

# Feature

## Young Volunteers Stand Up: Second Youth Convention on Volunteering Celebrate, Showcase, Attract, Involve, Discuss

By Jingqi Liu

Organized by the European Youth Forum (YFJ), the second Youth Convention on Volunteering took place in the European Parliament as well as the Esplanade of the European Parliament in Brussels, between 7-11 September.

As 2011 is both the European Year of Volunteering (EYV) and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10) from 2001, the convention celebrated volunteers through five days of conferences, seminars, workshops, concerts, art performances and exhibitions. It was the biggest civil society-organized event of EYV.

Around 800 young people from all 27 countries of the European Union (EU) and as well as participants from all over the globe, including more than 100 Chinese volunteers, took part in the convention. Approximately 80 youth organizations, local organizations and partners sent delegates. The Convention was also a flagship event for the EU-China Year of Youth and included activities and events organized by partners, institutions and European Youth Forum members.

A stakeholder conference took place from 7-8 September, creating a dialogue to discuss a 'Charter on the Rights of Volunteers' and develop a declaration on the rights of volunteers.

The main space was the Volunteering Village, an interactive space where volunteering organizations presented their work. Over 100 workshops, seminars, special events, information points or interactive stands on the theme of volunteering were organized by 45 European youth organizations and 35 local volunteering organizations and partners.

In 'Volunteer Bridge', a series of events and activities highlighted the contribution of participatory youth organizations to society as a whole. There were also discussions on youth volunteering in both EU and China.

Belgian and international youth bands performed in a three-day music festival for 5,000 visitors. Young traditional musicians from Europe and China delivered joint performances as well.

SEPTEMBER HAS BEEN A BIG MONTH FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR! BRACKETING THE YOUTH CONVENTION WAS THE 64TH DPI-NGO CONFERENCE ON 'SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES, RESPONSIVE CITIZENS' IN BONN, AND THE BUDAPEST GLOBAL VOLUNTEERING CONFERENCE.



Photo: European Youth Forum, 2011

### OBJECTIVES

- celebrate the work of young volunteers in youth organizations;
- showcase the role of youth organizations in volunteering;
- promote the European Charter for the rights of volunteers;
- attract and reach out to non-volunteers;
- involve young volunteers to act afterwards as multipliers;
- discuss good practices and international cooperation.

Global Volunteer Conference - 2011

15 - 17 September, 2011  
Budapest, Hungary

# News

## Through the eyes of children

### What is volunteerism through the eyes of children?

Over 200 children's drawings from about 20 countries have been received for the Children's Book Illustration (CBI) initiative, providing colourful answers to this question.

The CBI project was launched earlier this year by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme headquarters staff as a part of a celebration of volunteerism to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10). It aims at engaging children from ages 4 to 11 to draw or paint their ideas and associations around volunteerism, community participation, mutual support and so on.



To provide the children with some context and information on what is expected and meant by volunteerism, UN Volunteers, UNV Programme Officers, National UNV IYV+10 Coordinators and other partners have designed a variety of programmes. Different activities were designed according to the reality of the participating countries and organization, covering various thematic areas.

Humanitarian aid, environmental protection, community service, and many other topics have been depicted through the children's daily encounters. Frequently appearing themes are also the

volunteers and organizations that kids have interacted with.

Through games with volunteers and social workers, children from Kathmandu Community Centre for Refugees in Nepal reflected their own lives and felt empowered as volunteers inspired them to be creative.

In Haiti, one CBI project activity involving 120 school kids was combined with International Environment Day on 5 June. Environmental issues were touched through workshops organized by 35 volunteers from UN agencies, MINUSTAH, a Haitian NGO 'Terre des Jeunes' and the French NGO, 'France Volontaries'.

"We managed to get important messages while playing with them," said Samah Walter, a volunteer from Civil Affairs of MINUSTAH. He said not only the students but also the entire community would benefit. "Children will get the message to their families and neighbours."

Selected work will be compiled and published in the form of an online book and virtual gallery, which could be published on social media pages, IYV+10 websites and other electronic platforms.

"It is not a competition", said Maria Elena Sanchez, the coordinator of the CBI initiative at UNV. "The best thing is the initiative can be duplicated on local levels and spread the idea of volunteerism." She expressed special thanks to the UNV National IYV+10 Coordinators who have played an important role to drive the project in different countries.

A small scale exhibition at UNV headquarters is planned in October

## Breathe Energy into the Third Sector

China's first private-CSO cross-sectoral cooperation, ICT Professional Volunteering Alliance, was formally launched by six companies and non-government organizations (NGOs), at Intel China on 28 June.

The initiative aims at enhancing cooperation to develop the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) through volunteerism.

The focus of the programme will be on harnessing the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) to boost organisational capacity for social development. Intel China, Ericsson China, Baidu, Huizeren, Youchange China Social Entrepreneur Foundation, and BSR are part of the ICT Professional Volunteering Alliance. With the slogan "Breathe Energy into the Third Sector", the alliance will provide capacity building training, professional technical support and organizational development consultation to NGOs and CSOs.

The services will focus on capacity building by both corporate volunteers and individual volunteers. It also provides capacity building and networking opportunities for volunteers through a "Volunteer Club". It is an innovative model of Private Sector-NGO cooperation through volunteer service.

The general secretary of the Alliance, Ms. Yan Zhai, has invited more organizations and professionals to participate in marking of IYV+10 in China and to join ICT Volunteering Alliance to promote volunteerism in the country.



Photo: UNV, 2011

to engage the staff and their children. In the spirit of children reaching out to other children, a fundraising event showcasing a selection of illustrations is also intended to raise funds to support the children of the Mukuru slums in Nairobi, through Neema International e.V., an NGO based in Bonn.

## Feature

# IYV+10 National Coordinators

Meet a couple of our IYV+10 National Coordinators from around the world, as they share their experiences and stories in making this important year a success.

**Name:** Kumar Khadka

**Age:** 29

**Country:** Nepal

I previously served as a social worker and also completed a 15-month course on 'Community Development'. I also give support and assistance to a number of vulnerable children. Since 2002, I have been organizing International Volunteer Day (IVD) celebrations. In the efforts to mark IYV+10, my experiences and services are my 'life passion', more than merely 'just a job'.

We have organized a couple of programmes and events with different stakeholders to mark IYV+10. I've established an IYV+10 website, Facebook and Twitter page for Nepal. I also designed and revived the UNV Nepal newsletter. I coordinate and communicate with most of the volunteering stakeholders and media for the implementation of each and every activity listed.

The first and foremost IYV+10 achievement in Nepal is the 'National Steering Committee for Volunteerism Nepal (NSCVN)'. Another major development is a concrete multi-stakeholder national Plan of Action (PoA) to mark IYV+10. As a recent development, the National Planning Commission of Nepal is drafting a 'National Volunteer Mobilization Policy' and it is also restructuring the Government of Nepal volunteer mobilization agency, the 'National

Development Volunteer Service (NDVS)'. We are also in a very close consultation with the team of national and international stakeholders including NGOs and civil society to establish a 'National Volunteer Alliance' in Nepal.

**Name:** Heba Nosseir

**Age:** 28

**Country:** Egypt

I believe that in volunteerism resides great potential that might solve some of the developmental challenges my country faces. On 25 January 2011, my country witnessed a great revolution. One of the significant incidents during the revolution was how Egyptians grouped together, providing and supporting services, cleaning the streets, protecting utilities, helping alleviate traffic problems and maintaining security, all as spontaneous volunteers. This amazing scene gave me a strong push to have my 'self-revolution' and to quit my work to join what I have always believed in.

For me, IYV+10 was the opportunity I have been searching for. It is an opportunity that makes the sky your limit. I have been overwhelmed by my job as the UNV National Coordinator of IYV+10 - I am thinking of it every day and night, inside and outside the office. I am not only obsessed by the cause I am working for, but I am also touched by the people working in the field, who are always offering

their unconditional generosity and support. It's a blessing you will never find elsewhere. I would like to thank all the Egyptian people for believing in what they are doing and for being so helpful.



### Valuing Volunteering

Organized by the International FORUM on Development Service (FORUM) and VSO Jitolee, this year's annual International Volunteer Cooperation Organizations (IVCO) conference will take place in Mombasa, Kenya, from 9-12 October.

The theme for IVCO 2011 is 'Valuing Volunteering'. Presentations by African social innovators, FORUM member countries and African partners will be held. Discussions will focus on two emerging issues: the value of volunteering and the state of youth volunteering. Innovative approaches in volunteerism and its value to national development will be explored with a special focus on Africa while drawing lessons from other parts of the world.

**For more details, see:**

<http://www.vsojitolee.org/ivco2011/ivco-2011/> and <http://forum-ids.org/conferences/ivco/2011-ivco>.

# Volunteering together, changing the world

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## The Global Volunteer Conference in Budapest

The Global Volunteer Conference (GVC) has gone through the final preparation stage before about 200 leaders from different volunteering related sectors convene from 15 to 17 September in Budapest. Organized by joint efforts of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), GVC is one of the first global conferences on volunteerism with high level participants. Till now, confirmed participants include governments, international organisations, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), private sectors and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

Through plenary sessions and associated roundtables, the three-day conference is covering topics related to sustainable development and MDGs, volunteering in emergencies and recovery, and an enabling environment for volunteering.

Speeches are being delivered by officials and representatives from national and international volunteer organizations. Confirmed speakers include Judy Cheng-Hopkins, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peace Building, and Marian Harkins, Member of the European Parliament. Speakers from CSOs are sharing their experience and perspectives on different panel themes. For instance, Edouard Tschan from IFRC Haiti are giving a speech during the plenary on volunteerism for disasters.

Policy level recommendations for governments, corporate and civil society organisations relating to the panel themes are expected to be carried out from the discussions.

The GVC is concluding with a joint declaration on volunteering for sustainable future. It will be used by different organizations, as well as for discussion by the UN General Assembly in December.

### DAY 1/THEME I: VOLUNTEERING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)

Participants are engaged in discussions reflecting on progress towards the MDGs, people-centred approaches to address climate change as well as volunteering and human social development beyond 2015.

### DAY 2/THEME II: VOLUNTEERING IN CRISIS AND RECOVERY

The effectiveness of current volunteer management systems and emergency situations are being critically examined. Discussions are centred on harnessing the full potential of community action and volunteering for peace building and reconciliation in conflict and crisis settings.

### DAY 3/THEME III: PROMOTING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEERING

The day's sessions are focused on exploring the ways how states, citizens, private sectors and volunteering organizations can adapt to the changing world, with shifting demographics, social, economic and technical developments.

### UNDPI-NGO CONFERENCE 'SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES: RESPONSIVE CITIZENS' DECLARED "SUCCESS"

Bonn, Germany: More than 1,400 people gathered in Bonn, Germany, from 3 to 5 September for the United Nations Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization Annual Conference, which revolved around the theme of "Sustainable Societies, Responsive Citizens."

Grassroots representatives from 460 different NGOs in over 70 countries shared best practices, displayed their efforts in an exhibition hall, and compiled documents that will be integrated into next year's Rio+20, the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

Flavia Pansieri, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme explained the importance of this Conference. "Achieving sustainable development is not just the job of governments and the United Nations. Sustainable societies need responsive citizens – people who rise to the challenge, who take action of their own free will, and work towards a better and brighter future for everyone around them."

For more information and photos from the 64th DPI/NGO Conference visit <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ngoconference>

## Acknowledgements

With special thanks and appreciation to the design team (Felipe Leon, Mario Andrés Castro, Raquel Montejano, María Cruz Simón, Helen Lung), CIDA, the European Commission, the Governments of Germany and Japan, and White Helmets Argentina for their continued support for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers.