



## **8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Young Volunteers Exchange (AEYVE) Intercultural Approaches to Environmental Sustainability**

*August 21 – 4 September 2009, Singburi, Thailand*

### **FACT SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) with the support of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) has been organising the AEYVE since 2001, bringing together every year Asian and European international voluntary service organisations to work on a specific theme. For the first time in 2008, the AEYVE was held entirely in Asia and focused on Sustainable Development and its three pillars: environment, society and economy, as well as the complementary work on Cultural Diversity, all of which played a role in the success of the event. The AEYVE 2008 also featured in the mid-term report of the UNESCO Regional office for Asia-Pacific on the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) as an example of best practice. As a direct follow-up of the AEYVE 2008 and based on the needs and priorities identified by the participating organisations, their representatives and the institutional partners involved, the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Young Volunteers Exchange will concentrate on the environmental pillar of Sustainable Development, fortifying the role and impact of international voluntary service in fostering environmental protection, and understanding and mitigating the causes and effects of climate change.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The project “**Intercultural approaches to Environmental Sustainability**” aims at providing participants from various Asian and European countries the opportunity to familiarise themselves with environmental issues, share existing knowledge and experience in the field and improve existing practices within the respective voluntary service organisations and their projects. At the same time, it will also explore the dimension of sustainable choices and lifestyles within a larger perspective, thus linking local action to global reflection. Intercultural learning, also a central focus of this project, will be a key resource to deepen understanding and respect for cultural diversity and link it to the environment, also through the discussion and demonstration of the relations between traditional and indigenous knowledge and nature conservation. This will enable participants to critically reflect on their perceptions, attitudes and actions, and further develop the skills needed to implement activities in their day-to-day work in international voluntary service organisations, both at the local and global level.

Since the last decade, CCIVS member organisations in Asia and Europe have started to tackle environmental issues. Our sister network in Asia, NVDA, has developed a number of flagship projects around the theme, for example the “Greening Asia” project. A draft toolkit on environmental sustainability in voluntary service projects is among the expected results of the AEYVE 2009, along with the hands-on experience participants will gain upon using and adapting tools, developed on the subject by various networks, during the project and field visits.

## WHAT IS ASEM?

ASEM is an informal process of dialogue and cooperation bringing together all the members of the European Union (EU), the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as the European Commission, China, South Korea, and Japan. In 2007, ASEM further grew to include Bulgaria, Romania, India, Pakistan, Mongolia, and the ASEAN Secretariat. The objective of ASEM is to forge a stronger partnership between Asia and Europe that is based on equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit. The three pillars of the ASEM dialogue process – which extends beyond the political and official levels and encompasses the business and people sectors of the two regions – are political dialogue on regional and global issues, enhanced economic cooperation, and cooperation in the social, cultural, and educational fields.

## WHO ARE THE ASEM PARTNERS?

From Asia: Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

From Europe: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the European Commission.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will combine training activities, reflection, exchange of good practice, project visits and field experience for a total duration of 15 days, and is organised in 3 different phases:

- **In the first phase (21-25 August)**, participants will gather in Singburi, Thailand, for an intensive four-day training focusing on two main issues: cultural diversity, in particular the learning dynamics of an Asia-Europe intercultural project, and environmental protection with a progressive introduction and discussion of issues like climate change, natural disasters prevention and preparedness, and traditional and indigenous knowledge. The interconnectedness of these two central themes will become evident through references to culture, which is a powerful tool, but also a potential barrier, in understanding and addressing the challenges of protecting the environment in the diverse social and cultural realities of the two regions. In this sense, ongoing environmental projects around the meeting place will constitute the initial case study and be used as a living-training playground to understand the diversity of practices in the field. UNESCO experts from the Education for Sustainable Development unit in Bangkok will also present a number of tools and best practices in the region.

- **In the second phase (26-31 August)**, participants – divided into smaller groups – will travel to their field projects in Thailand and one project in Cambodia, where they will be hosted by voluntary service organisations, with the objective of finding local and global answers to the challenges of climate change and nature conservation in these very diverse contexts. During this phase, participants will collect important data necessary to address challenges at the ground level and prepare actions towards the end of their stay, using tools from the draft environmental toolkit for voluntary service organisations, to facilitate a discussion with their respective hosts and local communities on some of the main issues identified during the training phase and the first days of their field visits.

- **In the third and final phase (1-4 September)**, participants will meet again in Thailand in order to share and evaluate their field visits. Based on their recent field-trip experience and after a brief introduction to project planning and management within the specific Asia-Europe context, they will be invited to plan future actions addressing some of the issues raised during the training and practical phase. At the same time, they will be encouraged to put to good use the existing skills and expertise of their respective organisations and networks to create and reinforce new and effective partnerships in the field of international voluntary service and environmental sustainability.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The project aims to foster mutual understanding, co-operation and exchange between voluntary service organisations in Asia and Europe. Particular importance is given to the aspect of networking between organisations, in order to allow knowledge-transfer between the two regions and to achieve common quality standards with regard to the way the issue of environmental sustainability is dealt with at local and global level.

The *specific objectives* are:

- To strengthen participants' and organisations' awareness and knowledge about issues related to environmental preservation such as climate change, indigenous knowledge and disaster prevention and preparedness;
- To share experiences and train organisations on approaches to introduce these issues into their projects and the local and international communities they work with, taking into account cultural diversity as a determinant variable;
- To develop and test concrete tools to understand, introduce and prioritise the issues to be treated by the projects at the local and international level;
- To contribute to the development of an environmental toolkit for voluntary service organisations;
- To develop concrete follow-up ideas that can be implemented by participating organisations after the project.

## **PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

This 8th AEYVE will involve up to 25 participants - active volunteers, staff and board members of voluntary service organisations implementing projects with an international dimension. The applicants should be aged between 18 and 30, nationals of ASEM countries, and able to understand and discuss complex issues in English. They should have experience in the fields of environmental sustainability and international voluntary service and/or be interested in working in these areas. Last but not least, they should be nominated by a national and international organisation or network from the ASEM countries<sup>1</sup>.

The organisers of the project will be responsible for covering all local costs starting from the arrival day (20<sup>th</sup> August) to the departure day (4<sup>th</sup> September), including accommodation, meals and local transportation as well as transportation to and from the hosting projects during the second phase. A partial travel reimbursement will also be provided in order to support part of the international travel costs, covering 200 EURO for participants travelling from Asia and 350 EURO for participants travelling from Europe.

## **THE ORGANISERS**

The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) and the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) are the main organisers of the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Young Volunteers Exchange. In addition, they receive significant support, in respect of the project concept and implementation, from the Network for Voluntary Development in Asia (NVDA) and its member organisations.

Greenway Thailand will act as local host for the training and evaluation phase, providing all the necessary logistical support. Several CCIVS members in Asia will place their experience at the disposal of the project, acting as hosting organisations for the field experience.

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok will provide important support in terms of expertise for both the preparation and the implementation of the project. In particular, the unit for

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<sup>1</sup> The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an informal process of dialogue and co-operation addressing political, economic and cultural issues. It brings together a constituency of forty-five partners: Austria, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam, the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Education for Sustainable Development will continue its involvement in the project, which will once again be included in the frame of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

More information about the project and the participating organisations can be found on the CCIVS website under regional and thematic cooperation, providing a general overview of its activities on Education for Sustainable Development as well as on the past editions of the AEYVE programme: [www.unesco.org/ccivs](http://www.unesco.org/ccivs)

The AEYVE 2009 website will be regularly updated with news, articles, tools and materials in order to prepare and stimulate the exchanges among the participants and with the organisations involved, thus providing an interactive platform for all the actors involved to develop a solid partnership before and subsequent to the project in Thailand.

## **A SUSTAINABLE PROJECT**

Before the participants of the AEYVE 2009 start working on the topic of the project, they will have already contributed to the world's ecological footprint with around 60 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from the mere fact of travelling to the meeting place from their home countries. Although CCIVS sees the rewards of lively international and intercultural cooperation and common field work as the very basis of its mission and therefore essential to its efforts to promote a culture of peace, it is also dedicated to making AEYVE 2009 a sustainable encounter. Vital efforts will be made to integrate and compensate the ecological footprint of the project through a tree-planting action, and to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by privileging travels by land for the field experience.

## **FEES AND OTHER EXPENSES**

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## **APPLICATION**

Interested parties should send the completed Application Form (see attachment), through their sending organisation, no later than **19 June 2009**. Applicants are requested NOT to make any travel arrangements until they receive an official confirmation from the organisers.

For any further information and to send your application, please contact the **Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service Organisations (CCIVS)** at [ccivs@unesco.org](mailto:ccivs@unesco.org).