

CEV

General Assembly Conference

“Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue”

Luxembourg | 7 November 2008

FINAL REPORT



EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CENTRE

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMSED: Association Migrations, Solidarity and Exchanges for Development
ARCTOS: Anti-racism Tools in Sport
BiH: Bosnia and Herzegovina
BTCV: British Trust Conservation Volunteers
CEV: European Volunteer Centre
CCAEB: Council of the African Communities in Europe and in Belgium
CLAE: Liason Committee of Foreigners Associations
CSOs: Civil Society Organisations
DG: Directorate-General
ENGSO: European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation
EU: European Union
EYID: European Year of Intercultural Dialogue
FYR of Macedonia: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GA: General Assembly
MOVISIE: Netherlands Centre for Social Development
ÖKA: Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány, Hungary
PUB: People Understanding Borders
RIVERSEE: Regional Integration through Volunteer Exchanges for Reconciliation of South Eastern Europe
SAS: Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen Stad
SEE: South Eastern Europe
SEEYN: South East European Youth Network
Spes: Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato del Lazio
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNV: United Nations Volunteers
VOLAG: Voluntary Service for all Ages

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Is volunteering a tool for intercultural dialogue? If so, what does it take to make it an effective tool? What are the practical challenges facing civil society organisations, and government bodies in order to become actors of intercultural dialogue? Is intercultural dialogue a two-way process?

Who and where?

Almost 150 participants representing the civil society sector in Europe and the US, including policy makers at national and European levels, United Nations Volunteers representatives, and academics from over 20 countries, attempted to respond to these questions during the conference Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue organised by the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) in collaboration with Agence du Bénévolat in Luxembourg on the 7th of November 2008.

Why?

Volunteering has been perceived as a means to foster intercultural dialogue. Experiences at local level have showed that volunteering plays a role in the enhancement of integration and empowerment of minorities, and migrant communities. Volunteering has proved to be a means to achieve social inclusion, solidarity and tolerance. Moreover, 2008 has been declared the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue aiming at promoting dialogue between different cultures, celebrating diversity while at the same time promoting common values among all those living in Europe.

With all these arguments in mind, CEV considered that 2008 presented an opportunity to discuss the relationship between volunteering and intercultural dialogue – the conference represents CEV's contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and looks at the experiences and understandings of intercultural dialogue and volunteering at local and national level.

How?

The issues covered in the conference were discussed during the opening panel, and in the dialogue cafe exercise, which provided the participants with a general overview on how volunteering can foster intercultural dialogue. These discussions were complemented by workshop sessions, which included the views and experiences of the practitioners in the fields related to intercultural dialogue and volunteering, e.g. national volunteering programmes for all ages, senior and youth transnational volunteering exchanges as a means to enhance intercultural dialogue, and in some cases, reconciliation among divided societies; sports as a tool for anti-racism; projects developed at neighbourhood level in order to integrate minorities, migrant communities or refugees.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Following the discussions and experiences put forward during the conference, a set of conclusions can be drawn:

→ Volunteering is key to intercultural dialogue and for the build up of a democratic society. Volunteering helps to build self-confidence and thus constitutes a factor in integration, social cohesion, solidarity, and intercultural dialogue, which ultimately will contribute to a peaceful cohabitation between diverse communities. At the same time, intercultural dialogue is perceived to be a condition for volunteering in a diverse, multicultural society, such as Europe.

- The most successful projects take into consideration the needs of the target group and are tailored to the specificities of the region, city, and neighbourhood.
- There is a need to define clear agreements and feasible tasks, which constitute incentives that will encourage many people to volunteer including minorities and migrants. Volunteer involving organisations should be mindful of the competences of the volunteers and urge them to use these competences effectively. It is very important to match the competences of the volunteer to a suitable task in order to avoid frustration. The team working in the organisation must become familiar with working with vulnerable groups.
- In many of the projects presented, one of the main components was the two-way learning process. All the actors involved in the project were consulted and their views were integrated in the implementation phase.
- Common challenges and shared interests are a very positive form of bringing people together to volunteer, creating thus bonds of trust.

On the basis of these conclusions, the following recommendations were put forward in relation to the multiple stakeholders involved in volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue:

- A.** The **civil society organisations** working in the field of Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue should:
 - Put an emphasis on the promotion of a culture of tolerance **vis-à-vis** cultural diversity.
 - Take into consideration the **specificities** of the area where the project takes place and the target group, focusing on the development of an **“owned” programme**.
 - Develop projects based on the **same interests and passions**: art, environmental protection or rehabilitation and volunteering enable the creation of safe spaces and the build up of trust.
- B.** The supporting programmes and projects of **governments** in the field of Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue should:
 - **Promote volunteering** as a factor of integration, social cohesion and solidarity at policy level.
 - Provide more **financial and logistical support** to projects and programmes that involve all the participants.
 - Secure funds for **pluri-annual programmes and/or projects**.
- C.** The **individuals** working for civil society organisations and the volunteers should:
 - Work as a **team**, thus strong social bonds and enhanced friendship.
 - Be **sensitised, supported and trained** to enhance intercultural learning.

“Dialogue =
Process + Identity
+ Engagement
+ Interaction + Sharing”
Conference participant

PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE

CEV General Assembly Conference

“Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue”

7 November 2008, European Commission, Bâtiment Jean Monnet (JMO), Kirchberg – Luxembourg

08.30 Registrations

09:00 **Opening plenary – Welcome**

- **Jean Kieffer** President of the “Association du Bénévolat”, Luxembourg
- **Xavier Bettel** Deputy Mayor of Luxembourg City
- **Belina Scheurer** Representation of the European Commission in Luxembourg
- **Dr. Marijke Steenbergen** CEO MOVISIE, CEV President
- **Marie-Josée Jacobs** Ministry of Family and Integration, Luxembourg

09.30 **Panel discussion: Setting the scene**

Chair: **Markus Held**, CEV Director

- Keynote speech: **Paul Estgen** Sociologist at SESOPI-CI (Centre for research on immigration), Luxembourg
- **Pavel Tychtl** European Commission, DG Education and Culture
- **Jacques Küntziger** Counsellor on Volunteering, Ministry of Family and Integration, Luxembourg
- **Suzanne Monkasa** President of the Council of African Communities in Europe and in Belgium, Consultant in Communication and Diversity Management

11:15 Coffee break

11.45 **Dialogue café**



13.15 Lunch

14.30 **Good practice session I – 3 parallel Workshops (WS)**

WS I

- 1) Intercultural experiences and intercultural dialogue in the Voluntary Service for all Ages, **Deutscher Caritasverband**, Germany
- 2) Transnational Senior Volunteers across Europe as a means of intercultural dialogue

WS II

- 1) Colourful Neighbourhoods and the Management of Diversity, **MOVISIE**, The Netherlands
- 2) Neighbourhood: an intercultural meeting place!, **AMSED**, France

WS III

- 1) «Courant d'air littéraire», Literary stream, **Amitié Portugal - Luxembourg**, Luxembourg
- 2) Festival of Migrations, Cultures and Citizenship and the Cultures and Book Fair, **CLAE**, Luxembourg

16:00 Coffee break

16.30 **Good practice session II – 3 parallel Workshops (WS)**

WS I

- 1) RIVER SEE, Regional Integration through Volunteer Exchanges For Reconciliation of South Eastern Europe, **SEEYN**, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 2) Youth Work in Contested Societies – People Understanding Boarders, **The Corrymeela Community**, Northern Ireland, UK

WS II

- 1) Anti-racism tools in sport, **ENGSO**, Europe

WS III

- 1) Out and About in Leeds: Promoting Good Relations among refugees and local community, **BTCV**, UK
- 2) “Talent on Wheels”: through volunteering to get people to participate in society and to develop competences, **Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen stad**, Belgium

18:00 **Final plenary**

20:30 Reception and Gala dinner

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Glossary

2008 has been declared the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID)¹. The motto of the EYID was **Together in Diversity**, which highlights “(...) the multicultural character of many countries, adding to the number of languages, religions, ethnic and cultural backgrounds found on the continent (...)”² – in this context the objective of the EYID was to promote dialogue between different cultures by acknowledging and celebrating diversity while at the same time promoting common values among all those living in Europe.

The European Union (EU) institutions do not use a concrete definition of intercultural dialogue, although some features of the term can be deduced from the text of the Decision concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008³:

- “cultural diversity”;
- “equal opportunities and non-discrimination”;
- “solidarity, social justice”.

According to the Flash Eurobarometer 217, when Europeans were asked about the meanings of the expression “Intercultural dialogue in Europe”, they highlighted expressions such as “conversation”, “cooperation”, “exchange” and “mutual understanding” across all nations, religions and cultures. However, a significant number of the surveyed population (36%) did not attribute any specific meaning to the expression⁴.

The participants in the conference “Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue” define intercultural dialogue as gratifying interpersonal communication and establish a mental dimension of the other and a process of shaping societies: Intercultural Dialogue entails dialogue not between cultures (they do not speak) but between people. When asked about the elements associated with intercultural dialogue, the participants emphasise reciprocity, respect, identity, sharing, getting to know each other, comprehension, engagement, interaction, diversity and equity.

When thinking about intercultural dialogue, volunteering is rarely mentioned. Note that volunteering can be defined as “an activity undertaken: out of a person’s free will, choice and motivation; without concern for financial gain (non-remunerated); in an organised setting; with the aim to benefit someone other than the volunteer and society at large contributing to values of general interest”⁵.

Moreover, volunteering has been recognised by the EU as a means to “promote integration and intercultural dialogue: volunteering facilitates migrants and third country nationals to become involved in local communities. It also facilitates intercultural dialogue and exchange of experience and can also be an instrument whereby young people who volunteer abroad gain

“Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue: will to – attitude towards respect, negotiate, meet, trust, listen, understand, cooperate and share”

Conference participant



a positive experience of diversity and (...) contribute to the prevention of discrimination and prejudice⁶. Moreover, “transnational voluntary service at European and international level can substantially increase solidarity and mutual understanding among peoples, and promotes intercultural dialogue”⁷.

Volunteering has also proved to be a good way of engaging different ethnic groups in activities that benefit the community as a whole and promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding at national, regional and most importantly at local level.

There are thousands of voluntary organisations working for the integration of communities and develop projects which facilitate intercultural dialogue through volunteering. However, up to now, there is little exchange between organisations on what has been done in this field and how these processes can be supported.

Mindful of these different aspects, the European Volunteer Centre (CEV) considered that 2008 was the right time to bring to the attention of CEV members, civil society organisations, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders the relevance of volunteering in fostering intercultural dialogue. The conference represented CEV’s contribution not only to the EYID but also to building synergies between relevant stakeholders in the field.

Thus the main aims of the conference were:

- to define and explore the meaning of Intercultural Dialogue, its different aspects, especially the ones related to volunteering;
- to bridge and enable communication between volunteer organisations, the European institutions, public authorities and researchers on their work in the field of volunteering and intercultural dialogue;
- to foster networking and intercultural learning between organisations on their good practices in this field.

B. Introduction

The CEV General Assembly Conference “Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue” was organised by CEV in cooperation with Agence du Bénévolat - Luxembourg and gathered almost 150 delegates, representing the civil society sector in Europe, as well as in the US, policy makers at national and European level and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) representatives. The conference was opened by a panel discussion of experts who provided the delegates with their views on volunteering and intercultural dialogue. This session entitled “Setting up of the Scene” was followed by a dialogue café, during which the delegates discussed their views on the meaning of intercultural dialogue and on how volunteering can (or cannot) foster intercultural dialogue, as well as the role of civil society as an actor of intercultural dialogue and the barriers facing them. After these two activities, the delegates were introduced to good practices in the field of volunteering and intercultural dialogue taking place at local and national level.

This report is divided into VIII sections.

The **Executive Summary** is section I of this report and summarises the main findings and the highlights of the conference. Section II transcribes the full programme of the conference. Section III is the **Introduction**, which includes the background concept behind the organisation of the conference around the topic of volunteering and intercultural dialogue, as well as a **glossary**

¹ Official Journal of the European Union, Decision No. 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), L 412/44 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:412:0044:0050:EN:PDF]

² European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 official website, About the Year [http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html?&redirect_url=my-startpage-eyid.html]

³ Official Journal of the European Union, Decision No. 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), L 412/44 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:412:0044:0050:EN:PDF]

⁴ Gallup Organization Hungary, Flash Eurobarometer 217, Intercultural Dialogue in Europe (2007), page 4 [http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_217_sum_en.pdf]

⁵ European Volunteer Centre, Manifesto for volunteering in Europe (2006) [http://www.cev.be/64-cev_manifesto-EN.html]

⁶ European Parliament, Committee on Regional Development, Report on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion, Rapporteur: Marian Harkin (A6-0070/2008), [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oel/file.jsp?id=5498492]

⁷ Official Journal of the European Union, Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Voluntary activity: its role in European society and its impact (2006), C325/46 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:325:0046:0052:EN:PDF]

containing what can be seen as working definitions of the two leading concepts under discussion. The glossary does not give exhaustive or mandatory definitions, but proposes a specific interpretation of the concepts of volunteering and intercultural dialogue.

Section IV offers an overview of the presentations and discussions that were held during the opening experts' panel. This section is entitled **Introduction to Intercultural Dialogue and Volunteering**.

Section V seeks to provide an **overview of the good practice examples** that were put forward during the workshop sessions. Workshop I dealt with migrant senior volunteers in Germany, and European senior volunteers exchanges; workshop II focused on neighbourhoods hosting a large number of minorities in the Netherlands and in France; workshop III provided an outlook on the intercultural dialogue landscape in Luxembourg (the hosting country of the conference), with its festival of migrations and literature stream intercultural groups. Workshop IV provided views on and experience of the reconciliation process between people with a different ethnic upbringing in the aftermath of armed conflict in Northern Ireland and in South Eastern Europe. Workshop V was dedicated to the discussion of anti-racism tools in sport. Workshop VI dealt with the issue of integration of refugees and engagement of migrants in volunteering activities in the host community in the UK and in Belgium.

Section VI contains the **conclusions** reached and identifies barriers and challenges that can be identified in the field of volunteering and intercultural dialogue. Having in mind the presentations and discussions held during the works of the conference, a set of **recommendations** will be put forward.

Section VII lists the **bibliography** and **references** used to document this report.

Section VIII entitled **Appendixes** contains an address book and the list of participants.

CEV would like to thank **Agence du Bénévolat** for having hosted the conference, providing for such a smooth and well-organised event, all the invited speakers and workshop presenters that have agreed to bring their input and expertise to the discussions held, the participants in the conference as well as the volunteer proofreader Marie Tuley for their contributions to this publication.

Cândida Salgado Silva

CEV – the European Volunteer Centre
Brussels, September 2009



III. OPENING PANEL

Introduction to Intercultural Dialogue and Volunteering



The opening panel was chaired by Markus Held, CEV Director and counted with the precious contributions of **Paul Estgen**, sociologist at SeSoPI-Centre Intercommunautaire (Centre for Research on Immigration) in Luxembourg, **Pavel Tychtl**, European Commission, DG Education and Culture, Unit Citizenship policy - “Europe for citizens” programme, **Jacques Küntziger**, Counsellor on Volunteering, Ministry of Family and Integration, Luxembourg and **Suzanne Monkasa**, President of the Council of African Communities in Europe and in Belgium (CCAEB), and consultant in Communication and Diversity Management.

The main questions of the discussion were:

- ➔ is volunteering a tool for intercultural dialogue; and
- ➔ if this is the case, what does it take to make it an effective tool;
- ➔ is it a two-way process seen from three different perspectives, policy makers at European and national level, civil society and academics?

A. What role for volunteering in intercultural dialogue?

The aim of the keynote speech given by **Paul Estgen** was to open discussions and to provide a definition of volunteering and intercultural dialogue⁸. According to him, the intrinsic values of volunteering, such as solidarity, sharing and social cohesion are connected with intercultural dialogue. Moreover, due to the fact that European societies are multicultural, intercultural dialogue is the natural environment in which volunteering takes place. Volunteering is expected to maintain a strong social fabric – a solidarity that overcomes all divisions (social, cultural or generational).

If intercultural dialogue is a condition for volunteering to contribute to social cohesion, **which role does volunteering have in intercultural dialogue?** In order to analyse this role, Paul Estgen proposed four possible scenarios:

1) Volunteering in a multicultural environment

This refers to situations in which volunteering has a strong social character e.g. the defense of the rights of groups that are victims of exclusion; the support of the homeless or volunteering for the benefit of people with fewer opportunities, which is often the case for people with a migrant background. The civil society organisations (CSOs) exercising this kind of activity make efforts to attract staff and volunteers among the population with other cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In these cases, **intercultural dialogue is an operational way to open up to the “other”**, either in order to integrate in the majority group or to work with a target group;

⁸The speaker used the same definitions provided in this report under the section “Introduction”

2) Volunteering for a multicultural cause

The CSOs get together in order to establish a “meeting place” between cultures. Their objective is to encourage intercultural dialogue through the establishment of common projects, facilitating thus the integration in a pluri-cultural society. Here, **intercultural dialogue is the objective of this kind of volunteering activity;**

3) Volunteering in other cultures

Certain volunteering projects take place in another country through the framework of cooperation for development. In these situations, **intercultural dialogue is limited to the restraints and objectives of the project;**

4) International exchange among volunteering organisations

Some CSOs are structured at international level; others do international exchanges with other organisations that pursue similar objectives. Here, **intercultural dialogue forms part of the cultural exchange in these volunteering structures.**

Having in mind these four scenarios, which conditions should be in place to allow for intercultural dialogue at both an organisational and volunteers' level?:

- At the organisational level it is necessary to have a culture of tolerance vis-à-vis cultural diversity. This requires an internal reflection in the organisation on the objectives and the means necessary to put intercultural dialogue in place (e.g. code of good practices);
- At the volunteers level: the most important elements to be taken into consideration while working with volunteers are sensitisation, support and training, while at the same time it is worth taking into account that tolerance to cultural diversity is rarely spontaneous – it is important to train and to help the volunteers face this challenge.

Paul Estgen gave the example of Luxembourg as an interesting case study on volunteering and intercultural dialogue⁹:

- 43% of the population living in Luxembourg is of foreign origin;
- Most of them do not speak a common language;
- Almost 30% of the population declares themselves to be a volunteer. The majority of these claim to volunteer in sports and leisure activities or in cultural and religious organisations;
- 37% of the native Luxembourgish against only 19% of foreigners declare to volunteer;
- The social engagement increases with socio-cultural capital and integration of a person in the hosting society.

As a conclusion, the speaker identified two major challenges to volunteering as a means to promote social cohesion and solidarity within Luxembourg:

- increase the social diversity of volunteering; and
- sensitise the volunteers for cultural diversity.

B. Intercultural dialogue as a change...

Pavel Tlycht supplied the audience with his views on the issue of volunteering and intercultural dialogue by stating that intercultural dialogue is a process, a tool and a link to each person's personal identity - we all have a local, national and a shared European identity based on common values, such as solidarity and fundamental rights.

Through intercultural dialogue each person defines his or her identity. Moreover, when meeting up with other Europeans, his/her identity goes through a change, a re-shaping – this can be perceived as a sort of intercultural dialogue.

⁹These figures are contained in the European Values Study [<http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>]

He highlighted that in the Citizenship Unit within the DG Education and Culture¹⁰, where he works, an emphasis on democratic values and the participative process is in place – there is a true belief that CSOs play a crucial role in intercultural dialogue – **intercultural dialogue is not an end in itself, but rather a component of civil dialogue.**

Finally, Pavel Tlycht pointed out that democracy and active participation, including solidarity, active participation and **volunteering** are **key to allow for a real intercultural dialogue to take place and to build a truly democratic society.**

C. Intercultural dialogue as a process...

Jacques Küntziger affirmed that **intercultural dialogue is a process**, which encourages people to understand their own boundaries and invites them to communicate through these boundaries and to question them. In our globalised and interdependent societies, it is essential that **communities and individuals develop their capacity to get involved in a tolerant dialogue and in mutual respect.** Intercultural dialogue as a process steams from the fact that the contemporary society is plural, in constant movement and without a dominant group: one has to refrain from generalizing, stereotyping, and separating the “us” from the “them”.

In this view, the speaker referred to what he called the **sources of the conflict, which are perceived as barriers hindering intercultural dialogue. These are:**

- **Enculturation** – the process of learning the standards of a given culture, e.g. a child that is confronted with his/her culture that is taught by the family and the society;
- **Ethnocentrism** – to see the world in a way that locates each one's culture in a dominant position, in which all other cultures/people are evaluated and defined in reference to this given perception;
- **Stereotypes** – they ignore the differences among individuals; they carry an exaggerated perception of a certain group; they overvalue positive and negative aspects of a given culture. Stereotypes lead to **prejudices.**

Some possible measures to overcome the above mentioned barriers were identified:

- **promotion of intercultural education;**
- **promotion of cultural diversity;**
- **promotion of cultural bonds between individual people and the communities;**
- **development of intercultural policies;**
- **promotion of volunteering as a factor of integration, social cohesion and solidarity;**
- **setting up solidarity networks.**

These measures possibly contribute to favouring our capabilities to appreciate others' cultures, as well as to encourage cultural pluralism that ultimately will prevent conflicts between diverse communities.

D. Intercultural dialogue as a way of bringing people together...

Suzanne Monkasa presented herself as a third-country national and a volunteer for more than 30 years. She pointed out that there are two ways of understanding intercultural dialogue: **soft intercultural dialogue** and **hard intercultural dialogue**, meaning that one cannot bring intercultural dialogue into being in the abstract. Intercultural dialogue only happens in practice by putting in place a legal framework, and most importantly by respecting this framework in practice.

Intercultural dialogue invites the public to reflect upon the concept of culture, which can be translated into identity and diversity –deciding what is identity and what diversity is a very complex question, one has to “open his/her eyes”, to deconstruct the preconceived ideas, and seek understanding.

¹⁰<http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/>

When one speaks about **intercultural dialogue**, one is speaking about **identity, diversity and responsibility** – there is a personal engagement in the world, in our society, being it at national or European level. One of the conditions, allowing intercultural dialogue to happen is what Ms Monkasa called “**decentering**” – the capacity of being able to go “away from yourself” in order to get a different and broader perspective.

Another issue brought to the attention of the audience was related to the context in which intercultural dialogue occurs: who asks for intercultural dialogue, which community and which needs are being addressed? **Intercultural dialogue is a way to bring people together, to get to know one another.**

To conclude her intervention, Ms. Monkasa urged the audience not to be afraid of discussing the problems and tensions – we have to dare to address the issues that matter, **we do not want a culture of harmonisation, but a culture that accepts difference.**



IV. WORKSHOP SESSIONS



Each workshop session presented and discussed two good practice experiences in the field of volunteering and intercultural dialogue.

WS I – Voluntary Service for all Ages and Senior Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue: a national and a European experience

1) *Intercultural Experiences and Intercultural Dialogue in the Volunteer Service¹¹ for all Ages (VOLAG)*. Presented by Eugen Baldas, Deutscher Caritasverband¹², Germany

Background and objectives of the project

Germany is home to 15 million people with a migrant background¹³ thus integration is one of the main challenges faced by this country. A national integration plan was put in place to address those challenges. **VOLAG** was created in this context as a tool leading to integration designed to create special conditions for volunteer service targeting young and elderly people.

Using the framework that **VOLAG** created, **Deutscher Caritasverband** focused additionally on the integration of foreigners and people with a migrant background. By “fostering integration through civil commitment and equal participation”, the volunteer service provides learning opportunities through a culture of social responsibility. The participants can improve their skills, competences, professional orientation, as well as language skills. Moreover, **VOLAG** represents a solidarity service because it provides opportunities to society at large to commit to the general well-being of the society and allows migrants to be active within their local communities.

¹¹ Volunteer service model programme

¹² German Caritas [<http://www.caritas.de/Freiwilligendienste>]

¹³ Eugen Baldas, Rainer A.Roth, Helmut Schwalb (Hrsg), Talente einsetzen – Solidarität stiften. Modellprogramm Generationsübergreifende Freiwilligendienste, Freiburg 2009

Project Description

VOLAG is the volunteer service model programme of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth which aims at using the potential of elder generations; opening commitment possibilities for people who are working and/or have a family; and finally, creating access to possible voluntary services.

VOLAG can last between 3 and 24 months, on a full or part-time basis, for at least 10 to 20 hours a week. It is open to:

- employed people and people with a young family;
- (pre) retirees;
- migrants;
- people out of work;
- people between professional training and profession;
- people coming from disadvantaged groups.

The role of the **Deutscher Caritasverband** in the programme is, in close cooperation with its volunteer centres, to provide consultancy services for individuals who are interested in starting a **VOLAG** and also for institutions providing placements for **VOLAG**. The aim is to create more solidarity and to find new people who have never been voluntarily active and are willing to spend more time to perform a special temporary task.

The participating volunteer centres¹⁴ involved in the development and implementation of the volunteer service model programme work to find and set-up placements, prepare volunteer meetings, trainings, team meetings, and information events.

Migrant volunteers perform tasks such as: homework support for migrant children and teenagers; training for job interviews and apprenticeship mentors; tutors for volunteers from abroad; support with public administration; support for asylum seekers and refugees; care for lonely and elderly people.

The programme provides many intercultural dialogue opportunities for volunteers by facilitating interaction between volunteers coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds during the team meetings; interaction between migrant volunteers and local population; events and seminars; acknowledgment of the migrant volunteers' contributions.

Funding

The project was funded by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Project Outcomes¹⁵

According to the figures provided by the Deutscher Caritasverband, 54 model-projects were set-up throughout Germany, more than 1300 placements have been created and more than 6.500 volunteers have participated in this programme¹⁶.

A remarkable outcome of the programme is that far more migrants participated in the VOLAG than initially expected. In the Deutscher Caritasverband, migrants occupied 11% of the volunteer placements; senior volunteers 31 % and the unemployed 34%. When asked about the motivation to volunteer, migrants highlighted that they enjoyed talking to the locals, improved their professional and social competences, while they considered that they had fun while performing their tasks.

¹⁴This includes Caritas' volunteer centres and at the same time Caritas, which is the coordinator for about 20 projects all over Germany

¹⁵Eugen Baldas, Rainer A.Roth, Helmut Schwalb (Hrsg), Talente einsetzen – Solidarität stiften. Modellprogramm Generationsübergreifende Freiwilligendienste, Freiburg 2009

¹⁶Figures refer to 31 December 2007

Good Practice components

The presenter identified the following features of **VOLAG** as good practice components:

- manageable time load, flexibility, allowing for self-initiative, which creates curiosity to start a volunteer service;
- clear agreements about expectations and priorities;
- reliable mentoring;
- training possibilities provided for the volunteers, including exchange of ideas between volunteers;
- ample reimbursement of all the expenses;
- and personal acknowledgement.

As a result of sound organisation and management of the programme including elements such as good communication between the volunteer centres and the volunteers regarding expectations and task performance; the flexible time of the volunteer assignment; reimbursement of expenses; insurance; pocket money; and a contact person as well as clear agreements and feasible tasks resulted in the fact that far more migrants participated in the programme than initially expected.

2) Transnational Senior Volunteers across Europe as a means of intercultural dialogue

Presented by Ksenija Fonovic, SPES¹⁷, Italy

Background and rationale of the project

According to different surveys¹⁸ in 2050, the population of 60 years and over will increase to 35.1% in Europe. To face this phenomenon, the EU has encouraged member states to promote activities stimulating "active ageing"¹⁹ of the European population, which are seen not only as ensuring that people work longer, but also that elderly people engage beyond retirement in participation, solidarity and active citizenship - e.g. by volunteering.

Additionally, opportunities, differences and difficulties of volunteering for all ages was the topic of the conference organised in the framework of the CEV General Assembly in Cluj Napoca (Romania) in May 2005²⁰, hosted by Pro Vobis National Volunteer Centre²¹.

The conference "Volunteering for all ages – Summit of generations" has shown the differences among European countries regarding the involvement of elderly people in volunteering activities. Experiences and data show that in East and Central European countries, elderly people are extremely reluctant to engage in community action, while for instance in Italy large numbers of volunteers are retired people of both genders and over 60 years old. The rationale behind the project was that exchange of good practices between the countries with different senior volunteering cultures would be mutually beneficial - to the larger community, and to the volunteer who through active engagement maintains physical and intellectual independence.

Project Description

The two year project **Think Future, Volunteer Together** was organised in the framework of the ENEA preparatory action²² of the European Commission Directorate-General (DG) Employ-

¹⁷Service Centre for Volunteering in the Lazio Region

¹⁸United Nations, World Population Ageing 1950 – 2050 (2002), [http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/worldageing19502050/]

¹⁹"Core active ageing practices include life long learning, working longer, retiring later and more gradually, being active after retirement and engaging in capacity enhancing and health sustaining activities" in Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Europe's response to World Ageing, Promoting economic and social progress in an ageing world - a contribution of the European Commission to the 2nd World Assembly on Ageing [COM (2002) 143 final - http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_situation/docs/com2002_0143_en.pdf]

²⁰http://www.cev.be/92-2005_may_(cluj_romania)_volunteering_for_all_ages_summit_of_generations-SK.html

²¹http://www.provobis.ro/

²²http://ec.europa.eu/social/

ment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on active ageing and mobility of elderly people. In this preparatory action, volunteering was recognised as a tool to mobilise the full potential of older people for active ageing and their contribution to society.

The project **Think Future, Volunteer Together**²³ aims at promoting the involvement of people over 55 years of age in volunteering. Moreover, it attempts to evaluate if and how international exchanges and possible implementation of follow-up micro-projects of senior volunteers can enhance and promote their active engagement especially in the Central and East European countries, where adult and older people are scarcely present in the volunteering landscape. The ultimate objective of the project is that senior volunteers engaged in the project become promoters of volunteering among elderly people in their communities.

Aside from CEV, acting as policy advisor, the project brings together five CEV member organisations working in five different countries: SPES – Italy, Pro Vobis – Romania, C.A.R.D.O – Slovakia, ŐKA - Hungary, and Slovenska Filantropija – Slovenia.

The main project activities are the setting-up of a local network and the promotion of the project within country-based organisations working in the field of volunteering or with elderly people; the recruitment of volunteers; a two-week international exchange composed of a number of volunteer activities for participants; the possible implementation of micro projects by the volunteers upon completion of the exchange.

The project activities were designed by taking into consideration the differences of traditions regarding elderly volunteering between the 'old' and 'new' EU member states. 100 volunteer exchanges took place throughout the project implementation. Following the two-week exchange experience, the volunteers are invited to implement their own micro-projects in their own community on the basis of what they have learned abroad.

Furthermore, the project foresees activities for the promotion of the participation of elderly people in volunteering activities, the analysis of results and a proposal of recommendations for possible European programmes and actions increasing the involvement of elderly people in volunteering activities in Europe, which will be presented on an international conference to be held in Brussels in autumn 2009.

Funding

The project is financed by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities under the ENEA preparatory action.

Project Outcomes

The project was presented at the end of its first year of life, however, the coordinator of the project pointed out some positive outcomes that could already be perceived. The most important outcome is related to the fact that through the international exchanges, elderly volunteers are getting more familiar with volunteering, they feel mobilised to be active European citizens and empowered to implement micro-projects in their communities.

The volunteers participating in the exchange also keep contact with one another and share experiences assuming the role of multipliers/promoters of volunteering in their communities. Regarding the intercultural component of this project, although during the briefing course they receive short language and cultural training, participants/senior volunteers are generally under-exposed to intercultural experiences. The biggest barrier is the language since most of the +55 do not speak a foreign language. However, the participants and the volunteer centres hosting them abroad created an intercultural and friendly environment based on sharing time, hospitality, volunteering practices and values, as well as warm personal contacts, openness towards others. Ideas for future collaborations and direct interactions among voluntary organisations were also being developed.

²³ [http://www.cev.be/101-think_future_volunteer_together_\(senior_volunteering\)-EN.html](http://www.cev.be/101-think_future_volunteer_together_(senior_volunteering)-EN.html)

Good practice components

Ksenija Fonovic highlighted the fact that getting a direct feeling of what “people just like you”, e.g. 55+ volunteers, “make happen” can stimulate a more solid and creative engagement in volunteering. Interacting in something one is very passionate about such as volunteering is a powerful tool to overcome the initially very strong cultural barriers and transform the experience into a positive trigger for the benefit of the local communities. The voluntary organisations hosting the groups of volunteers set up a protected and stimulating environment that facilitates an intercultural experience for people who are generally totally excluded from such possibilities. Living examples of voluntary activities performed and governed by older people can provide a powerful stimulus for the inclusion of seniors in cultural contexts where these have been so far just a minority.

The factors of success so far related to this project are: the partnership between partner volunteer centers (all being CEV member organisations), the immediate interest and wonderful hosting capacity of local voluntary organisations, the solid national networking, the dedicated and capable country managers and the linguistic facilitators.

When organising a project such as this one, one has to bear in mind the special needs of the target group, e.g. age - the organisation has to take into consideration the specificities of a group of elderly people); language - as there is no “bridge language”, an extra effort should be put in place to provide linguistic facilitation. The tutor figures as one of the best instruments for overcoming intercultural barriers. The voluntary organisations involved in exchanges are not required to develop organisational tasks, but more importantly to guarantee the quality of the work regarding intercultural dialogue, capacity building, and networking.

WS II – Intercultural Dialogue in Multicultural Neighbourhoods in the Netherlands and in France

1) *Multicultural Neighbourhoods and the Management of Diversity.*

Presented by Mellouki Cadat, MOVISIE – The Netherlands

Background and objectives of the project

The pluri-annual project **Multiculturele Buurt** (Multicultural Neighbourhood) is rather different from the other projects presented during the conference because it is an umbrella project that consists of many micro-projects.

The project aimed to stimulate and support social work in order to create the conditions for the successful development of projects and activities in a multicultural context. The Multicultural Neighbourhood has been developed in the Netherlands, where 1.7 million people are first or second generation immigrants from non-Western countries, mostly originating from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname, Antilles and Aruba²⁴, thus in a very multicultural environment.

Project Description

More than 30 organisations throughout the Netherlands were involved in the Multicultural Neighbourhood project, which sought to empower local organisations to expand the multicultural aspects of their work. All CSOs could apply to develop projects that were perceived as compatible with the aim of the project and which reflected the local context. A national coordinator was in charge of supporting, exchanging and monitoring all the project procedure.

The project was launched in September 2004 and will last 6 years – until 2010.

Intercultural Dialogue is, in the Multicultural Neighbourhood project, perceived as a process based

²⁴ Institute for Intercultural Development, Dutch Multicultural Society, Facts and Figures – Factbook (2009) [<http://www.forum.nl/international/pdf/factbook-dutchsociety.pdf>]

on a large variety of individual and collective efforts that aim to stimulate community centres, social work services and volunteers organisations to be more open to local migrant residents.

In different cities diverse projects were developed: in Enschede, Hengelo, Eindhoven and Oss special projects for elderly migrants were put in place; in Zaandam the possibility arose to address the theme of home violence within migrant communities; in Katwijk and Zeist, activities were developed within mother-child centres with special focus on the multicultural composition of the local community.

Other project activities consisted of: exchange meetings with the topic of elderly and youth work, an excursion to Berlin, meetings with relevant third parties, support and bound activities between the project participants, a national online database of multicultural and intercultural practices, 50 interviews in community centres and social services centres, 30 interviews with migrant organisations' representatives, expert meetings and national conferences and the coaching of 30 social work organisations involved in multicultural and intercultural activities.

All projects were managed by project leaders, which were coached by a specialised organisation. Below there are different project examples:

You are the future

- A programme focusing on counselling in favour of children, teenagers and young adults from 4 up to 23 years old living in deprived conditions;
- A community worker coaches the youth in community centres where activities match the needs of the target group.

Be at the media²⁵

- Websites;
- TV productions;
- Theatre productions;
- Debates.

Street Theatre

- Neighbourhood theatre focuses on social action and motivation;
- Cooperation between welfare organisations and a theatre company;
- Organising encounters and meetings;
- Research.

Mentoring project

- By means of individual counselling, prevention of youth early school dropout;
- Social support up to 2 years: skill development, homework and other pedagogical activities;
- Parents are involved in the activities.

A way to look

- A multicultural youth group speaks about culture and identity. Background: own ethnic-cultural origin and religion;
- They have unravelled common points and differences;
- It has been recorded on photographic film and in a PowerPoint presentation.

Stories of the past

- Discovering and sharing personal stories from different cultures;
- First phase: working with culturally homogeneous groups;
- Second phase: mixed groups;
- Third phase: telling the stories to a broad public.

Old and wise on world travel

- Surgeries;
- Nursing homes open up for migrant neighbours;
- Working together with social workers.

Clothes project Almere

- Needlework project;
- Bringing people together;
- Learning from a good practice in Delft.

Funding

The Multicultural Neighbourhood project was funded through the Oranje Fund with more than € 1.8 million - on average each of the local projects received € 60.000.

The Oranje Fund "is the largest social fund in the Netherlands. [Its] operations cover the Netherlands, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, and its work involves financing various organisations that request funds for certain projects. This may be shelter for the homeless, for abused women or former addicts as well as activities at children's playgroups, multicultural events or information for the children's help line"²⁶.

Project Outcomes

According to the presenter, the socio-cultural institutions working within multicultural neighbourhoods play an active and positive role in the community through meeting, bonding and bridging gaps between members of the community. Thus they shape space, support interaction and generate cooperation. Furthermore, it is considered that the interculturalisation of social work benefits the community as a whole.

Good Practice components

This project allows the participating organisations and the public involved to develop a strategy that can be sustainable and which has the potential to deepen ties in the community. Very important components of the project are the financial support of the Oranje Fund throughout 6 years and the engagement of inter/multicultural "pioneers" (social professionals and volunteers).

The project is based on a two-way learning process – professionals, project leader, volunteers and the target group learn from each other's ethnic and cultural background through peer-to-peer approach. To this end, social professionals with outstanding practices 'teach' others, using interactive workshops, multimedia, ICT and visual materials (thus avoiding the use of theoretical books).

2) *Neighbourhood: an intercultural meeting place!*

Presented by Eleonore Martray, AMSED²⁷ – France

Background and objectives of the project

AMSED puts in place local development projects that seek to create solidarity links, exchange and cooperation for development.

Therefore the project *Neighbourhood: an intercultural meeting place!* sought to act against the social confinement of a neighbourhood isolated from the rest of the city of Strasbourg, which hosts people with fewer opportunities, different origins, and multiple identities, suffering from exclusion and at risk of poverty. The project was developed in partnership with the local organisations established in the neighbourhood, especially with the socio-cultural centre of Cronembourg

Generally, the objective behind the project was to enhance the social links between the communities and to improve the negative image of the neighbourhood.

Project Description

The project *Neighbourhood: an intercultural meeting place!* was developed in a deprived neighbourhood in the city of Strasbourg.

It aimed to enhance the active involvement of the inhabitants through the development of artistic and intercultural activities that facilitated the exchange of experiences and practices that targeted the population living in the area.

²⁶ <http://www.oranjefonds.nl/oranjefonds2/pagina.asp?pagkey=69737>

²⁷ Association Migrations, Solidarity and Exchanges for Development

²⁵ <http://www.be-at-the-media.nl>

The project coordinated by AMSED took place in summer 2008. During two weeks more than 40 facilitators and leaders formed an intercultural team and implemented intercultural events, mainly street happenings, in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of the city of Strasbourg (in which the migrant community is present). The project responded to the needs and expectations of the migrant community by putting in place activities that facilitate the fight against the social confinement of these neighbourhoods.

The artistic and intercultural activities were addressed to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to give them the chance to get to know other cultures and ways of life, fostering tolerance and solidarity. All participants showed the practices and ways of life of their countries through the organisation of artistic workshops. The intercultural learning dimension was present thanks to the following elements:

- confrontation of experiences and acquisition of intercultural knowledge through the exchange of experiences and practices;
- through the exercise of “building bridges” and preparing activities together [the preparation of the activities was done during the morning. During this occasion, all the facilitators had the opportunity to present themselves and to propose their pedagogical approach to the workshops. At the end of each session, the facilitators built the street happenings together];
- based on this approach, the exchange between the facilitators contributed to the build up of a true and strong team. Through this common work, the social workers (both local and international facilitators) acquired the pedagogic intercultural tools that mutually enrich their practices and methodologies. The project aimed to benefit on the one hand the inhabitants of the Cronembourg neighbourhood, and on the other, the local and international facilitators.

The facilitators originated from different cultures: French, Moroccan, Algerian, Turkish, Swedish, Greek, Austrian and Romanian. They were involved in all stages of project, from the evaluation of the activities that took place during the previous summer, the preparation of the project (since they were the ones that defined the project), the street happenings, the workshops’ content, to the place where the events took place. The local population (“the voice of the inhabitants”) was also taken in consideration since this project was prepared in close cooperation with the local socio-cultural centre. The ideas and initiatives of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood were integrated into the main project activities.

During the fortnight of project implementation several workshops and other activities organised in a sort of festival took place throughout the neighbourhood. These activities included: a make-up with henna workshop; a workshop introducing the techniques of make-up; a workshop on fairy tale telling; a theatre improvisation workshop; a workshop about intercultural games; a percussion workshop; a demonstration of traditional dancing from Greece and Turkey; and Turkish and Kabyle singing.



Funding

The municipality of Strasbourg and the Agency for the Social Cohesion and Equality of Opportunities²⁸ co-financed the project, in the framework of the French plan that seeks to support the development of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A partial funding through the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission was also made available.

Project Outcomes

There are several projects outcomes, which can be regrouped in the following way:

- **For the facilitators:** the workshops were an occasion to put in place the organisation tools commonly elaborated by the different facilitators. Through the exchange of experiences, the confrontation of practices, and by jointly organising the events, the facilitators and social workers improved their skills. At the preparation stage, the facilitators had the chance to develop, evaluate and improve the quality of the exchanges and the result of the previous day’s activities based on the expectations and reactions of the public.
- **For the local community:** the development of the activities was done in conjunction with the local socio-cultural centre, taking into consideration the special needs and interests of a community living in the neighbourhood. 1500 people living in the neighbourhood were involved in the activities that were designed to enhance social ties, social cohesion and empowerment.

The main challenges to the implementation of the project, identified by the presenter, were the French sociological reality and the difficulty it posed to foreigners’ comprehension, i.e. the facilitators coming from other European countries. Financial difficulties were also a constant challenge because the support provided by the local, national and European authorities was not enough to carry on the project.

Good Practice components

Art and creativity are tools for social inclusion – they facilitate access to culture for everyone, build bonds of tolerance and respect, develop new skills and attitudes and create links between different cultures.

The project was designed to provide an answer to the specific needs and expectations of an intercultural population, having in mind their demands. The target group was involved in the setup of the activities and in their implementation. Some of the concepts behind the organisation of the workshops emerged from consultation and dialogue between the youth from the neighbourhood and the facilitators. Thus, the fact that the **activities were developed in their different stages by all the participants, both public and facilitators**, can be considered as a component of good practice.

WS III – Intercultural Dialogue in the Context of Luxembourg

1) Literary stream

Presented by Guy Reger, Amitié Portugal – Luxembourg²⁹ – Luxembourg

Background and objectives of the project

Luxembourg is a small country with 450.000 inhabitants, 43% of the population are migrants, mostly from other European countries. 70.000 of these migrants are of Portuguese origin. This fact gives rise to the need for organisations acting at the local level capable of responding

²⁸ <http://www.lacse.fr/dispatch.do>

²⁹ Friendship Portugal - Luxembourg

to the needs of integration of such a significant minority. It is in this context that the **Amitié Portugal-Luxembourg** was created in 1969. This association aims to help the harmonious integration of the migrant community (namely Portuguese speaking) in the host community. Through cooperation with several migrant and Luxembourgish CSOs and by direct actions in the social, cultural, and educative domains, the association seeks to address all forms of racism and xenophobia.

The motto of the association is “for better living together”³⁰ – these are some of the reasons why the **Literary stream** project was launched in 2006 in the framework of the National Year against Racism.

Project Description

To **read and live the book** is the slogan of the **Literary Stream** project that promotes the migrants’ population literature and the literature of the hosting country – in this case, Portugal and Luxembourg respectively.

The project seeks to strengthen the bonds between children and young people from different cultures through the discovery of Portuguese and Luxembourgish literature. It aims to stimulate the interest in literature, reading and creativity, as well as fostering intercultural dialogue.

The underlying idea of the project is to give children and youngsters the opportunity to discover the richness of other countries’ literature. Intercultural learning occurs through the sharing of each country’s specific culture, history, habits, imagery, social and political factors. The **Literary Stream** allows children and youngsters with different origins to be confronted with a foreign language and an unfamiliar culture.

The activities organised under the **Literary Stream** project are directed at children and youngsters between 6 and 16 years old – the groups are organised according to age groups, thus 6 - 8; 9 - 11; 12 - 14; 14 - 16 years old. Adults are involved in the project as they participate in an exchange of ideas and concepts about the value of reading in the development of the children. The parents, especially the migrant parents, are sensitised to the importance of reading in the development of the children’s intellectual and relational capacities.

The project is implemented through reading sessions with at least two authors from the different involved countries - Luxembourg and Portugal. These authors present their work, which is followed by workshops to discover the book in a creative fashion. The participants have the opportunity to exchange knowledge on foreign literatures, discovering the content of the books through creative means, such as to “dance a book”, to “stage the book”, to rewrite the history or to write its continuation and to draw the book. Furthermore, children and youngsters translate the texts to each other.

Volunteers are at the core of this project as they carry out the activities – they undertake the organisation of the reading sessions for the children and they coordinate the promotion and publicity of all the initiatives.

Funding

The project is financially supported by the Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Culture from Luxembourg, as well as by the Portuguese bank **Caixa Geral de Depósitos**.

Project Outcomes

The project captured the attention of many schools and associations – there is a growing interest in transposing the project to other groups, covering literature coming from other countries, such as Cape Verde, Spain and the Balkans and to work as a network. The **Literature Stream** has an active role in the Book Fair, International Book Day and other initiatives in Luxembourg.

In 2006, there were 13 primary school groups, 4 secondary school groups and 180 people participating in the weekend reading sessions. In 2008 the following took place: 7 primary school groups, 3 evening events with the adults, lecture sessions in the Book Fair, a book weekend with a parents association, and the set-up of the project AGIR – a quarterly meeting of facilitators and children to explore a book.

Good Practice components

The **Literary stream** project proves that with a **simple idea**, which is not excessively work intensive, children and youngsters of different origins have the possibility to **enhance the intercultural learning** and exchange between them, **boosting the empowerment of the migrant children** on the one hand, and **generating tolerance and showcasing the richness of cultural diversity** on the other.

2) Festival of Migrations, Cultures and Citizenship.

Presented by Jean-Philippe Ruiz, CLAE³¹ – Luxembourg

Background and objectives of the project

The project is managed by the Liaison Committee of the Foreigners Association (CLAE) which brings together migrants and solidarity organisations working to support the migrant populations living in Luxembourg. Through social, cultural and associative work, they seek to get recognition for migrant rights and their culture.

As described in the previous workshop³², Luxembourg is a multicultural country with many different minorities. There is a need for better recognition and public awareness of their cultures and rights.

Project Description

The Festival of Migrations, Cultures and Citizenship aims to increase legitimacy and recognition of migrants’ cultures in Luxembourg and to develop a broader definition of citizenship.

The Festival has been organised since 1982 and is the biggest event convening civil society movements working in the field of migration and citizenship in Luxembourg, thus creating a space of intercultural dialogue. In 2008, the festival saw its 26th edition. The festival underlines the richness of Luxembourg’s socio- cultural landscape through intercultural dialogue that is established between the participants throughout the Festival.

The Festival is an intercultural event organised by 300 volunteers and is open to the public. It especially targets CSOs, political and cultural actors, with between 15,000 and 25,000 people visitors since its creation. Furthermore it includes several activities such as: the organisation of more than 150 stands for associations, multiple cuisine offers representing the biggest migrant communities in the country, performances and exhibitions, music performed by the migrant organisations, political and cultural debates, conferences and a book fair.

Funding

The festival benefits from the financial support of the Ministry of Family and Integration and from the city of Luxembourg.

Project Outcomes

According to the presenter, after the 26th edition of the festival, the society in Luxembourg has given wider recognition to the value that cultural diversity has in the country. Moreover, the festival has contributed to the development and recognition of people’s education and sociability, as well as to the integration of the migrant communities in Luxembourg’s multicultural society.

³⁰ In French, “pour mieux vivre ensemble”

³¹ Liaison Committee of the Foreigners Association

³² The Literary Stream

In general, one can affirm that the notion of citizenship is nowadays stronger than it was 26 years ago. However, work still needs to be done and there is a permanent process of negotiations.

Good Practice components

The Festival of Migrations, Cultures and Citizenship brings together all associations and individuals that compose civil society in contemporary Luxembourg. It enhances the value of a multicultural and plural identity. During the festival a constant dialogue is in place between the different communities.

The project presenter sees the festival can be perceived as a forum of understanding, respect for diversity and cultures in peaceful cohabitation.

WS I – Youth Volunteering in Divided Societies as a Mean to Promote Inter-cultural Dialogue: the Western Balkans & Northern Ireland

1) RIVERSEE, Regional Integration through Volunteer Exchanges For Reconciliation of South Eastern Europe. Presented by Emira Mesanovic, SEEYN³³ – Bosnia and Herzegovina

Background and objectives of the project

The South and Eastern Europe (SEE) region has a recent history of severe conflicts. It is in this complex, politicised, post conflict context that the RIVERSEE programme was implemented. The idea behind the programme was that work camps allow participants to take part in activities, which are pro-social, challenging, involve self-management, and which include substantial contact with other cultures through the involvement of international volunteers.



Thus, the RIVERSEE programme focused on reconciliation, regional re-integration, social cohesion and poverty reduction.

Project Description

RIVERSEE - the regional integration through volunteer exchanges for reconciliation of South Eastern Europe - programme concept came into life in 2002, as a pilot programme of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Balkan region, covering Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo. The main objectives of the RIVERSEE programme were to reduce prejudices towards peers among youth in SEE and in neighbouring countries, to assess their levels of volunteerism, to increase their pro-social values and employability. The volunteer exchanges and placements aimed to

- reinforce social inclusion,
- increase opportunities for youth,
- fight stigmas attached to marginalised groups,
- as well as the promotion of regional reconciliation.

This was done by bringing young people from conflict-affected regions together to work in different community based projects across the lines of ethnic division in the Balkan region.

The South East European Youth Network (SEEYN) was one of the implementing partner organisations, which provided training, expert and financial support to the programme. Moreover, SEEYN was, together with the other 14 implementing partner organisations, co-responsible for the implementation of voluntary management activities at national and local level, and for the relations with volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and civil society. SEEYN officially undertook the coordination of RIVERSEE in 2008.

The project activities included:

- creating a platform for the main actors in SEE and the EU countries;
- generating an online database for volunteers and hosting organisations;
- setting up the SEE volunteer exchange scheme, which consisted of long-term volunteer exchanges, short-term volunteer exchanges (work camps), school exchanges and regional youth initiatives;
- advocacy for volunteering legislation;
- RIVERSEE conference;
- research.

Funding

The programme was initially financed by UNDP/UNV, co-financed by the European Union, and the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through the Danish Neighbourhood Programme).

Project Outcomes

According to the presenter, the RIVERSEE programme was very successful in enhancing the volunteering effort and youth engagement in the Balkan region. Moreover, the volunteer hosting organisations have highlighted the fact that RIVERSEE volunteers integrated more easily into the work of the host organisation, and in the local culture than international volunteers coming from other regions.

The project proved that bringing young people from neighbouring countries to work in endangered communities contribute to breaking down cultural and ethnical prejudices and engaging in intercultural dialogue. Through direct contact and joint activities, volunteers and communities change their value systems. Moreover, the volunteer's home community also profits from such exchanges as the personal experience is transferred back home.

Good Practice components

The RIVERSEE programme was developed by the UNV country offices in BiH and Albania and the UNV headquarters, taking into consideration evidence of the need to address the state of youth, volunteering and civil society in the Balkans, as well as the "dissolution of bonds of trust between individuals, social groups, countries and areas"³⁴. **The programme was tailored in the region for the region, bearing in mind the needs of the region.**

Moreover, the RIVERSEE volunteering programme tackled different issues (mainly environmental and social) and gathered different groups to work together on **common challenges**. Volunteers were dealing with specific challenges (for example, the protection of a cross border river) - by working together. Volunteers coming from different backgrounds contributed to reconciliation process in the Balkans region.

³⁴ RIVERSEE history: <http://www.riversee.org/index.php?link=2&lang=1>

³³ South East European Youth Network

2) Youth Work in Contested Societies – People Understanding Borders.

Presented by Ivan Cross, The Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland – UK

Background and objectives of the project

The Corrymeela Community Youth Programmes address the conflict in Northern Ireland - this conflict represents an ethno-political conflict between Nationalists and Unionists. While Nationalists aim for the unification of Northern Ireland with the rest of Ireland, and thus independence from the United Kingdom (UK), the Unionists want the territory to remain part of the UK. There is also a religious aspect to the conflict since Nationalists are predominantly Roman Catholics and Unionists are predominantly Protestants.

The Corrymeela Community Youth Programmes aspire “to create safe spaces where young people, from diverse backgrounds, can come and meet each other within an atmosphere of trust and acceptance; where differences can be acknowledged, explored and accepted. Corrymeela works in a variety of ways to make meaningful connections with young people through shared experiences. This work plays an essential role in [the Northern Irish] post-conflict society where there is a (...) need to accept diversity”³⁵. The project Youth Work in Contested Societies – People Understanding Borders (PUB) forms part of this vision and is based on three principles - equity, diversity, and interdependence.

Project Description

The PUB seeks to create trust and acceptance among young people in Northern Ireland, notably through the exploration of issues that have caused the division of society and violence in recent history.

PUB is a project run by the Corrymeela Community, and it brings together participants organised in a group of young adults aged 18-25, who are interested in working within their own communities and/or the Corrymeela Community. The group assembles in order to exchange their views and opinions on different topics, which are defined by the group itself. The project is open to any group in the whole of Ireland (North and South) without concern for background nor religion.

The project objectives are:

- To train young people to understand causes and consequences of conflict at many levels;
- To create an awareness in young people of North/South issues with relevance to young adults;
- Increased capacity of participants to apply learning within their own specific settings and home environment drawing on skills learned;
- Increased awareness of class, culture, religion, educational and ethnic issues which hinder community cohesion across Ireland;
- The implementation of North/South organisational links which could develop into sharing of resources and longer term networking on future projects;
- Development of an “owned” programme, driven by young adults, which meets their needs, specific to their own environments;
- Development of ongoing monitoring and in depth evaluation processes, which enhance the opportunities for greater learning.

Volunteers play a relevant role in the development of the project, as they help facilitate and deliver the different aspects of the programme; while at the same time, they assess the work done by the group involved in the programme.

The group taking part in the PUB programme identified four themes that they would like to work on: family, well-being (sexual, spiritual, relational), sexuality, and residential experience.

³⁵ <http://www.corrymeela.org/sitepage/youth.aspx>

The programme is organised in six weekend residential experiences that explore the psychological, social, geographic, historical and political divisions that have created the conditions for the conflict in Ireland. The first residential experience was a pilot, during which the participants identified the themes that they found most interesting and challenging. It is hoped this will lead to an international experience for the participants.

Funding

55% of the income of the Corrymeela comes from voluntary contributions; the other 45% includes income from lettings, projects and core grants³⁶.

Project Outcomes

The programme will last until summer 2009 – thus for the presenter it is difficult to point out the outcomes, as an evaluation has not yet been carried out.

However, some outcomes can be anticipated such as the **creation of a safe environment which leads to the build up of bonds of trust** between the participants. Furthermore, the ownership that the programme allows for can lead to the empowerment of the youth group.

Good Practice components

Some of the good practice components can be identified at this point of the programme implementation: the fact that by enabling the group who wishes to participate in the programme to gain ‘ownership’ and to identify the issues and themes which are most relevant to their needs; to create a safe environment, in which young people feel secure, to think as an individual (breaking the walls of separation in the community) – this programme represents an **open process** in which the participants acknowledge the **diversity in the group**, and at the same time do not to give up their **sense of identity**.

WS II – Sport as a Tool to Combat Stereotypes and Promoting Intercultural Dialogue

1) Anti-Racism Tools in Sport (ARCTOS).

Presented by Jan Holze and Natasa Jankovic, ENGSO Youth – Europe

Background and objectives of the project

Discrimination, racism and xenophobia are serious challenges for sport organisations. For this reason, ENGSO Youth³⁷, and notably the German Sports Youth (the youth branch of the German Olympic Sports Confederation) in close cooperation with eight other national sports organisations from Austria, Finland, Norway, UK, Czech Republic and Latvia, have developed a multilingual computer-based tool. This tool can be easily used in the field of national and international youth work to inform and teach young people about issues such as discrimination, racism, and xenophobia. ARCTOS (the anti-racism tools in sport)³⁸ is a transnational EU multimedia-learning tool to fight against discrimination and racism in sport.

Project Description

The ARCTOS project consists of an interactive multimedia-learning tool that is comprised of a handbook and 10 video-clips, which can be used to educate young leaders and coaches – mostly volunteers - as well as for everyday use by youth workers to raise awareness about discriminating situations.

³⁶ Annual Report 2007 – 2008 [<http://www.corrymeela.org/uploads/docs/Corrymeela%20Annual%20Report%20AW.pdf>]

³⁷ <http://www.youth-sport.net/>

³⁸ <http://www.youth-sport.net/index.php?id=5340>

The different situations of discriminations presented in the videos of the tool are not supplying training on argumentative techniques to solve a problem, but provide the viewers with ‘food for thought’ and approaches to solve the situation by themselves. The target group of ARCTOS include youth leaders, trainers (volunteers and staff from sport clubs and sport federations) and youth in sport and international events. The topics of the video clips are discrimination, exclusion and bullying.

Illustrative sport training- and instruction situations that were inspired by practical and everyday life are represented in the video clips. A team of volunteer youth sport coaches from seven countries elaborated these situations. The results served as the basis for the shooting of short non-verbal video clips by the youth section of the Austrian Federal Alliance of Sport in cooperation with Metz-Video. The discriminated people in the clips are shown in green, with the green symbolising discrimination due to handicap, origin or colour.

ARCTOS clips seek to help trainers who watch the situations to learn how to recognise discriminating acts and reflect upon them, especially regarding how short- or long term interventions can be undertaken. The proposals, ideas and hints on how a trainer should react in specific situations are suggestions because the actual specific course of action is dependent on various factors. They are determined and influenced by the quality of the relationship the trainer entertains with his/her group, by the individual qualities of strength or weakness of the trainer, by his/her acknowledged status, the relations to his/her colleagues and other agents or actors (e.g. parents). Other important factors which might influence possible reactions and interventions are the institutional context and the age of the children or youth of the groups.

These are some of the questions that might arise:

- ➔ What are the “offenders” thinking?
- ➔ How might the “victim” feel?
- ➔ How would you react as a trainer?
- ➔ What kind of fears would you have as a teacher?
- ➔ Which demands and claims do you put to yourself?
- ➔ What do you wish to achieve?

These kinds of questions, which are in every clip, should help to clarify and aid personal reflection upon the specific theme of the clip. The background information and hints offer some theoretical information as well as ideas, which can and should be adapted and developed by the trainer, the group, and the working environment. Moreover, the clips and the accompanying references can be used as basis for a workshop for a group of young people.

Funding

The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Woman and Youth funded the ARCTOS project, in the framework of the Children and Youth Federal Plan.

Project Outcomes

ARCTOS enhanced the cooperation and anti-discrimination work in sports among the sport organisations involved in the project.

ENGSO Youth acts as a coordinating organisation and disseminates the good practices in anti-discrimination work within sports organisations and others. The main challenge of the project is to **enhance intercultural competences through anti-racism work by the means of a multimedia-tool.**

According to the evaluation by ENGSO Youth, the trainers were sensitised for discriminative situations. Moreover, the ARCTOS workshop facilitators received very positive feedback regarding the tool.

Good Practice components

The good practice components are:

- The computer-based methodology;
- The widely linked network of sport organisations in different European countries working against discrimination;
- Addressing questions to young people related to social and cultural diversity using an interactive tool with the aim of reaching a more tolerant and respectful attitude in sport, as well as a positive attitude towards diversity and intercultural society;
- ARCTOS is a language friendly tool that can be adapted to many different social and cultural environments, as it does not use verbal language; it communicates the message through images and can be easily translated into different cultures.

WS III – Through Volunteering Promoting Participation and Integration of Migrants and Refugees: an English and a Belgian Perspective

1) *Out and About in Leeds: promoting good relations among refugees and local community.*

Presented by Anita Prosser and Clifford Davey, BTCV³⁹, England – UK



Background and objectives of the project

The project *Out and About in Leeds: promoting good relations among refugees and local community* was set up because there was a need for action in Leeds regarding refugees and asylum seekers. In 2005 Leeds was one of the cities with the greatest number of asylum seekers (2,000 during the summer of 2005).

The organisers of the project believed that nature offers a great opportunity for people to express common values and identity. People

of all cultures can be brought together, through simple activities such as growing and harvesting food, creating and looking after gardens and green spaces. These activities are enjoyable, purposeful and productive, creating stronger social bonds, as well as better local places for people to enjoy. Moreover, refugees and asylum seekers value activities that provide ‘time-out’ from the pressures of their situation, greatly appreciating the occasions when they are welcomed, respected and given hospitality by others.

A good network of support organisations was in place, which facilitated the recruitment and the setup of the project. The project responded to the “diversity” theme of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)’s strategic plan, and support from the Leeds City Council was granted.

Project Description

The project *Out and About in Leeds: promoting good relations among refugees and local community* sought to create bonds between the refugee and the local community through the development of activities related to nature and its protection.

³⁹ British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

The project focused on giving refugees and asylum seekers an opportunity to learn about and enjoy their new environment, enabling them to become integrated within the local community. The local community had the chance to meet the newcomers, which contributed to the promotion of good relations between both the local community and the refugees and asylum seekers through **work on community gardens and allotments, supplemented by walks and visits to local gardens and the countryside.**

The project contemplated activities such as: the recruitment and training of leaders, conducting city orientation and park walks from both the local and refugee and asylum seekers communities; the setting up of a weekly programme of local, city centre, park and countryside walking activities; the development of a programme of practical and educational environmental activities to meet the needs and aspirations of both communities – these activities included community gardening and conservation; work with other organisations which support refugees and asylum seekers in Leeds.

Funding

The project has been funded by the United Kingdom Home Office, Immigration and Nationality Directorate and the Leeds City Council.

Project Outcomes

Through the project implementation, BTCV and its partners realised that the developed activities **constituted an instrument to achieve greater integration and cohesion, as well as active citizenship.** Intercultural dialogue has been fostered through the development of awareness and enhancement of values such as peace, tolerance and mutual respect. Participants had the opportunity to develop their personal and social skills and to improve mutual understanding.

To sum up, the key outcomes of the project were: the build up of a community spirit, the informal learning of the English language through group dynamics, the supply of physical and mental health, the benefits of outdoor exercise in a social setting; the gaining of confidence “to move on”; both for refugees/asylum seekers and for the disadvantaged settled communities; the gardening at a neutral place that can be shared by people from settled and newly arrived communities, as they added value to the humanitarian work of other agencies active in the protection of asylum seekers.

Good Practice components

The project proved to be successful because the **human connection with green spaces (nature) is universal and can bring people together.** Working as a **team of volunteers** towards the same goal **created strong social bonds among participants and enhanced friendship.** The improvement of natural sites helped to achieve a sense of belonging, community ownership and local heritage.

The fact that it was a project for and with volunteers contributed to the creation of an informal environment, allowing refugees/asylum seekers to feel included and welcomed – this contrasts with their normal interaction with people and state agencies, which is normally very formal and bureaucratic.

All staff involved in the project were aware of the different religious beliefs and habits – these considerations were made when setting up the week and annual programme of activities (e.g. the needs of Muslim believers). Refugees and asylum seekers face many pressures in their lives, thus the regular attendance of an activity session does not necessarily fit in well with such challenges. To face this circumstance, the organisers were recruiting volunteer leaders on an ongoing and permanent basis. To ensure attendance, staff were actively encouraging people to participate - potential volunteers needed to be contacted just before the activity was taking place (e.g. the day before and on the morning).

The project’s success is underpinned by three factors:

- Shared values: the love of nature and care for the environment is “hard wired” into human beings. Our connection with the land and with green spaces is part of our common humanity, and basic environmental values can bring people together across racial, religious and cultural divisions;
- Shared activities: environmental volunteering encompasses a range of outdoor and practical activities that are best carried out by teams of people working together. These practical projects do not just appeal to nature lovers – people who are looking for friends and companionship, people hoping to gain language and practical skills, people looking for a sense of purpose and self-worth all have something to gain from the open access, team-based opportunities. At the end of each project, the group of volunteers has made a visible difference to their local environment, and so can also share a moment of celebration, and feel good about their combined achievement;
- Shared places: the BTCV owns no land, so most of its projects are carried out on sites that are publicly owned and/or publicly accessible. Volunteers working on these sites were therefore acting for the benefit of the community and are doing so in a very visible way. Community ownership and control of local green spaces is vital to a sense of belonging. It also contributes to the creation, through voluntary effort, of a valued local resource and, over time, to developing local heritage and a shared history.

2) “Talent on Wheels”: through volunteering to get people to participate in society and to develop competences.

Presented by Heidi Zwaenepoel, Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen Stad⁴⁰, Belgium

Background and objectives of the project

Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen Stad, henceforth SAS organises community work in disadvantaged areas of Antwerp. The projects developed by SAS seek to empower groups living in these areas, stimulating them to participate in society addressing common needs and how people experience them. Having these aims in mind, the principles of equal chances and of peaceful cohabitation in diversity as well as the total percentage of migrant population leaving in Antwerp (27.9%), **Talent on Wheels** looked at different aspects of community life, such as diversity, isolation, feeling of insecurity, no mixed society and tried to address them through volunteering.

Project Description

Talent on Wheels was a community development project focused on people living in the same neighbourhood, but not having the chance to have a contact with one another. Thus, the idea was to stimulate relations through common voluntary activities, bringing people together on the basis of their similarities, making it easier to address their differences.

The project Talent on Wheels worked as a local agency for volunteers, matching the profile of volunteers with local organisations active in the field of the specific interest of the volunteer.

The project was looking for people with competences, talents and ambitions. The focus has been on what each person wanted to do, enhancing personal empowerment, developing competences, learning about the work of an organisation, gaining new experiences and meeting new people.

The project involved a wide array of activities. It mainly focused on: the promotion of volunteering for disadvantaged groups; searching for people with skills who live in disadvantaged situations; mapping the local organisations where volunteers can work; bringing the candidates to volunteer and potential hosting organisations into contact; developing projects in SAS and in

⁴⁰ Community Development Work Antwerp

other organisations in which volunteers can participate - contributing their competences and defining projects that are modelled to their needs; providing support to volunteers.

In practice, SAS was actively looking for people in disadvantaged situation. It did this through the establishment of contacts in the street, visiting their homes and the Dutch language courses, the neighbourhood house and the food distribution organisations for poor people. SAS asked people about their talents and ambitions. Regarding the local organisations, SAS tried to figure out who was already working with volunteers and which organisations were willing to host (new) volunteers. SAS also approached organisations not yet working with volunteers but willing to do so.

The focus has been on matching the volunteer with the most adequate organisation, taking into consideration the content of the volunteer placement, the support that the organisation could provide to the volunteer, the possibilities to meet new people and how far the volunteer placement would fit the expectations and competences of the volunteer.

Concretely, volunteers have been involved in activities such as: giving a cooking workshop in the municipal library; talking part in a conversation group during the Dutch course; acting as a gardening coach in a garden project; helping in the nursery; introducing people to the names and rituals of African fabrics; visiting elderly people; helping in a day centre for disabled people.

Funding

Talent on Wheels was a community development project financed by the Flemish government, through the structural funding that SAS receives from this governmental structure.

Project Outcomes

On the one hand, people living in disadvantaged situations experience the benefits of volunteering once they work as a volunteer. The biggest challenge is to stimulate them to “give it a try”. On the other hand, it is not easy to find volunteer placements for disadvantaged groups, because volunteer involving organisations often search for “super-volunteers”. However, **Talents on Wheels** have shown that if both parties are willing to find solutions there are lots of possibilities e.g. organisation of activities that are more tailored to the interests of the target group in for example, the municipal library and the cultural centre.

Once people started volunteering and keep on doing it for a while, they gain a larger social network and more self-confidence. Self-confidence is a very **important feature of intercultural dialogue** (e.g. to dare to speak Dutch, feeling good about themselves). **People from minority groups that volunteer are ambassadors of their communities**, feel empowered as individuals and as representatives of a culture.

In general, the project has achieved the following results: the widening of the social network, a development of solidarity bounds, the enhancement of learning possibilities, the improvement of self-confidence and the appreciation and support for the involved volunteers.

Good Practice components

The presenter of the workshop highlighted some good practice components of the project. Talent on Wheels looks at the competences people already have and offers them the possibilities to do things using these competences, thus enabling them to play a **positive and rewarding role** in society. At the same time, the problems faced by these people are not ignored and they are provided with the necessary support to enhance self-confidence and intercultural competences.

Moreover, the project organisers are in a close and personal contact with the candidates for volunteering, giving them the possibilities to meet in different ways, participating in activities, undergoing different kinds of volunteer experiences. In return, the organisations that involve volunteers and their staff are supported to find the right placement for the volunteer within their structure and their activities.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conference “Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue” provided a space for exchange of good practices and facilitated discussions in the field of volunteering and intercultural dialogue. On the basis of the discussions and underlying questions the following conclusions can be drawn:

- A. *Volunteering can foster intercultural dialogue*** in as much as it puts intercultural dialogue into practice, so that volunteering can be a tool for intercultural dialogue. There is a need to address various challenges such as how to launch projects and programmes addressing an intercultural population, how to build bonds of trust and how to engage and empower deprived communities. The participants at the conference identified the need to mainstream intercultural awareness in training and management of volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and communities, as well as to clarify the meaning of volunteering and intercultural dialogue, as these concepts may refer to different aspects for different nationalities and people.
- B. The *practical challenges faced by CSOs to become actors of intercultural dialogue*** identified by the participants at the conference include the cultural composition of the area where the work is taking place in a way that activities can be developed and matched to the demand of the specific social fabric, as well as the needs of the target group. At the same time, expectations need to be managed both from volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in the sense that volunteers are not super-heroes. Furthermore, a focus should be on fighting misunderstandings and prejudices and combating victimisation by bringing the use of the “other” to an end, by assembling people and overcoming the language barrier and the fear of cultural confrontation. Finally, the lack of financial support for organisations was another aspect identified as being a challenge to intercultural dialogue.
- C. Confronted with the question about what CSOs have done, or what it would need to do, in order to *deal with these challenges*** and involve volunteers from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds, the participants identified a number of aspects that should be addressed. These include: educating people and challenging stereotypes that exist in society, using simple language to speak with people, having a greater appreciation of people’s needs and combating barriers to deal with them, reaching the most marginalised groups, involving volunteers from different cultures through contact with mediators (e.g. leaders in the community) and seeking to create an atmosphere of tolerance and respect (“a safe space”). It is very important to target all members of the family using a holistic approach: women should be primarily targeted as they play a crucial role raising children and many social networks stay on them (e.g. family, school, social services). Another important aspect put forward is related to the fact that there is a need for CSOs to work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and by relying on local networks.

On the basis of these conclusions, the following recommendations can be put forward in relation to civil society organisations, governments and individuals.

D. The **civil society organisations** working in the field of Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue should:

- Put an emphasis on the promotion of a culture of tolerance vis-à-vis cultural diversity. This requires an internal reflection on the part of the organisation on the objectives and the means necessary to put intercultural dialogue in place (e.g. code of good practices);
- Take into consideration the **specificities** of the area where the project takes place and the target group (culture, age, gender, language, religious rituals) and assemble all members of the community. Projects/programmes should be designed in the region for the region, and should have in mind the needs of the region: **open process** programmes [development of an **“owned” programme**, driven by the participants, which meets their needs and is specific to their own environments]. Furthermore, **clear agreements and feasible tasks** will result in having more people from very diverse backgrounds willing to get involved;
- Develop projects and/or programmes that are based on the **same interests/passions**: art, environmental protection or rehabilitation and volunteering enable the creation of safe spaces and the building of trust. Bringing people together on the basis of their similarities, makes it easier to address their differences:
 - ➔ **art and creativity are tools that can be used against social isolation** – they facilitate access to cultural activities, and build bonds of tolerance and respect. They develop new skills and attitudes and create links between different cultures.
 - ➔ **nature** offers people the opportunity to express common values and identity, creating stronger bonds between them. Love of nature is a pillar of all the world’s cultures and religions, different groups can contribute through their own stories and traditions – thus, environmental action is a powerful force for cultural expression and community cohesion.

E. The **governments** supporting programmes and projects in the field of Volunteering and Intercultural Dialogue should:

- Promote volunteering as a factor in integration, social cohesion and solidarity when defining policies addressing intercultural dialogue at large;
- Provide more financial and logistical support to projects and programmes that bring all the participants together from the very beginning of the activities: facilitators/organisers and target group; intercultural/multicultural mediators; community leaders and local associations;
- As a general rule, secure funds for extended periods of time. Due to the fact that working with vulnerable groups, and on issues related to cultural diversity and dialogue, is very complex and time consuming, preference should be given to pluri-annual programmes and/or projects.

F. The **individuals** working for civil society organisations and the volunteers should:

- Work as a **team** towards the same goal, creating strong social bonds among the volunteers and staff of the organisation, as well as enhanced friendship;
- Be sensitised, supported and trained in their work with/for volunteers, while at the same time it is worth taking into account that tolerance to cultural diversity is rarely spontaneous – it is important to train and to help the volunteers to face the challenge of intercultural learning.

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APPENDIXES

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34	Estgen	Paul	Centre for Research on Immigration	Luxembourg

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37	Fichtl	Eric	Action Without Borders/Idealist.org	USA
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39	Fonovic	Ksenija	SPES	Italy
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43	Grotz	Patrick	Ministère de la Famille et l'Intégration	Luxembourg
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47	Henninger	Emmanuel	CIGS Archipel a.s.b.l. / Ile aux clowns	Luxembourg
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50	Hoste	Tuur	Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk	Belgium
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54	Jamsek	Primoz	Slovene Philanthropy	Slovenia
55	Jankovic	Natasa	ENGSO Youth	Serbia
56	Kamenko	Jelena	Volunteer Centre Osijek	Croatia
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60	Komjáthy	Zsuzsanna	Artemisszió Foundation	Hungary
61	Konvalinka	Michal	Inter - action	Luxembourg
62	Kurm	Kristina	Volunteer Development Estonia	Estonia
63	Kützinger	Jacques	Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration	Luxembourg
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65	Lassouani	Halba	CIGS Archipel a.s.b.l. / Ile aux clowns	Luxembourg
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70	Mamer	Robert	Agence du Bénévolat	Luxembourg

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76	Matthews	Nicky	VSO	UK
77	McGrath	Conor	The Corrymeela Community	UK
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79	McNeil	Mary	VC N Lanarkshire	UK
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91	Nussbaum	Mike	Volunteering England	UK
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93	Okereke	Nwadi	Volunteering England	UK
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Appendixes

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119	Steenbergen	Marijke	MOVISIE	The Netherlands
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121	Stracks	Jean	Fédération nationale des Corps de Sapeurs-Pompiers	Luxembourg
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123	Szabo	Susana	France Bénévolat	France
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126	Tiago dos Reis	Joana	Amitié Portugal-Luxembourg	Luxembourg
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128	Tóth	András	Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány	Hungary
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130	Tuniz	Davide	Centro Servizi Volontariato Novara	Italy
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133	Van Vaerenbergh	Katrien	Het Punt vzw	Belgium
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