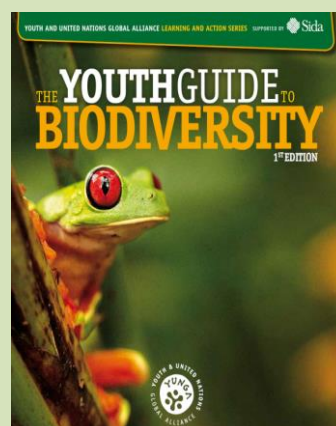
### **Youth shape the UNESCO 2013 Youth Forum.**

The youth consultations for the preparation of the 8th UNESCO Youth Forum continue. The second phase of consultation focused on the Forum's preparatory process and overall programme.



From 14 March to 9 April 2013, 595 young women and men between 15 and 35 years old, from all regions of the world, contributed to an online UNESCO survey to provide their ideas on the Forum's preparation, format, activities, outputs, communication and visibility. The results show that young people expect the Youth Forum to provide them with more action, more space for informal exchange and greater involvement. [Read more](#)

### **The Youth Guide to Biodiversity is finally here!**



The Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) aims to empower children and young people to be active agents of change. The Youth Guide to Biodiversity is part of the YUNGA action and learning series which seeks to raise awareness, educate and inspire young people to take action.

Learn about biodiversity and what it does for us, and let the Youth Guide inspire you to help protect the marvellous natural world around us. Enjoy it, share it: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3157e/i3157e.pdf>

## United Nations Peacemaker



UN Peacemaker is an online mediation support tool developed by the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) in the Policy and Mediation Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). It includes an extensive database of peace agreements, guidance material and information on the UN's mediation support services. This database is also intended for peace making professionals. Read more on [UN Peacemaker Website](#)



### SHAPING TOMORROW'S INNOVATORS: LEVERAGING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND CULTURE FOR TODAY'S YOUTH.

On 27 March, youth convened at the United Nations in New York during the [2013 Youth Forum](#) of the Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](#)), entitled "Shaping tomorrow's innovators: Leveraging science, technology, innovation and culture for today's youth." The main objective of the Forum was to provide young people with an online space to have multi stakeholder discussions on the role of science, technology, innovation and culture in promoting global sustainable development. More information is available [online](#).

## News From NGOs

### Youth and World Governance



Albert Einstein was only 25 years old when he wrote his famous theory of relativity. Gandhi was about 25 years old when he helped to found the Natal Indian Congress, which moulded the Indian community of South Africa into a homogeneous political force before he moved on to fight for the freedom of India.



Che Guevara was about 28 years old when he joined Fidel Castro's revolutionary movement for the freedom of Cuba. Nelson Mandela was about 30 years old when as a leader he was spearheading the fight against the Apartheid policy of racial segregation. John Anugraha's paper "Youth and World Governance" is an attempt to look at youth perspectives on world governance and their active role in world governance. [Read more](#)

### Toolkit for post 2015 youth consultations



**Restless Development** is a youth-led development agency. Their mission is to place young people at the forefront of change and development. Their strength comes from being led by young professionals, from the board room right through to the field. They have been working hard since 1985, and over the past 27 years their programs have reached over seven million young people.

With input from partners in 12 countries and with support from the Department for International Development youth working group, **Restless Development launched a toolkit for post-2015 youth consultations**, meant to enable youth groups across the world to run consultation workshops on youth priorities for a post 2015 development framework. The **results were captured in a report** and a **dissemination guide was designed** to provide guidance on how to share the findings with key influencers in the post-2015 process in different national and local contexts. The guide is packed with useful tips and ideas on how to develop the key elements of a good post-2015 dissemination strategy. [Read more](#)



## The CIVICUS State of Civil Society 2013 Report

# 2013 State of Civil Society Report.



The State of Civil Society 2013 Report presents insights from over 50 civil society experts from around the world. Alongside the report, CIVICUS is publishing a draft methodology for an Enabling Environment Index (EEI) that seeks to measure how well countries around the world are doing on creating positive conditions for civil society. Amidst the challenges facing civil society, the CIVICUS State of Civil Society 2013 report highlights good practices around the world and challenges on the horizon for citizens and civil society worldwide.

Download the full report [here](#) or read its Summary Report [here](#)

### VOICE



VOICE is a global bi-monthly magazine of the youth, for the youth and by the youth. It is an unbiased untainted perspective of youth across the world. With 1.2 billion young faces comprising the global "youth bulge", a platform to give voice to their thoughts and concerns is more than what is needed. VOICE aims to create awareness and engage young people in exploring global issues leading to a search for possible solutions. Through VOICE, youth can discuss issues and express ideas for a better and promising future. [Read more](#)

### Grow.Food.Life.Planet.



Join OXFAM's campaign for a future where everyone on the planet always has enough to eat. We can grow more food more fairly and more sustainably. We can press governments and companies to take urgent action to reform bad policies, to preserve scarce resources and share them fairly. We've got a lot of plans, but we're also all ears. Because GROW has space for all of us to share ideas and views about better ways to grow, share and live together. Welcome to GROW. It starts [here](#). Be a part of it.

## ICYE PROGRAMME NEWS



### Volunteering Agents of Citizenship

Funding for the multilateral reciprocal EVS project „InterACTIVE Citizenship,” taking up the motto of the “European Year of Citizens 2013,” has been approved by the European Commission within the scope of the Youth in Action Programme! As a fundamental element in active citizenship, volunteering entails giving one's time for the benefit of others. Volunteers thus service their community and play an active role in society. Volunteering has therefore the potential to develop citizens' commitment to society and to political life in society. From September 2013, 11 volunteers – 6 from EU countries and 5 from Asia, Africa and Latin America – will begin their 9-month civic engagement, generating awareness on the need for increased civil action in order to instil a commitment to analysing and critiquing unjust and dominant structures in society.



### **"A Reflection of Peace"**

Dave Santulli,  
Founder and Executive Director, United Planet/ICYE U.S.A.  
- A post on the Huffington Post.

Men, women and children have died by droves -- and countless more maimed.

War is the sadistic art of man. We have no problem, despite the pain, sacrificing ourselves for noble cause in war when the battle between good and evil is clear -- when it is too late -- when the guns and swords are drawn, when the bombs are already bursting.

But how about in the gray fog before the war begins? That's when the real fighting should begin -- the fight to preserve peace, to snuff out ignorance and hatred, to destroy war at its roots, not after it's begun, but before it's even sprouted.

And yet no matter how many resources -- human and financial -- we invest in war, we have few to spare for peace.

Efforts to build peace -- cultivate cross cultural and interfaith understanding -- are viewed by most as pleasant, yet unimportant, afterthoughts. With a little forethought, perhaps we could see these things as they are -- the very roots of war and global chaos.

This is not a fight reserved for fables; it is a fight for the here and now -- this life that we all live.

The fight for peace is perpetual, age-old, recurring generation after generation. We know it well: good versus evil; light versus darkness; hate versus love; close-mindedness versus openness; wisdom versus ignorance.

It is a fight that is made visible to most only when it erupts in war or terrorism, but it still percolates and roils silently like molten lava beneath a dormant volcano. The forces of war are always at play beneath the surface of life.

And that creeping suspicion -- that sense of superiority, mistrust, and fear -- that is a precursor to war can only be extinguished through building understanding, respect and mutual support beyond borders and by inspiring all to appreciate that our differences of religion, race, and culture are the magic colors that add brilliance to the tapestry of life. Our diversity should be celebrated and heralded as a vital source of love, appreciation, and respect versus a gushing font of adversity, strife and fear.

With so many ills plaguing our world, how can we ever expect to solve the problems that transcend our borders when we ourselves are unable to do so?

There is no doubt that it is sometimes important to fight war, but it is far more important to fight the war before it ever begins.

Where is this force for peace? Who are its soldiers? They dressed as teachers, school principals, parents, coaches, pastors, rabbis, monks, and imams, NGO workers and civil servants. You can find them in the most unsuspected places, but the most important agent of change you'll ever find is the one who stares you back every day when looking into the mirror.

It is not to war that we should sacrifice our lives, but to peace.

## Social Inclusion of Youth

On behalf of AUS/ICYE Iceland, which was nominated by the Icelandic Ministry of Education and Culture, I had the honour to attend the EU Youth Conference of the Irish Presidency, Dublin, 11-13 March 2013. The main aim of the Conference, which was part of the Structured Dialogue of the EU, and a follow up to the White Paper on Youth, was to gather together youth and representatives of authorities and discuss youth topics to obtain a result that is useful for policy-making in the future. The main topic was the social inclusion of youth, not surprisingly since youth unemployment in Europe is tremendously high and some say a generation is lost because of the international economic crisis.



Ireland isn't an exception, and the words of the president of the Youth Forum are imprinted in my mind: „We are the present and not the future“. A reminder that something has to be done today and not tomorrow, but there we were ready to do our best to change the situation.

There were eight workshops, dedicated to issues like welfare and education, and I attended the one on "Quality in youth work", in which we all agreed upon the following final statement:

*„Recognition of youth work should be ensured at EU and national level through participatory policy development, sustainable financial support, an institutional framework and development of evidence in order to acknowledge the impact of youth work on social inclusion and across different policy fields.“*

My participation in this event has greatly strengthened my motivation to work for AUS and the Youth Council of Iceland. To read the Joint Conclusions of the conference [click here](#)

Marta Mirjam Kristinsdóttir, Chairperson of ICYE Iceland

## On Migration and Integration - An International Discourse and a Local Action

The 31st issue of the ICYE Newsletter "Migrating Identities" is a special subject to me, not only on a professional level but on a personal level too. This article gives insight on two actions in Vienna, Austria. One is an international event in which the topic of migration among others was tackled, and the other is a local project of ICYE Austria/Grenzenlos on mentoring and integration.

I had the privilege to represent the ICYE Federation at the one-day **Youth Event and 5<sup>th</sup> Global Forum of UNAOC (United Nations Alliance of Civilization), 26-28 February 2013, Vienna (Austria)** - [www.unaoc.org](http://www.unaoc.org) and immediately after that, the two days 5th Global Forum of UNAOC, titled "Responsible Leadership in Diversity and Dialogue".

150 international young leaders (particular large numbers from Africa and the Middle East) representing several NGOs, educational institutions, the private sector, etc. were selected and worked together on these three issues 1) religious freedom, 2) media pluralism and diversity of media content and their contribution to fostering public debate, democracy and awareness of diverse opinions, and 3) shaping a new narrative for migration, integration and mobility in the global economy.

The Youth Event started with a positive speech from the UN **Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon** stating that we all need the input of youth and reiterated his commitment to ensuring youth involvement in promoting dialogue and responsible leadership. He said: "When leaders do not listen to changing aspirations of people it is the beginning of hatred and distrust between the government, between leadership and the people."

*(Continues on the next page)*



After a day of debates around the need to ease migrant adjustments in new countries, encourage religious dialogue and provide press freedom, specific recommendations on migration and integration included: the need to make the path to citizenship for migrants easier, must create policy law with an aim to enhance minorities in society and must strive for successful inclusion by providing children with education in mother tongue.



Some of the key points that resulted from the workshops, which I found very interesting, were that the expert guests from international organizations and institutions of migration spoke about an "ERA of MOBILITY" and focused on ways of informing and educating politicians on the importance of migration to our current societies, creating more human and reasonable policies for immigrants and including the benefits of migration for migrants themselves. We should take the concerns that the locals have on immigration seriously, but at the same time politicians and the media have the responsibility to show how overwhelming positive migration. For more information [click here](#).

*Sara Paredes, ICYE Austria/Grenzenlos*

### **"Zusammen Leben" (Living Together) - Mentoring for Immigrants: A Local Project from Grenzenlos**

ZUSAMMEN LEBEN is a program from Grenzenlos since 2010 and a cooperative venture between Grenzenlos and Interface, an institution funded by the city of Vienna, Ministry of Integration and Culture - MA 17.

In 2009, Grenzenlos saw the need to develop more local programs in order to have a more direct impact on the Austrian community as well as other communities living in Austria. Through the mobility program, Grenzenlos has gained and developed strategies as well as methodologies to monitor and support participants going abroad or coming to Austria. Taking this experience into account, a team of volunteers from Grenzenlos got together and brainstormed on how a mentoring system could support immigrants in their social integration process in Austria.

The project consists of **Mentors** (who are Austrian volunteers or volunteers who have been living in Austria for a long period of time) and **Mentees** (who are Interface clients with migration backgrounds). The goal is to bring together 15 mentees and 15 mentors for the period of around 7-8 months to get to know each other so that the mentees have personal support to facilitate their integration process. The mentors support the mentees in their language learning process, clarify "Austrian rules" and ways of living and thinking, assist in case of problems, accompany them to meetings related to their visa, work, study and give them advice as well as information on their rights and on what they can do in Austria. The mentees are able to meet new people through the mentors' social networks and they share their culture and values. Not only the mentors and mentees, but also their friends and family can learn and take advantage of this program. Last but not least, in several cases, long lasting friendships are built between people from different cultures who share the same living place and learn not only to live together but also to be together as one.

*Sara Paredes, ICYE Austria/Grenzenlos*

## **(Living Together) - My Experiences with Zusammen Leben – Magdalena Lentsch (Mentor 2012)**

Thanks to the fact that I was part of Zusammen Leben, I got to see my own culture and identity through new lenses. I was able to question Austrian society in new ways that I had not considered before. Those questions were: What is my role in Austrian society? How do I have an impact on my community or how do I interact with people who are not born in Austria? The intercultural exchange in your own country makes one more aware of one's identity and role within society. With time, in many cases, a friendship is formed, which implies that the personal and individual contact became central and therefore the categories of asylum seeker, refugee or being "Austrian" were questioned or at least became less important.

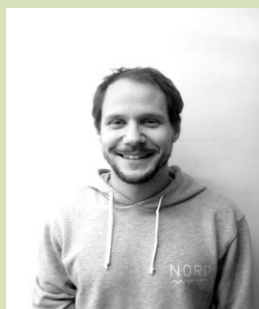
Zusammen Leben helped me to open my eyes to the many processes that are taking place within "my own" country which I have not noticed for a long time or which I was not part of. Zusammen Leben can also be seen as a springboard to network and create relations with other like-minded people to start initiatives or projects. Asylum seekers and Austrians can function as each other's facilitators in order to turn some ideas into reality, help out via one's own network, knowledge, etc.



A mentee Claude-Willy, for example, is subsidizing an NGO in Burundi for several years now, and I tried to support him by opening up his access to my Austrian social network in order to find a bigger circle of support. Zusammen Leben can be an opportunity to decrease eventually existing stereotypes and prejudices within one's circle of acquaintances simply by making the project a topic of conversation. Claude-Willy mentioned that he enjoyed the chance to get to know so many people from such different places and that this fortified his curiosity to get to know new people and cultures. I think that this is the aim of the program: to pique people's curiosity, to get to know each other and learn from each other instead of judging other cultures. While in politics, people with migration backgrounds often experience discrimination. This program is a statement against discrimination of any kind and for equal opportunities and mutual respect.

*Magdalena Lentsch, a Mentor of the Zusammen Leben program.*

### **Anti-racism curricula for schools in Sweden.**



In 2013, with the support of Ungdomsstyrelsen and Arvsfonden, PeaceWorks in collaboration with Mångkulturellt Centrum started a new project called Låt Stå-Antirasism på Schemat, an anti-racist project aimed at schools in Sweden.

The overriding aim of the project is to create a user-friendly anti-racism toolbox for classroom teachers in order to strengthen teachers' abilities to teach about attitudes regarding equality and racism, and encourage an anti-racist mind-set, serving to create an inclusive and positive climate in the classroom. The project therefore aims at creating continuity and sustainability, which has been lacking in efforts to combat racism in schools.

Låt Stå will develop ideas about human rights with the long-term goal that students join in the construction of a 'society for all'. It is foreseen that the material and toolbox will be developed during the first year in collaboration with researchers, educators, teachers, students and schools, and subsequently tested as a whole on a number of schools in Sweden. The toolbox is expected to be ready for schools in beginning of the second year, when teachers will be offered training to understand the pedagogical framework and to use the methods of the toolbox. An online forum, where teachers, other end users and experts from PeaceWorks discuss issues and questions, will also be in place. If you want to know more about the project, please visit [peaceworks.se](http://peaceworks.se) or send us an email at [Info@latsta.com](mailto:Info@latsta.com)

## ICYE in Action – A Training in London

I am in the last half of my EVS at the ICYE International Office in Berlin. At the beginning of April I was asked if I wanted to join a Youth in Action 4.3 training in London, „Training on Cross-Cultural Volunteering Impact“, which is a part of the project to make the impact of volunteering in ICYE visible. The outcome of the project will be a toolkit with guidelines and tools to assess the impact of long-term volunteering. With this ICYE can get visible results of the impact (changes, benefits, and learning) for the volunteers, the people working with the volunteers, and the people who cross paths with the volunteers etc. I grasped this opportunity to participate immediately, and during five days, 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> of April, I experienced from the inside, how people with different kinds of experiences can come together and work towards a common goal.



We were 27 participants, people from ICYE offices and host projects from 10 different countries, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Austria, and Switzerland. The training took off with a warming up part, we got acquainted, shared our experiences, and our expectations, and with the help of workshops around intercultural learning we set the focus of the training. Then we moved to the core of the training, „impact of volunteering“. The terms „impact“ and „assessment“ had different meanings to us all. First after spending time on communicating and discussing the terms, we could work further with the questions: What is the impact of volunteering? What do we want to know and why do we want to know it?

The days were filled with sessions from morning to late evening, and as we entered the last two days we tried to figure out the question: How do we measure the impact that volunteering has? The task was tricky, but as ICYE staff and the representatives of the host projects brought their experiences from their close work with volunteers into the discussions, the goal we came to the training to achieve came within reach. Here I also saw my part in the training: As a current volunteer I could contribute with my reflections on how I as a volunteer feel regarding questions and ways and methods to ask these questions about my volunteering. It was a great feeling to be a part of a training group with so much experience, and to see how collaboration and hard work in the end pays off. At the beginning of the training, I was really wondering how we with our different languages, our different approaches, different working methods could possibly meet each other. But as the days went by, we all found a way to work together. That was a very important firsthand experience for me, to put in my luggage for future intercultural meetings. Thank you.

**Magdalena Persson Kjessel, Swedish EVS volunteer at the ICYE International Office**

## Let's make Kimchi!



ICYE South Korea added a new element to the monthly meeting on March 8, 2013, which carried the title „Let's make Kimchi“!

All incoming volunteers attending the meeting also enjoyed the time spent making Kimchi themselves, which they then took home to share with their host families.

## ICYE FEDERATION STAFF NEWS

### New ICYE National Correspondents:

- SOUTH AFRICA – Shahida Dudley.