



**Cultural Diversity and  
Voluntary service:**  
International solidarity or  
diversity consumption?

4 - 10 April 2006  
INEX sda Kostelecké Horky,  
Czech Republic



CCIVS

**Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service**



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## Introduction

From the 4<sup>th</sup> until the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, CCIVS organised a seminar on **approaches to Cultural Diversity in international voluntary workcamps**.

The seminar aimed at fostering the intercultural competence and knowledge about relevant methodologies for the organisers and coordinators of international voluntary workcamps. The aim of the seminar was to help the stakeholders of voluntary service projects to fully use the potential of learning of the international workcamp as a laboratory and microcosm for an experience of living together. The idea was to influence the world vision of the volunteers participating in a voluntary service project through an appropriate frame for learning during the project. During the seminar the concept of cultural diversity was introduced as a choice for the everyday life beyond the festive and folkloric celebrations of difference on the one hand or its limitation to the issue of racism and discrimination on the other. Much stress was put on the vision of **culture as a dynamic concept subject to multiple influences over the course of time**. The inter-relatedness of the various aspects of culture from the individual level to the one of the nation-state was also explored.

Issues such as multiple or hybrid identities and the sense of belonging, the role of stereotypes, dimensions of conflict and ways of looking at culture as the result of multiple influences, were addressed through various exercises and sessions. In addition some theoretic inputs were given to introduce the notion of cultural diversity as laid out by UNESCO (especially in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity), the notion of “bridge beings” as introduced by Amin Maalouf, and other concepts. A module with exercises that can be used during workcamps was proposed and reviewed.



## Programme

	Tue Apr 4	Wed Apr 5	Thur Apr 6	Fri Apr 7	Sat Apr 8	Sun Apr 9	Mon Apr 10	
8:00-9:00	Arrival	<i>Breakfast</i>						Departure
9:00 – 10:45		-The suitcase Fears and expectations -Introduction seminar -The seminar declaration	Discussing a trigger for intercultural awareness	Clash of civilizations/ multiple identities	Introduce the org's and their trainings methods	-De-brief editing team -follow up ideas -Identify lab workcamps		
10:45 - 11:00		<i>Coffee break</i>						
11:00 – 12:30		- <i>blindfolded walking</i> -introduction in the approach of CCIVS to cultural diversity -introduction of the module and the editing team	Identity  <i>The personal onion</i>	Continue Stop at 12 for excursion	-training and evaluation in our org's -follow up ideas? Other ideas for a session?	Plan of action		
12:30 - 14:00		<i>Lunch</i>						
14:00 – 15:30		<b>Stereotypes</b> Stereodrawing and confronting our stereotypes	<b>Game on values (choosing rights in balloons)</b>	<b>-Excursion to Letohrad, Caritas house</b>	<b>-Easter habits in the blue house 14.00 – 15.00</b> <b>-Debrief of morning session in plenary</b>	<b>Final evaluation</b> <i>-back to our suitcase</i> <i>-the green hot chair</i> -individual filling out of evaluation sheet		
15:30 16:00 Break		<b>De-brief after coffee break</b>						
16:00 – 18:30								
18:30 20:00		<i>Dinner</i>						
20:00 - -		-name games <i>-the declaration game</i>	<b>-Meeting editing team</b> <b>-presentation of organisations (vernissage)</b>	<b>-meeting editing team</b> <b>-Mid term evaluation</b> <b>-projection of different films of organisations</b>	<b>Local bands festival and local pub</b>	<b>-meeting editing teams</b> <b>-party evening</b>		

## Day to day report

### Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April

#### Getting to know each other

On the first day, most of the participants arrived before 20 o'clock. As a way to get to know each other, people were asked to interview someone else. During the interview they had to draw the other person's head and any particular aspects on a balloon that was hung on strings on the ceiling. The middle was represented as the Czech Republic and the strings were lines to the North, East, West and South. Afterwards, the balloons were presented by the ones that had drawn them. In this way, people got to know about the other's names, occupations, hobbies and other aspects like from what organisation she or he came from and why she or he was at the seminar.

#### The seminar declaration

After that, the group was divided into seven and they were all asked to be researchers and find out the answers to the following questions:

Do you like a hot shower? (78% yes, 11% no)

Do you like playing games? (yes)

Are there stupid questions? (82% yes)

Do you like to wait for someone? (100% no)

Do you like discussion? (men: 100%, women 90%)

Do you care about being interrupted by someone? (33,33% yes, 33,33% no, 33,33% depends)

How many hours of sleep do you need? (women: 8.1 hours, men: 6.66 hours)

As can already be seen from the answers stated here, the research methods were quite advanced (as can be seen in the numbers behind the comma), in some cases.

During the debrief it became clear that this was an exercise to set the rules during the seminar. It was transformed into a 'Seminar Declaration on Participant's Common Rights and Duties', which was accepted and signed the next day and can be found in the Annexes.

### Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April

#### Fears and expectations

After breakfast on the first morning, Maloe welcomed the group and did another quick round of introduction.

Then, to find out what were the fears and expectations and possible contributions of the participants, people were asked to write them on post-its and stick them on the 'suitcase' under the respective categories on the wall.



This was what was written on the different post-its:

<b>Expectations:</b>	<b>Fears</b>	<b>Contributions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Implementing cultural diversity in workcamps</li> <li>-Learn from each other</li> <li>-Getting to know each other and each others cultures</li> <li>-to get a new experience, finding ways of dealing with cultural diversity in voluntary workcamps, learn how to escape cultural diversity questions in workcamps, finding new friends, having a great time</li> <li>-information and other ways of thinking</li> <li>-friendship, love, great time</li> <li>-new methods / activities which I can use in future trainings / workcamps</li> <li>-new ideas for everyone, fun</li> <li>-some concrete material to work on intercultural learning</li> <li>-new ideas, different points of view, a lot of good discussions, nice time</li> <li>-some answers / ideas on why people think in stereotypes / about identification (with countries)</li> <li>-to produce some outcome and not only to discuss and have a nice time</li> <li>-to learn about new cultures</li> <li>-to have fun and to learn</li> <li>-to experience how to create the feeling of unity and warmness nevertheless the differences between cultures</li> <li>-to get to know each other and the real meaning of diversity</li> <li>-meet new people and interesting discussions</li> <li>-learning about other cultures, contacting different organisations and new friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To be bored</li> <li>-To be excluded</li> <li>-Not to get a concrete result and follow up not being implemented</li> <li>-not to learn during the seminar, getting bored, feeling excluded</li> <li>-misunderstanding</li> <li>-the unknown and the long journey home</li> <li>-to be confused and staying without answer</li> <li>-not being able to express my thoughts</li> <li>-wasting time and not finding the answers</li> <li>-no food</li> <li>-misunderstanding because of language and culture and cold weather</li> <li>-not being able to transmit my ideas properly, tiredness and not enough fun</li> <li>-to many ICL activities that I have tried before or which I have tried to use</li> <li>-having the seminar stay in our minds as only a nice memory and nothing happening afterwards</li> <li>-not enough time to go deeper into the subject</li> <li>-getting bored</li> <li>-not being able to fulfil my expectations</li> <li>-misunderstanding because of language and / or cultural differences</li> <li>-that I will not be able to connect with the group and that the content of the seminar will not be as good as I expect it to be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My energy</li> <li>My intercultural sensitivity</li> <li>Fun</li> <li>-my experience, my energy, my enthusiasm</li> <li>-having fun</li> <li>-evening amusement with our band</li> <li>-taking active part in the seminar and to realise this knowledge in practice afterwards</li> <li>-knowledge of group dynamics</li> <li>-experience / games</li> <li>-to take part actively</li> <li>-creative ideas and no fear</li> <li>-my energy and being active</li> <li>-to give you more information about my NGO, my country and culture, as far as I am able to</li> <li>-my experience as trainer and campleader and experience of intercultural learning</li> <li>-sharing my experience in voluntary service and intercultural learning</li> <li>-big experience of intercultural communication, good mood and communication</li> <li>-workcamp experience</li> <li>-knowledge of African cultures</li> </ul>

After that, we went to the other room for an introduction into the seminar and the methods to be used.

## Introduction to the seminar

Simona introduced the background of the seminar. The seminar was organised by CCIVS in collaboration with INEX sda. She started by explaining CCIVS' structure.

CCIVS is the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service. It was created in 1948 under the aegis of UNESCO and has member organisations all around the world that organise international voluntary workcamps.

The objectives of CCIVS are related to the promotion and development of the voluntary service movement on national, regional and international levels in the contemporary world.

CCIVS aims to achieve:

- The propagation and development of the aims of voluntary service,
- the promotion and development of relations and co-operation with other voluntary service organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs on a broad political, religious and social spectrum,
- the liaison with inter-governmental agencies in general and UNESCO in particular

## The idea of the seminar

The idea of the seminar was to propose CCIVS' approach of cultural diversity, to discuss it and to see how it can be promoted within workcamps. The hypothesis exposed was that culture is often presented and compared in national or regional categories: "the French", "the Africans", "the Egyptians" etc.... A lot of material about intercultural learning compares supposed characteristics of groups of people on a regional level (e.g. Hall or Hofstede).

The challenge that CCIVS would like to introduce or underline in the work of its members is to insist on the dynamic nature of culture (it changes all the time) and on the fact that it is always the result of different influences whether it be on the level of the culture of an individual, any group or on a regional perspective. The keywords to understand CCIVS' approach to culture are therefore: **dynamic and multiple** as opposed to static and homogeneous.

Aspects that must be examined to better understand this approach are therefore

- the multiplicity of influences on culture over time (looking at roots in music, recipes, language, names of people and places, plastic arts, traditions, habits etc)
- the role of stereotypes to simplify and interpret reality and the danger of applying them to a given individual
- the role of identity and belonging: Human beings are part of different groups that influence different parts of their identity. It is formed over time by experience, alliances and a sense of belonging but also by the image others impose on an individual. It is crucial to highlight that identities are multiple and dynamic, that people are not obliged to live in homogeneous boxes
- the role of values, the question of the universality of the human condition. How to reconcile a universal approach with respect and recognition for difference.

Simona stressed that according to her the challenge of changing people's vision of culture went much beyond the challenge of organising a successful workcamp in which everyone has opened his/her vision. For her it was absolutely crucial to search for ways to leave the rhetoric of a clash of civilizations, where different cultures are presented as incompatible, differences exacerbated and cross-influences denied. For her a lot of the recent conflicts and riots in the Muslim World or in Western Europe were linked to this kind of world vision. (Among other examples she referred to the Danish cartoon crisis, which had taken place just a few months before the seminar). She underlined the responsibility of the global web of voluntary service organisations to engage in a fruitful dialogue, which recognises differences while highlighting the extreme inter-connectedness of people and cultures.

She stressed that according to her many conflicts were the result of the fact that people had “to take sides” in terms of their identity and that they had the impression to necessarily betray one part of their identity depending on the side they would take: to be only French or only Arab / African (like for some of the young people in France of second or third generation immigrants who have difficulties to integrate in or are rejected by the mainstream society); to be only Hutu or Tutsi, to be only Christian, Jewish or Muslim; to be only Bosnian or Serb, to be only an educated urban student or a villager etc. Reduction on one part of identity is dangerous and designates the potential “other” very clearly. It is an easy way to find strength in the group rather than finding strength in one’s own diversity. The idea was thus not to dilute the individual in a multiplicity of influences in order to uproot him/her but rather to strengthen his/her identity while accepting all the strands of his or her roots and all the “branches” of the tree developed over time to remain in the picture.

Then, Simona showed the result of the declaration game we did the evening before (see also the annex). Nobody objected or added anything and everyone present signed.

### **When you have to trust someone...**

After the coffee break, a game was done in which the participants were discovering the house blindfolded. The aim of this exercise was to create a level of trust amongst the participants.

The group was divided into couples of which one was blindfolded. During five minutes, the other was leading this person around with by using only the tips of his or her fingers. After five minutes, the roles were changed and the other took the lead.

These were some of the comments that were made during the debrief:

- very good,
- very comfortable, I had trust to my partner,
- guiding someone is more difficult than to be guided,
- when you are blind, you do not care, just wait where the other will lead you,
- communication with hands was good, we invented the signals,
- it was better to lead than to be lead,
- I felt safer and safer,
- five minutes seemed like half and hour when I was blind, to guide was much faster,
- different types of leading – one or two hands holding,
- putting more stress on other senses.

The conclusion was that you have to adapt to the new reality, invent a new system and trust someone who you cannot see.

After this exercise Simona gave an introduction into CCIVS’ approach to cultural diversity (see the PowerPoint presentation in the annex). She gave an overview of different events in the last 100 years that inspired CCIVS to come to its own approach to cultural diversity.

The presentation provoked a short discussion on how to organise workcamps in regions where there is a more delicate position between different groups of people. Essam pointed out that the situation in the Middle East is very delicate and was wondering how Workcamps could be used there. Simona said that the key element was to change the vision of the volunteers and to leave the rhetoric of opposed groups. Dines mentioned that his organisation had always wanted to focus on the Middle East, but that funding had come in only since the cartoon crisis provoked extreme rhetoric in the Western and Muslim world.

Simona mentioned that Cultural pluralism was presented as the policy answer to the recognition of multiple and plural identities.

A lot of trainers use the expression ICL – it is used as if it was a method. But what in fact are the different organizations transmitting by their methods when speaking about ICL?

### The module on cultural diversity

After this presentation, Maloe introduced the module and the idea of an editing team through a short presentation (see also the PowerPoint presentation in the annex). She explained that the idea of the module was to help workcamp leaders in promoting intercultural learning in international voluntary workcamps by giving them tools to 'open up' the minds of the participants. The tools are gathered in the module in the form of a comprehensible explanation of various theories on cultural diversity, a link of these theories with workcamp practice and exercises to promote intercultural learning.

During the seminar, an editing team of two different people per session would write down the ideas that came out of the sessions as a link of theories with workcamp practice. With this material, the module is going to be rewritten in the CCIVS secretariat and it will be turned into a CD-Rom publication that will be distributed under CCIVS member-organisations in autumn 2006.

### Stereotypes

With a game, the group was divided into small groups of 3 or 4 persons. An exercise from the module called *Stereodrawing* was done. Each group had to draw a stereotypical African, Arab, Asian, Eastern European, Western European and a Latin American. Each member of the group drew a part of the body of the respective character. Afterwards, the pictures were hung on the wall so that they could be compared. Then, another exercise was done (called *confronting our stereotypes* in the module). The same groups had to find as many stereotypes of given characters as they could think of. The aim of these two exercises was to redirect the attention of the participants at the subject of stereotypes and to create an open space to freely express our own stereotypes.



After the coffee break, the following questions were discussed in the same groups: What are stereotypes and what is their role? What can the exercises we just have done be used for?

Presentations of the group's results in plenary:

1

Stereotypes are fixed ideas that should be broken.

We are using stereotypes to simplify. They are thus not always negative. Sometimes they are useful, because they can provide a starting point into understanding others.

Stereotypes have a historical background.

2

Stereotypes are a fact in our life and can be good and bad.

They are a result of lack of information, they live in us.

3

Stereotypes are part of the human way of dealing with unknown (you need to start from somewhere)

A workcamp leader should know that stereotypes exist and most probably in the group itself as well.

A workcamp can be a “garden” for stereotypes, which is a big risk.

4

Stereotypes are given to us as tools

They come out of a fear of the unknown and self-defence.

With stereotypes, it is easier to start relationships.

Prejudices can make us think we are better or worse than someone else.

There exist different stereotypes: local, regional, national etc.

5

Stereotyping is an easy way of putting people into boxes.

They can make your life easier.

They can have roots in something that is true or was true in history.

They can create and escalate conflicts.

Conclusions and recommendations of the plenary session:

On stereotypes:

Recognise them / allow voicing them

Take them into account,

Make sure they don't block perception and become a limit in learning about someone else.

Recommendations:

Avoid that people stick together by country, religion or region.

Highlight what does not correspond to the stereotype in the participants of a workcamp to promote a different vision.

The idea of stereotypes as self-fulfilling prophecies ('you see what you are prepared to see') should be pointed out during workcamps.

Different examples of the power of stereotypes in different situations:

Miguel gave an example of an experiment on stereotypes in the US:

During 3 months, a teacher said there was government decision about blue eyed people being smarter than people without / stupid stereotype to see how the group functions – they started to fight, after some time the decision “was changed” in contrary. The pupils could remember it for years. Shows how the behaviour can change just because of admitting something that is artificially invented and has nothing to do with reality.

Stereotypes on local and national level>

Saleh speaks about upper and lower Egyptians, southerners are considered to be less smart.

Miguel: “Do it as the Portuguese.” – do not pay: fighting with the stereotype by finding out the historical source, find out the truth and speak about it with those who believe the stereotype.

Discussion on using this game in WC:

It puts stress on stereotypes and the debriefing should be well prepared, could offend other people.

It should be followed by an activity that brings it into a different process and that puts stress to something else than stereotypes.

As there hadn't been a real debriefing of the two exercises that were done before the break and it was found out that this can be really important, it was decided to do it in the end. We got back into the small groups and discussed the outcome of the second exercise.

In the debriefing of this exercise in plenary, the following comments were given:

- important exercise, needs to be done at the beginning of a workcamp,
- not good to use at all, because it can stress the stereotypes too much, it is better to speak about positive examples,
- an example of good experience with Africans and Europeans and the need for - distinguishing subdivision of regions. The more distance we have the more homogenous the group seems to us,

An idea came up to get a bag, put the paper result of the exercise after the debriefing in this bag, close it and say that after that, everyone has had the opportunity to voice the stereotypes they could think of, but that after that, the stress is going to be on the individuals that are behind the stereotypes.

The aims of the exercises were to redirect the attention of the participants at the subject of stereotypes and to create an open space to freely express our own stereotypes. In this group, we succeeded in the former easily, but as was said during the debriefing, it created a bit of a negative atmosphere, which didn't promote the creation of an open space.

## **Editing I**

In the evening, after dinner, the first meeting of the editing team took place. Marilena and Essam spoke with Maloe about their ideas on stereotypes and workcamps and wrote a text that could be part of the module.

## **Presentations of organisations**

During that time, the participants had set up a presentation of their organisation with posters and other information they wanted to show. With a glass of Czech wine, beer or orange juice, we listened to the presentations of the various organisations.

By some, these presentations were interesting and useful ('All the participants demonstrated good will and enthusiasm that seemed genuine.'), but others found it was too long and too formal ('we could have talked about it over lunch')

**Alternative-V** is a Ukrainian voluntary organisation that organises workcamps, sends volunteers abroad and organises trainings.

**APAI** is a national branch of ICYE and organises youth exchange and international volunteering that stimulate and develop intercultural awareness. APAI is actively involved in running long-term volunteering exchanges, EVS projects, Summer Camps, Work Camps, Teachers Seminars, Au Pair Programme, Group Programmes, Training Courses and, Training of Volunteers EGO is an organisation of young psychology students in Armenia that have counselling as main activity and wish to organise workcamps in the near future.

**Fair Trade** Portugal is an initiative by Miguel, who, after his EVS in Italy in fair trade, decided to set it up in his country. He has set up three stores and organises workcamps to sensitise young people on the subject.

**IJGD** is a German voluntary organisation that exists since 1947, sends and receives short and long term volunteers and has a long standing tradition in training of volunteers and trainers.

**Inex sda** is a Czech voluntary organisation, established in 1991 to provide opportunities in the field of voluntary service to realise personal possibilities in care of the surroundings and the world. They send and host short- and long term volunteering.

**KVDA** is a Kenyan voluntary organisation that aims to promote cross-cultural exchange, exists since 1962 and sends and receives short and long term volunteers. Besides a leader

training, they have training for the volunteers they host in their projects. KVDA is member of the Executive Committee of CCIVS.

**MS** Mellemløst Samvirke (Danish Association for International Co-operation) was established in 1944, organises activities like workcamps for global sustainable development, for dialogue between people and for popular participation and democratisation. MS has a longstanding tradition in training.

**Pro International** is a German voluntary organisation that organises workcamps, sends and receives (short and long term-) volunteers since 1951. They have several trainings.

**SCI Hellas** is the Greek branch of Service Civil International (SCI), a movement that has a mission to promote peace and intercultural understanding through international volunteering.

**SJ Vietnam** is created in 2004, organises workcamps and sends volunteers abroad.

**UNA exchange** organises international voluntary workcamps, weekend workcamps, hosts and sends long term volunteers and organises several trainings, amongst which a global education training. UNA is member of the Executive Committee of CCIVS.

**Vai Avante** is a Portuguese organisation that organises activities for children the year round and one workcamp during summer.

**Vive Mexico** exists since about 10 years, organises workcamps, sends volunteers abroad, hosts and sends long term volunteers and has a training for leaders, and, from summer 2006 on, a training for the volunteers they host.



## Thursday 6th April

### Energizer

After breakfast, the group came into the room and Martina asked the participants to show their moods in a way of posing their bodies. According to this, everyone seemed to still feel quite well and not overwhelmed.

Then, they were asked to stand in groups of three as a house with someone inside it. One person was standing in the middle, trying to find a safe place to live, facilitating the storm that blew away either the left wall, the right wall, the person in the middle or any other thing they thought of.

Afterwards, the walls and the person in the middle made up the different groups.

Afterwards, the group was divided into three parts, according to the game from the beginning. Martina made a link between the more general stereotype session of Wednesday and more personal experiences with intercultural learning. First, they were asked to talk about the 'trigger' that made them think it would be important to learn more about cultural diversity and how this works out. Second, they were asked to talk about the methods they might use in their organisations.

During the de-brief of the discussion, it became clear that people mostly talked about the 'trigger' that made them want to learn more about cultural diversity. It was mentioned that it was interesting to see how everyone had had very different triggers, which would mean that everyone reacts different on them. Because of that, it is difficult to find out what exactly could make a workcamp or parts of a workcamp such a trigger.

Besides, there was a short discussion on whether there is a difference between a short and long-term stay in another country. It was mentioned that a long-term stay can provide more detailed comprehension of another culture, but a short-term stay can also provide a trigger. It was also said that when people get a lot of intercultural experience, they sometimes have problems defining themselves as being part of a group. In this, national identity is an easy and protected thing to fall back to.

Different cultures imply different ways of experiencing. With workcamps, mid term, or long term volunteering, people might get to understand a bit more about other ways of experiencing and understanding that their 'own' way of experiencing is culturally defined.

### **The turning onion**

Simona introduced the onion exercise (*the turning onion* in the module). This exercise was meant to make people reflect about their identities and how they are multiple. It could also show how people put forward different parts of their identity when talking to different people in different periods of their life.

Everyone was given a coloured sheet of A4 paper with another round one attached to it so that it could turn (see the picture in the module for an example). They were asked to draw an onion on the circle, with their childhood being in the middle and their current age outside. The circles they drew were events that changed parts of their life or just ages and they were divided into different things or people that influenced them during that period.

During debrief in plenary, it became clear that this exercise went quite deep for some people. It was 'A really big step'. For some people it went a bit too deep ('A bit too much, made me say more than I wanted to say'), but it was agreed on that this exercise helped the group making a big step further into understanding each other and trusting each other. It was seen as a 'Simple way to show what is your identity'. Besides, it made some understand the similarities between them: 'we had the same structures, everyone had family, school, etc'. Still, anyone that wants to use this exercise has to be warned that it can be intrusive and that some trust is needed within the group before introducing it.

For in a workcamp, it was suggested, instead of everyone making her or his personal tree trunk, to make a big wheel for everybody to put his or her personal things.

We thought this exercise has served to understand more about one's identity, about how it is multiple and how precious it can be to people. Because of that, we have to be really careful about bringing up the subject and in some cases doing an exercise like we did during a workcamp isn't a good idea.

## Negotiate or die

In the afternoon, Martina introduced a game on values.

The aim of this exercise was to make the participants reflect on values and human rights and what they mean to them.

They came into a room, which was decorated like a world on the edge of ceasing to exist. The participants were told that the world that they lived in was breaking down. They had to go on a long journey. For them to succeed in making the journey, they had to drop some of their human rights, or decide to stay, which would mean dying.

The first round, they had to decide on 15 rights in pairs. In the second round, they had to embark on a journey in two hot air balloons. They could decide on 8 rights and keep everyone in, or on more, but with every right kept, they had to leave behind one person.

In the end, they succeeded dropping enough rights to keep everyone in that wanted to stay.

They were supposed to agree on the following rights:

1. The right to make a snowman
2. The right to have the education for everyone guaranteed by the state
3. The right to decide without restraint about the number of children I want to have
4. The right to choose the (sexual) partner without restraint
5. The right to choose a job without restraint
6. The right to dispose without restraint with my own possession and money
7. The right to say to anyone what I want to say without restraint and be free to publish my own ideas
8. The right to choose my confession without restraint
9. The right to take part in decision making on local, regional and state level
10. The right to move without restraint (free travelling, free choice of the country I want to live in)
11. The right to decide without restraint about the end of my life
12. The right to bring up children according to my own principles
13. The right to harm my own body (to eat unhealthy food, to smoke, to drink alcohol, to take drugs)
14. The right to defend myself, my family and friends (even at the price of killing someone).
15. The right to have the minimum social standard guaranteed by the society I live in (facilities for seniors, handicapped, long-term ill people, etc.).
16. The right to become a member of any political party, hobby group, club etc.
17. The right to object the practices I cannot agree with (slavery, cannibalism, etc.)
18. The right of common protection of human' life (no one can kill me or injure me without appropriate punishment).

Some of the comments that were made during the debrief of the game:

Anesta: 'In my life, it would be very difficult to be taken away these rights'

Essam: 'We could not generalise all these rights' 'The more development, the more rights'

Miguel: 'There is a difference between development and value-rights'

Lilit: 'I see a glass of water half full, so I prefer living with a lot of people without much rights then having more rights and less people'

Oneka: 'people come with different backgrounds'

Dines: 'Interaction of human rights is difficult'

Margareta: 'If people live together and have no rights, you can't do anything.'

Marilena: 'I don't want to negotiate about rights. Rights are human beings. I don't want to live in a society in which people exchange their rights for their lives.'

Anesta: 'The aim to survive is the right to live.'

Victor: 'I feel like a puppet. The game is about needing to raise your hand, but you don't want to.'

Doreen: 'there is only one right, the right of the strongest'

Miguel: 'We have to fight for the rights people die for every day. Minimum or better... maximum situation.'

Ramzi: 'As a strong group we can start to take what we would like to take in our lives.'

Marilena: 'rights are interconnected, it's like a card-house: if you take out one card, it all collapses!'

## Editing II

After dinner, the editing team had its next meeting, this time it were Anna and Anesta writing about identity. The result will be implemented in the module.

## Mid-term evaluation

Then, we had a mid-term evaluation. Maloe spread a number of postcards on the floor. Everyone was asked to pick one of the postcards that corresponded best to their feeling about the seminar until that moment. After that, they were asked to point out their card and explain the others why they picked this card. Some of the comments that were heard most were about meeting new friends that help on the way to more knowledge and experience about international voluntary service and cultural diversity and the feeling we started a journey to understand more about the topic, but haven't arrived where we wanted yet.

## Films and presentations

In the evening, the projector was used to show various presentational films of organisations. Besides, there was a projection of a film made by the French voluntary organisation Solidarités Jeunesses about a workcamp that took place in September 2005 on the way memories about the Second World War were transmitted in Japan, Germany and France.



## Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April

### Reconcile Identities and civilisations

Friday morning started with listening to a part of a radio show with an interview with Amin Maalouf, a Lebanese-French writer. In his book 'les identités meurtrières' ('In the name of identity'), Maalouf speaks about the concept of 'multiple identities'. According to him, people don't have only one identity (as is the case in the accepted sense of today), but an identity that is made up of many different aspects. Whenever identity is seen as only one aspect of it, it means automatically that it is defined by opposition to somebody else, usually a neighbour. In that way, it can become a definition of war.

First feedback in plenary:

During the discussions many questions were raised and many issues touched upon. It became clear that talking about identities is a delicate matter and a balance needs to be found between the safeguarding of the specificities while remaining open for new influences.

Some of the issues mentioned were:

- Has there ever been a 'pure' identity – an essence?
- World, national and group history should be taught as the result of mixture of various influences.
- Cherish the masterpieces of culture while admitting change
- On globalisation: is there good and bad globalisation?
- Will we all become the same one day?
- Can we celebrate diversity in globalisation?
- Globalisation is not new: what about the Portuguese in Brazil, the English in Kenya and Egypt, the French in Vietnam etc
- Paradox: how to embrace the new while keeping the old
- Globalisation like a natural phenomenon: like the migration of birds
- "Cultural diversity is a necessary for human beings as biodiversity is for nature" (UNESCO declaration on cultural diversity)
- If you repress part of the identity of a person the repressed part may someday explode violently
- The concept of 'dramatic identities' came up: what do you do when your identity is under attack?
- When you become different, you don't become poorer.
- Identities are like drafts of the "human document": you keep the drafts to retrace the evolution.
- Identity is like a rubber ball
- Identities are constructed and then become a reality
- There is a necessity to protect the specificity while admitting change

After that, there were small groups' discussions on how to cherish and protect diversity while welcoming change and how to transmit the notion of multiple identities.

Feedback from small groups:

1

We should not try to teach someone and bring our concept as a dogma. The participants should find the answers to their own questions.

To start discussions on the subject:

- icebreaker
- presentation like we had at the beginning of this session
- invite a speaker
- going on after icebreaker: make people think about their own identities by making a global newspaper
- for children to understand something about identity: only communicating through funny noises

2

In a workcamp, we can have bilaterals

How can we get to the grass root level point of view into the discussion about identities?

3

- We should not only focus on the workcamp, but also the context. Maybe we should put more stress on intercultural learning/cooperation in the preparation and evaluation of workcamps
- Stress on preparation: Campleaders should be facilitators of intercultural cooperation during the camp.
- Afterwards, there should be a follow up with the participants to go on in the same process. During an evaluation meeting, there should be a 'debriefing' of what has happened during the workcamp.
- During the camp, not only the participants, but also other people (e.g. locals) should be implied in intercultural learning.



4

- Each individual always has his or her own base of culture. This will not change, no matter how many Mc Donalds we eat
- we are globally reliant for diversity
- (goods, ideas, practices. We will influence it in our own way and make it our own)
- adoption of other cultures > diluting of original culture
- you have a choice on how much your culture changes
- categorising people residentially can be dangerous for generalisation
- you can't end culture
- acculturalisation (adopting another culture whilst keeping your own base)

Feedback from plenary:

- ideas for workcamp:
  - first day: people bingo
  - bring a typical item from one's country (to show the individual but also the culture)
  - discussions about for example
- At the beginning of the workcamp, people should be made aware of the fact that it can be an opportunity to learn interculturally.
- To reach grassroot level, theoretical ideas should be broken down into more practical steps.

The aim of this session was to link the workcamp reality with the world situation, in which identities and globalisation play a big role. The stimulant at the beginning, in the form of a

radio interview with Amin Maalouf started an animated discussion. The world situation was discussed with globalisation as the main topic. Some of the participants appreciated this session, as it was an interesting, vast discussion. Others didn't really like the session because of its vastness and they thought it went to far in all directions.

### Excursion

An excursion was planned for the afternoon. A rented bus brought the group to the town Letohrad, where visit of a local youth centre of the organisation Caritas Letohrad was planned. While enjoying tee in the tee room, an introduction into the activities of this organisation was given. The organisation mostly organises activities for the young people in town and fundraising for Foster Children in India. We played some ping-pong with the children and made a hand painting. In the end, the people from the organisation expressed their interest in organising a workcamp together with INEX sda.

Afterwards, there was some free time in town, which some spent strolling around and others in a local bar.

We got back to Kostelecké Horky for dinner and went to a local band festival and a local pub afterwards.



## Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April

After some icebreakers (that were a bit necessary after the night before), facilitated by various participants, the group was divided into two according to whether or not you had training experience.

The following questions were discussed:

- What can we do in our orgs in terms of training and evaluation?
- Are there Concrete follow up ideas?

The feedback of the two groups took place in the afternoon.

After lunch, at 14h, there was an excursion to the 'blue house'. This is a home for EVS-volunteers and a local activity centre. We participated in a workshop on Easter habits, together with local children and their parents. Eggs were painted, Easter-decorations made and traditional hitting instruments for men were made out of twigs. Some discussion came up on the violence of Czech Easter habits and some of the women in the group decided to hit them back...



## Afternoon session de-brief

After the workshop, there was a de-brief of the two working groups in the morning.

*Report working group of trainers:*

Most organisations organise trainings on different issues (pre-departure, EVS, conflict resolution)

The group focused on where improvements are necessary:

There was a discussion the importance of group de-briefings.

Ask volunteers to interview locals or find out things about the locals.

Include camp evaluation of former volunteers in trainings for leaders to find out what makes a workcamp a successful intercultural learning experience.

Importance of motivation and its influence on the experience they will have.

**Attention:** voluntary service needs to remain accessible and should not be selective! Therefore the barrier to 'enter' should not be too high. Issue of inclusion: the way the prep trainings are sometimes conducted may be too intellectual. What is essential is not whether the person has the right or wrong motivation in the beginning but whether the person can learn to be open to new experiences. Participants have to be prepared to be flexible, to realise that the issues they will be confronted with are not dealt with in the same way as in their country. The group itself will also have an influence on the group; you can discover your passion as you discover a new activity.

Follow up ideas:

- Training course on group management, facilitation of discussions, group dynamics
- Research on the impact of volunteering, also on the local community, how does the preparation and evaluation of volunteers influence the depth of their experience
- Organise workcamps with a study part on cultural diversity
- Global education in workcamps as part of raising awareness on cultural diversity, practical techniques
- Introduce the idea of cultural diversity as a means for outreach to link volunteers and refugees in a refugee camp in Kenya.

*Report of the second working group:*

A discussion took place about how the system of workcamp placements works. Each organisation introduced their activities. Not all are organising workcamps, but most intend to. All organisations work in close contact with the local population.

A number of issues were discussed:

- Volunteer selection, contract (moral or real) between the volunteer and the sending organisation
- Budgetary issues
- The EU Youth Programme
- Leadership styles: more authoritative or more democratic (some organisations don't have a coordinator at all)
- Motivation, similar as in first group: there is no ideal motivation; the question is to channel the motivation
- Post Camp Events as a way to bind volunteers to the organization and provide them a chance to engage more intensively with the organization
- Weekend workcamps as a way to introduce locals to the idea of workcamps
- It was stated that within the social sector a lot of knowledge is being accumulated and that we have the capacity to change!

Recommendation: CCIVS website (info on publications, themes and membership issues (addresses etc)

Simona thanked Alternative v for having translated the website to Russian!!!!!!!!!!!!!! And is looking for more language versions

Follow up ideas:

- Develop general guidelines regarding the set up of workcamps: what's the meaning, what are the subjects, maybe a CD, could be translated into different languages
- Organise a training on workcamp basics

Existing material to be taken into account:

- SEEYN handbook
- Alliance handbook
- CCIVS publications to be updated
- MS film used as introduction to workcamps

### **“Regensburg” study**

After the de-brief, Simona presented the findings of a psychological study by the Regensburg university in Germany on international youth exchange (comprising international voluntary service, see also the annex). The main conclusions of this study are that most of the participants of these exchanges, even after several years, could remember quite a lot of details about the experience. The experience, for most of them, was either a ‘nice to have’ experience, but for some it was a mosaic experience (adding a piece to the puzzle), a trigger to start something or even a turning point in their life. Simona said this study has been an important influence within CCIVS for a project on cultural diversity. The research also showed that a lot of people thought international youth exchange promotes intercultural learning. CCIVS thinks that by promoting the understanding of cultural diversity within workcamps, their impact can be enhanced.

Then, there was a short discussion in the group:

As in the result of the Regensburg study, it was made clear that the involvement of the local community enhanced the intercultural learning experience. Then, there was a short discussion on how to include the stronger involvement of the local hosts of a project. A need to focus on group development, group psychology and communication styles during camp leader training was mentioned. Finally, there was an idea to create a module on what you can do in the trainings for the workcamp leaders. As some pointed out that there are already several existing documents within the different networks, it was said that within the CCIVS module on cultural diversity, reference should be made to the need for a workcamp leader to develop other capacities (like group management, facilitation of discussions and group dynamics) and context (other training material already developed).

### **Editing III**

After dinner, there were three editing team meetings: Anna and Anesta continued there editing on identity, Jo and Dines wrote about methods and Doreen and Margareta on the clash of civilisations.

In the evening, the bar was opened again, everyone’s pictures of the seminar were shown with the beamer and Miguel introduced the postmen game: everyone got a number and wrote anonymous messages to another number on a small piece of paper. Because the message wasn’t given to the other directly, it got a funny delay while going to several other hands.



## Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April

The morning of the last day started with a de-brief of the various texts written by the different editing teams.

### Stereotype group:

- Ideas for the module for the game section: include a short version of the effects of an exercise that could be seen within a group as a result of the exercise (for people that won't read the whole theoretical part)
- Mention clear aims and objectives before each game
- Why and destined to whom, When
- Concrete suggestions for de-brief of the exercise (what kind of questions to be asked or what kind of topics are to be discussed)

### Identities group:

- Atmosphere important to let issue of personal identity come out, minimum level of trust needed
- Complex and delicate issue
- Make links for further reading
- Question of cultural versus personal identity (is there a difference between the identity of a group and of a person?)
- Go about identity gradually and leave the personal things for a later stage
- Focus more the complexity of countries instead of personal identity, give examples and identities

In reaction to the de-brief of this group on identity, a discussion broke loose about where to start to understand more about identity. It was mentioned that the notion of identity by Amin Maalouf that we would like to promote in workcamps might be one that could not be used everywhere. In areas of conflict between different groups that put forward a very specific identity, the idea that identities are multiple might be very difficult to implement in their daily lives. People might even be offended when they are said that the one identity they put forward is only one of several aspects of their identity. In that way, it could be shown that they have actually much in common with their opponents. On the other hand, it could give them the strength to say that, even though they might have some things in common, they still choose to live mostly that one aspect, in which they feel mostly 'themselves'.

### Group on values and general comments:

- Clash of civilizations: importance to talk about topic, some questions rose on whether or not to include discussion on globalisation in a workcamp.
- The impact on workcamps is questioned during the seminar and should be investigated.
- There are a lot of emotions that come with identities. When they are under attack, it might be very difficult to promote the view of multiple identities, as it would indicate people that they might have more in common with their enemies than they thought.

Group on section 4: how to use this module:

- General comments: there is a confusion of terms (evaluation and de-brief, method and methodologies), add clear aims, objectives and a target group in this chapter.
- There exists a need to mention the prerequisites for intercultural learning: talk about culture shock, experiential learning, self reflection, motivation and talk about the de-briefing of workcamps in order to evaluate the effect it had (refer to Regensburg findings to define the possible ways the experience can be integrated into the biography)

### Follow up ideas

In the afternoon, At the end of the debrief of the different edited texts, possible follow-up ideas on organisational level were mentioned:

Laboratory workcamps:

- Essam: no concrete idea yet, but would like to use it and find a way to translate the module into Arabic
- Victor: not confirmed
- Oneka: training for leaders in June, Nov Dec a huge workcamp will be organized in a refugee camp *Karkuma camp*
- Sam: for UNA is part of global education team and will reach out to future leaders, Jo is part of North South training team and may run a workcamp
- Marilena: two ways of doing it, larger part on cultural diversity on coordinators training and ask camp leaders to introduce it in all camps, set up a team and travel to one or more camp, euro med exchange on identity
- Dines: not really possible this year, leader training starts as he comes back, could be used in the next Alliance study session on ICL and vol service end Jan /beg Feb 07
- Oliver: quite likely can introduce the module in an IJGD training seminar at the end of June and pick at least one work camp
- Phuc will use it in May/June training for campleaders and for outgoing volunteers
- Alternative will liase with head office. It should be possible. The training for leaders takes place in May.
- Lilit: will organize some trainings to pass on the information, would like to organize a workcamp in 2007

As a more general follow-up idea (that is not necessarily implemented in one or two organisations), the interest was shown in learning more about the impact of international voluntary workcamps. Simona commented that there is a researcher that is interested in this subject (who actually wanted to attend the seminar, but unfortunately couldn't make it) and want to work more with CCIVS. The secretariat will stay in contact with this researcher and will try to find out how to proceed on this subject.



**PLAN OF ACTION**

In the afternoon, everyone was asked to fill out the following scheme:

	Short term	Medium term	Long term
<b>Personal</b>			
<b>Organisational</b>			
<b>Between organisations</b>			

Afterwards, there was a debriefing. The comments that were made varied from, on a personal level: getting some sleep, drinking a good cup of coffee, and finishing my studies, going to Vietnam for a while. On an organisational level the answers varied from organising a leader training soon, while using the module, organising a laboratory workcamp, organising a first workcamp in about a year and using the outcome of this seminar for further reflections within other networks.

**Evaluation sessions**

The participants were asked to take away all the post its of fulfilled expectations and contributions and fears which didn't materialise. The post-its that were left in our suitcase at the end of the seminar:

<b>Expectations:</b>	<b>Fears</b>	<b>Contributions</b>
-friendship, love, great time -new methods / activities which I can use in future trainings / workcamps -some concrete material to work on intercultural learning -new ideas, different points of view, a lot of good discussions, nice time -some answers / ideas on why people think in stereotypes / about identification (with countries) -to produce some outcome and not only to discuss and have a nice time	-not to learn during the seminar, getting bored, feeling excluded -the unknown and the long journey home -to be confused and staying without answer -not being able to express my thoughts -wasting time and not finding the answers -no food -misunderstanding because of language and culture and cold weather -to many ICL activities that I have tried before or which I have tried to use -having the seminar stay in our minds as only a nice memory and nothing happening afterwards -not enough time to go deeper into the subject	-evening amusement with our band -taking active part in the seminar and to realise this knowledge in practice afterwards -knowledge of group dynamics -experience / games

After this link back to the expectations, fears and potential contributions of the beginning, Martina assigned the most popular, big green inflatable chair as a place to share feelings about the seminar. Everyone that had the same feeling should find a place on the same green chair as well. Everyone that took a seat said they had a very good time, had met a lot of nice people and felt motivated by them and by the discussions that had been going on to follow up on the subject in their personal and organisational lives. A lot of people agreed and we still wonder how the green hot chair stayed intact with so much weight on it.

Then, the participants were asked to fill out an evaluation sheet. A statistical analysis of this evaluation can be found in the Annexes.

## Evaluation

The aims of this seminar were to foster the intercultural competence of the stakeholders (trainers and leaders) that organise international voluntary workcamps and to introduce the concept of cultural diversity.

There were 26 participants from various corners of the world and from different cultural, organisational, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds. This was what we wished for while organising the seminar, as we thought it would be a good starting point to have a 'pool' of cultural diversity within the group itself.

It did provide interesting starting points into the various exercises (that are based on personal culturally based perceptions) and into methodologies on how to treat the concept of cultural diversity in workcamps.

The red line during the seminar was the module on cultural diversity. We had sessions on stereotypes, identity, values and globalisation, which are (or will be) all themes in the module. Most sessions were introduced by a game or other exercise, which was appreciated very much by most of the participants, and which corresponded to the wish of the group, as expressed in the Seminar Declaration.

Some participants felt that the issue was very delicate and doubted that a workcamp was the right place to engage volunteers in deep reflections about self and others if this kind of discussion didn't come up by itself. They said that some of the reflections incited participants to expose a lot of very intimate issues to the others and that this needed careful and professional debrief.

With the module, we try to foster knowledge and understanding about cultural diversity in international workcamps. The idea is to produce the module in a collective effort giving the member organisations a chance to contribute to it. It is a work in process, needing to be revised by experienced trainers of member organisations. The work on the module is based on four steps: first edition in the secretariat, editing during the seminar, testing during the "laboratory camps" feedback from coordinators and volunteers who have tested it and revision afterwards by the secretariat.

Some of the participants were disappointed, because we didn't come to real conclusions. The idea was not to present ready recipes to be applied but to develop a collective approach starting from the ideas presented by CCIVS.

The idea of 'multiple identities' and promoting cultural diversity by cherishing different influences of a culture took root in the mind of the participants. It was enlightening for some to realise that it is possible to embrace ones origins and multiple influences (individual or on a larger scale) while admitting change.

This made most of them want to go on in this reflection.

The reflections in the secretariat will find their way into the module. We collected a number of ideas regarding changes to implement in the module such as:

- to situate the parts of the module systematically (what was the idea behind this chapter, how to go about it, what to be careful about, etc)
- the message and target group we aim at should be made clearer
- more stress should be put on showing to what extent societies and individuals have always been made up of multiple influences (use examples from music, kitchen, language etc...).
- more reflection is needed on the level of power relations that have a great influence on intercultural relations within a group (North, South, "rich", "poor", implicit feelings of inferiority or superiority etc..)
- more focus needs to be put on other competences, which need to be developed by workcamp coordinators such as knowledge about communication mechanisms and group processes in general.

## Conclusion

The organisation of this seminar responded to a long-standing wish of CCIVS to develop its approach to Cultural Diversity. The number of participants and logistical difficulties causing late arrival of several participants made it difficult to manage the group and didn't allow reaching its full potential in terms of exchange of different approaches.

Nonetheless the seminar provided an important impetus to reflect further on the concept and the way to introduce it concretely into the work of CCIVS member organisations. The background and experience of the participants was quite diversified. It is always a challenge on the CCIVS level to bring together such a diverse group of organisations. The success of a gathering such as this cannot only be measured by its concrete outcomes but by the long term effects of the opportunity given to actors from all over the world to come together, get to know each other and strengthen the global network of voluntary service organisations. CCIVS defines itself as a think tank where organisations can exchange good practices, improve the quality of their action and advance collectively in their reflections. This process takes time and the results become sometimes visible after years only.

The module resulting partially from the seminar will be based on a collective effort and several of the organisations present in the Czech Republic foresee a further involvement in the follow up of the seminar. A number of organisations committed themselves to further follow up actions and the ideas exposed during the seminar will make their way into the concepts of voluntary service organisations.

Last but not least we would like to thank INEX sda very much for their contribution in terms of logistics and content, which have made this seminar a success.



## List of participants

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## Annexes

I Text on the seminar

II PowerPoint presentation on CCIVS approach on cultural diversity

III PowerPoint presentation on the module and editing teams

IV Statistical analyses evaluation sheets

V The seminar declaration

VI Presentation Amin Maalouf



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