

INTERCULTURAL TALK

ICYE NEWSLETTER



HOW ARE WE STAYING CONNECTED?

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THIS NEWSLETTER!



Online Is the New Normal — or Not?

BY FABIENNE ZOGG

It has been another challenging year. Closed borders, lockdowns, limited international mobility, lack of offline encounters, isolation and a great amount of uncertainty — the world seems to be less open but at the same time, it is becoming more digital.

An increasing number of events and activities continue to take place online, which makes us wonder whether the new normal is digital? In order to adjust to unexpected changes, new initiatives have emerged by taking advantage of and adopting new digital tools. Within the ICYE Federation, we are used to having online meetings to stay connected but having the opportunity to meet face-to-face with work colleagues is also crucial for building strong relations and boosting engagement.

Despite the challenges, we are striving to become a more inclusive and sustainable actor in the field of international volunteering. This year, the ICYE Federation has made great progress with its Sub Committees, further developed its South to South Scholarship Fund, gained a new associate member, held multiple successful workshops online, established new partner agreements and so much more!

As the year is soon about to end, we would like to say a big thank you to our dear ICYE friends in all parts of the world for your contribution, support and collaboration. In a time of a global pandemic, the importance of global cooperation, solidarity and a sense of unity are even greater. So let's stay connected! Hopefully, next year will bring us even more inspirational opportunities and memorable stories to share.

MEET KATJA, OUR LOVELY NEW TEAM MEMBER AT THE IO!

"My name is **Katja Walther** and I am part of the ICYE IO team since July 2021. I spent most of my life living in Berlin and currently live in the Northern outskirts of the city, sharing a self-organized communal living space with friends.

I have more than ten years of experience in project management: Besides doing a lot of voluntary project work, I worked for five years in **European Youth for Action (EYFA)**, an organisation that conducts international youth exchanges and volunteer services.

In the last years, my work shifted towards the field of bookkeeping and accounting — I am currently becoming a qualified bookkeeper. Besides working in ICYE, I am working with **Plan Solidarität e.V.**, an association that supports youth with fewer opportunities, in the position of office administration and accounting. In my free time, I like to enjoy Berlin's parks and forests with my dog."



ICYE's South to South Scholarship Fund

What has been happening lately with **ICYE's South to South Scholarship Fund**? The working group planned a social media fundraising campaign that was launched between November and December to celebrate this year's International Volunteer Day. A warm thank you for promoting the fundraising campaign on your social media channels!

The working group also participated in the **International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations (IVCO) 2021 Fair** held online from 16 to 20 October and hosted by **ActionAid Hellas** on the theme **Inclusive Volunteering for Global Equality**. IVCO is an annual conference for volunteering for development bringing together development practitioners, institutional actors and researchers across the world to discuss current challenges and opportunities in the field of international volunteering.

During this conference, ICYE's working group got a chance to discuss global inequalities in international volunteering and introduce its South to South Fund. How this fund can serve as a way to tackle the inequalities in the context of international volunteering, and in which ways South-South volunteering can be promoted as an inspiring opportunity for young people were also key topics. Such an inspiring event!



“I learnt a great deal of humility and gratitude from working with and supporting the children at my project, they really had a lasting impact on me and how I viewed the importance of giving back and taking time to really understand the plight of marginalized communities and social inequality”, says Vanessa who travelled from Kenya to volunteer in Colombia

Let's promote
together
#EquitableVolunteering!





VOLUNTEERING IN ECUADOR – IMPROVING SPANISH SKILLS AND LEARNING BY OBSERVING

What is your name and where did you volunteer?

My name is **Mogoi Nyaribo**. I am from **Kenya** and volunteered in **Quito, Ecuador**.

Why did you choose to volunteer via ICYE?

It was honestly the only Kenyan based volunteer organization I knew at the time.

What motivated you to apply for South to South volunteering?

Well, I knew I didn't want to go to an English speaking country and after meeting Belen, the former VASÉ director, I was convinced that Ecuador was the right place for my volunteer year. Spanish also didn't seem like a difficult language to learn.

Which reservations did you have?

I didn't know anyone who had been to Ecuador as a volunteer, another African, and I wasn't sure how well I'd assimilate in a country whose first language wasn't English. I think I was just afraid to be away from home for a year all on my own.

I spent my first few months mostly with children, myself, and sometimes my co-workers and I just watched and learned. There's a lot you can learn by just observing a person or an environment

What challenges did you face as a volunteer?

It took me longer than I expected to be able to communicate in Spanish and I think this was because I spent most of my time with the children of my project. But like magic at the 6-months mark, I could suddenly have a full conversation in Spanish.

What did you learn?

Patience. It takes time and persistence to get to your goal, just keep trying. This also applies to spending a whole day with children. I learned Spanish which I now use to translate documents when required. I shared a lot of home-cooked meals with my host family and learned how to make some of them along the way.

How did this experience impact your life?

Thinking back on how I was before, I tend to think before I speak now. I spent my first few months mostly with children, myself, and sometimes my co-workers and I just watched and learned. There's a lot you can learn by just observing a person or an environment.

Help Us Promote Equitable Volunteering!



The number of exchanges from one country in the Global South to another country in the Global South is low. Why is that? South-South exchanges are not prioritised or promoted sufficiently because of the global structural inequities and the legacy of colonialism. Also, due to high costs and lack of funding, it is challenging to support these exchanges.

To address this gap, ICYE decided to establish a scholarship fund with the aim to make international volunteering more equal and inclusive. At the same time, we are able to strengthen global solidarity within the ICYE Federation.



To learn more about the fund, please visit <https://www.icye.org/icye-south-to-south-scholarship-fund/>

Volunteering abroad can be a very impactful intercultural learning experience. With the South to South Scholarship Fund, we wish to give young people in the Global South the possibility to engage in South-South volunteering through ICYE.



Remember that you can still send us volunteers' testimonials and/or join our working group! If you have any further questions about the fund, please drop us a message at mail@icye.org. 😊

Why is it important to support South-South exchanges? We believe that through South-South exchanges, it is possible to empower global citizenship as well as promote reciprocity, equality, and solidarity, which are important values for the ICYE Federation.

After having raised enough money, the scholarships will be available for young people from the ICYE countries in the Global South who wish to participate in our volunteer programme. The donations will be used, for example, to cover visa and travel costs, insurance, trainings and language courses of the South-South volunteers.

A contribution of any amount would greatly help us to be a step closer to providing full funding for several South-South volunteers. Thank you for your support!

“ To me voluntary work is a very enriching experience to grow as a person because it is a way to give back to others the blessings I have had in my life. Also, it helps to recognize some privileges that we take for granted. ”

Estefy, travelled from **Ecuador** to **Kenya** for ICYE volunteering



Staying Connected with our Networks



- On November 21st, **CCIVS** members voted in the online General Assembly for their new **Executive Committee** and three members from the ICYE network got elected: **Rolando Kandel** (Fundación SES Subir al Sur/ ICYE Argentina), **Rhenelyn Queen Dadulo** (GIED/ ICYE Philippines) and **Anja Stuckert** (ICYE IO). Congratulations!
- A three-year partnership agreement between **ICYE** and **United for Intercultural Action** on **strengthening an anti-racist approach and respect for diversity in International Voluntary Service (IVS)** was established in November 2021. The aim of this partnership is to cooperate more closely on an anti-racist approach in international volunteering and to promote intercultural understanding, equal rights for all and a world without racism.
- ICYE is excited to be taking part in an Erasmus+-funded Cooperation Partnership, bringing together the networks of **CCIVS**, **ICYE**, **Alliance**, and **SCI**, called **Decolonise! Building Equitative, Diverse and Environmentally Sustainable Long Term International Voluntary Service projects**. Over the course of the ambitious 2.5-year project, we will develop a self-assessment tool, an online course, 8 videos, 3 policy papers, 4 social media campaigns, a knowledge platform, and a long-term advocacy strategy.

These outputs will enable us as IVS organisations to tackle neo-colonial and racist structures that get in the way of equity. With the tools we are going to develop, we can build more reciprocal relationships among volunteers and their hosting projects, as well as among sending and hosting organisations. We hope to share more with you about how to get involved in this project when it kicks off in early 2022.

WINNING NEW MEMBERS!



We have the great pleasure to welcome **Service Volontaire International (SVI) from Belgium** to our network as a new associate member. SVI is a non-profit, non-religious, non-political association created by and for volunteers in 2007. We are very much looking forward to collaborating with you!

”

Dear new and old partners! SVI team is very proud to join the ICYE network. Thank you for your trust, your support and for the opportunities for cooperation! We are open to many new ideas and innovations, so keep us in mind in planning something crazy for 2022. We wish you thumbs up for the upcoming year!

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Exciting News from our Federation



- **The Board of Managers (BoM)** and the **IO** got together for their statutory meeting from 17th to 19th of September in Madrid. The meeting was full of fruitful discussions and the joy of finally being able to meet in person again!
 - As a follow-up to ICYE's Grant writing thematic call that took place in June this year, **a grant writing working group** was established. The aim is to share good practices with one another, find new ways to mobilise resources as well as offer support and motivation for the grant writing process. **Donna Lubrano** from **United Planet USA** has provided insights, encouragement, and strategies to overcome the challenges of grant writing. The group is meeting every two weeks and anyone interested in polishing their grant writing skills is welcome to join!
- For more details, please reach out to **Courtney** at courtney.kelner@icye.org
- In December, the IO organized two workshop sessions on **Gender Equality and Inclusion**. The participants examined together how gender norms drive and sustain gender inequality, as well as learnt about intersectionality and power dynamics. The participants engaged in insightful discussions on how gender norms and power relations influence everyone. One of the key questions addressed was what we can do to transform gender norms in our work. Thank you to everyone who participated!

RAISING YOUNG PEOPLE'S AWARENESS ON GENDER EQUALITY

Grenzenlos together with **Citizens in Action**, **Kayan Feminist Organization** and **Hayya Bina** coordinated a project called "**start to listen – gender equality from the perspective of young people**" between October 2020 and August 2021. The project was funded by the **Anna Lindh Foundation** and its aim was to give young people from different countries the possibility to exchange and increase their knowledge on various topics, such as human rights, inclusion, migration and gender equality.

The project activities included international training, online meetings, local workshops and the production of podcasts. With the help of the podcasts, the participants were able to express and share their ideas about the current situation of gender equality in their societies.

The project encouraged young people to actively discuss gender equality matters across national borders and to create inclusive and resilient societies.

You can listen to the podcast [here](#) or on [Spotify](#).



Online Workshops and Implementation of New Policies

GREEN POLICY



During a workshop with representatives from different NC the Sub Committee got valuable feedback from an external consultant on our ideas regarding ICYE's contribution to environmental sustainability. We have now finalized a first draft of the Green Policy which we will present in two online meetings for NC in January and February 2022 to discuss the goals and strategies the Sub Committee proposes. Moreover, a monitoring and evaluation framework has been developed which will allow us to assess our progress in implementing the Green Policy.

FUTURE OF THE FEDERATION

In the summer, the five strategic areas for our new strategic framework were approved by the full members. In an online workshop in October, 25 colleagues from across the Federation then discussed as a first step the revision of ICYE's vision and mission. Based on the input, the Sub Committee has now come up with first statements on a new vision and mission which we will share with NC in January for feedback. In the new year, the Sub Committee also wants to set up the first working groups for the five strategic areas – so don't miss out on this opportunity to shape the new framework.

5 STRATEGIC ACTION FIELDS

Purpose

- * intercultural learning (broad) or volunteering (narrow)?
- * motives of target groups? - sharpen the ICYE profile (USP)
- * communicate values and approach

Diversify and specify programmatic offer

- * Different programs for different target groups in the north/south
- * Volunteering as professional competence building
- * e.g. inclusion, gender, ecological, ethical, activist programs

Diversify funding

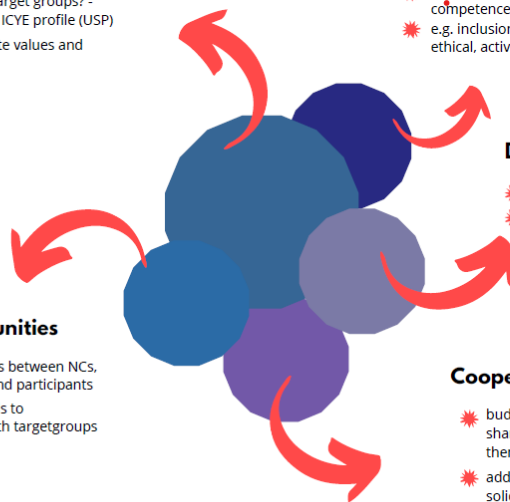
- * to supplement program fees
- * grants, scholarships, etc

Digital opportunities

- * to strengthen ties between NCs, projects, hosts and participants
- * Use new channels to communicate with target groups
- * SEO

Cooperation between NCs

- * buddy systems, working groups, share costs for experts, regional & thematic calls
- * address power relations, idea of solidarity





POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Since the summer, the Sub Committee on Policy Implementation has continued working on the following three policies:

For the **Ethical Code**, we are well advanced with the implementation guidance and checklist for each of the areas which we will share in the new year with NC for their comments.

For the **Policy on Safeguarding Children**, we have finalized the policy and will start with the implementation guideline in 2022. We are aware that the policy is a bold step for our Federation and we will need to discuss with all the NC how we will make sure we are going to comply with the commitments to safeguard children as outlined in the policy.

For the **Policy against Sexual Violence**, we had a very productive workshop with an external consultant and representatives from various NC. Based on the feedback, the policy draft was revised and will be shared for discussion in two calls in the new year. Many thanks to **Mercy Kubasu** from **ICYE Kenya** for the hard work on getting the document finalized.

Excited to see what we can achieve with our Sub Committees in the upcoming year! ✨