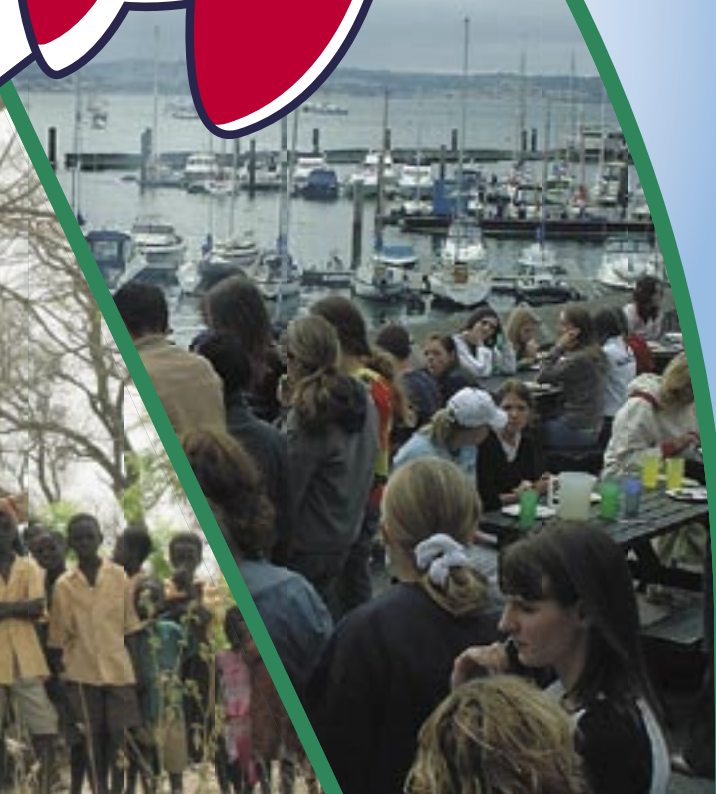
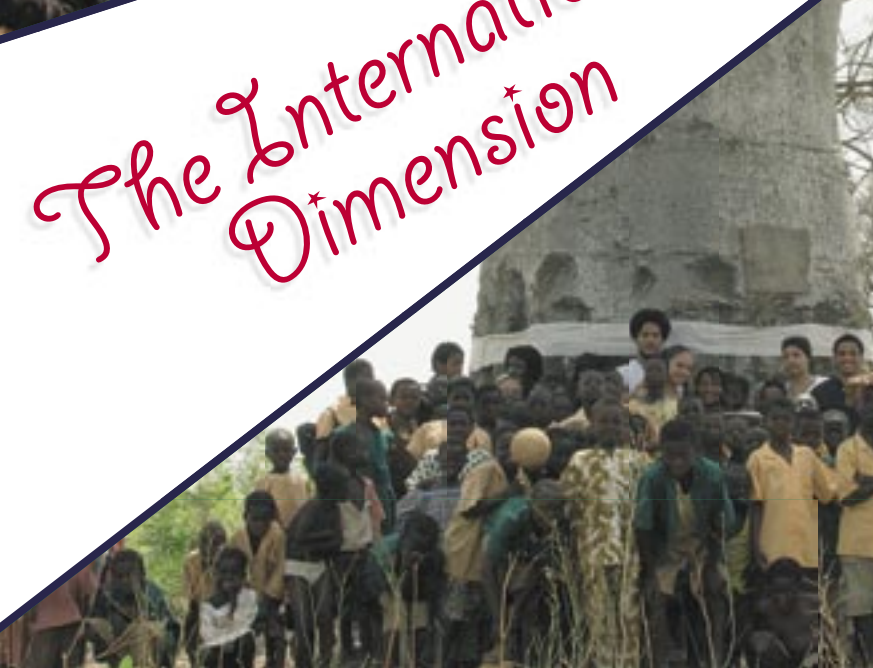


YOUTH WORK WORKS 4



*The International
Dimension*



Itinerary



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YOUTH WORK WORKS 4

Setting off



International Youth work with young people has an image problem. Some people see it as being easy and fun or 'a bit of a jolly' while others view it as 'too challenging and difficult for our young people'.

Despite this, a massive range of international opportunities is taken up each year by young people in the South West region. In truth each experience is different as is each outcome, but for me this is the beauty of the work that we do.

The international visit is the decorative icing on the international cake but it is the mixture and baking that makes it for me the gold standard of youth work.

The full involvement of young people in the planning, preparation and delivery of an international programme provides the perfect platform for teamwork; self-awareness and self-confidence.

One aspect of international youth work that I always enjoy is the opportunity it provides for groups and individuals to reflect on their own lives in the South West, and explore and explain the differences and similarities with the lives of young people in other parts of the world. Here are a couple of examples from my own experience:

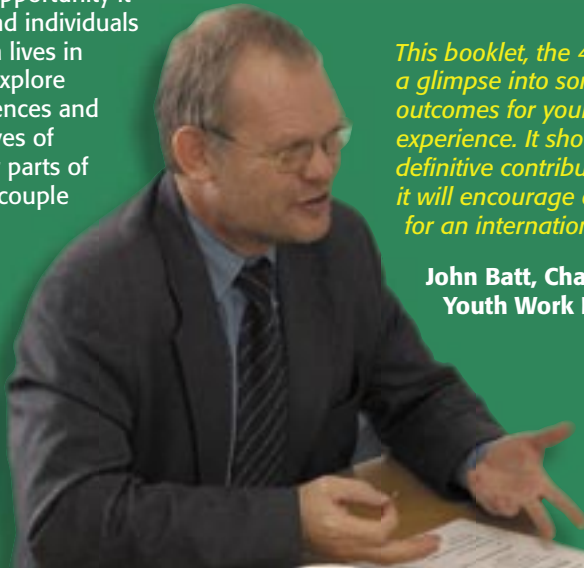
On the plane journey home from an exchange visit to India, I was chatting to a member of the group who told me that she had always thought everyone had social services and weekly benefits. She had assumed she was entitled to everything social services had provided.

For this young woman, who had been in the care of the local authority for most of her 17 years, the visit changed her whole view of her life and gave her a new perspective of her world.

Young people preparing for a networking seminar with other European countries, were asked to provide a 'market stall which represented the food, drink, traditional music and costumes for our country'. This proved an impossible task from this English group. They finally decided to have on their stall Cheddar Cheese, Cider and The Beatles – but the choice of traditional dress to display remained a subject of intense debate and was never agreed on!

This booklet, the 4th in the series of 'Youth Work Works' gives a glimpse into some outstanding youth work projects and the outcomes for young people that result from their international experience. It shows how international opportunities make a definitive contribution to informal social education, and we hope it will encourage every local authority to include an opportunity for an international experience in its 'offer' to young people.

John Batt, Chair SW International Youth Work Partnership



Youth Exchanges with Europe and the Commonwealth

Youth exchanges enable groups of young people from different countries to develop links, visit each other in their projects, homes and neighbourhoods, and jointly create a record of their activities and learning. Young people are encouraged to gain recognition for their learning through awards including Duke of Edinburgh, Youth Achievement Awards, Local Accreditation Awards and the European Youthpass Certificate. Exchanges with EU states and partners can be funded through the Youth in Action Programme.

Torbay, Hamelin and Friends

Torbay Youth Service and Multi-national events with Hamelin & Quedlinburg, Germany; Kalvaria Zebryzdowska, Poland; and Bryansk, Russia.

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Torbay Youth Service has a long standing association with international youth work, largely through its partnership with its twin town of Hamelin (of pied piper fame) in Germany. In fact the youth exchange with Hamelin had its 30th anniversary a few years ago, and the youth exchange was the initial link which led to the towns twinning.

Over 30 years later, and hundreds if not thousands of young people later, the association is still strong. In the last few years, though, the exchange has changed and grown. Previously, an annual bi-lateral exchange involved young people in Torbay and Hamelin in a home stay exchange, involving both groups hosting each year. Over the years this involved trips to one of Hamelin's other twin towns, Quedlinburg, in the former East Germany.

In the last few years, the partnership has been extended to include Poland and Russia. The Hamelin Youth Office, organise an annual multi-national visit to Torbay, where a group of 40-50 young people from each of the three countries stays at a residential centre in Torbay and takes part in a range of water based activities. The visit which takes place at Easter brings a touch of Europe to the area, as they always decorate the centre with Easter trees and eggs. For the young people it is always an enjoyable visit, and for many their first experience both of England and the sea.

Since 2003, this multi-national grouping has become the norm for our international work. Although, we have organised bilateral exchanges with our Polish partners, the main event each year is now an annual summer camp. This has been held in Hamelin and Torbay up to now, but this year is to be held in Poland, and next year in Russia. The Summer camp gets the young people from all four countries working together in small multi-national groups. A theme around sharing cultures through arts and presentations has become a part of the programme, as has national days where food from each country is shared – our English group certainly struggled with the Russian day and caviar!

The young people really enjoy getting to know each other and making new friends.

Gloucestershire Youth Service International Camp

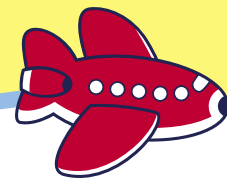
8 young people from Cheltenham joined others from Poland, the Ukraine and Germany for a special week long event in Torun in Poland in Summer 2006, organised to mark the 12th anniversary of the International Peace Camp established in 1994 to celebrate 50 years of peace in Europe.

The trip was the result of months of planning and fundraising by young people themselves, and was aimed at providing an opportunity to meet others from the same age group and different backgrounds.

During their stay, young people visited Copernicus's House and Stutthof Concentration Camp, as well as taking part in a variety of activities including horse riding, arts and crafts workshops and international cookery evenings.

Sandy Bolger, the Youth Worker who organised the event said: 'The trip was amazing, very educational and emotional, with visits to the old town in Warsaw, the Solidarity Museum in Gdansk, and Malbork Castel, where we learned about Teutonic Knights. All the young people bonded really well and some very good friends have been made that I am sure will see long term friendships developing over the years'

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Somerset Youth Service Goes Global

Over the past 10 years young people from Somerset have visited 4 countries on 2 continents, and have hosted reciprocal visits from those countries.

Links and friendships have been made with young people in Denmark, Russia and Belarus, which continue with return visits and meetings, e-mails and birthday exchanges. In 2000, a conference for young people from the 4 countries explored their vision for 2020 and debated Power and Democracy, Communication, Culture and Cultural Integration, Education and

Employment, Violence and Conflict, Health and Ecology and Equality of Personal Rights.

In 2005 youth workers supported Somerset young people to set up an exchange with a school in Accra, Ghana, looking at practical ways of learning about each others cultures.

The funding streams that enable this work to happen (Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, European Youth in Action Programme) are much appreciated in helping to develop and sustain these links.

'I was expecting to experience the unexpected. People were not as different as I'd thought. I hadn't expected it to be so busy and lively... I am inspired to make the most of everything I have'
(Kim, Ghana 2005)

'I would have liked to spend more time in the schools... I have grown more assertive and my confidence has grown'
(Kayleigh, Ghana 2005)

'Deep bonds can be made despite nationalities, languages and different sights of the world'
(Vision statement, Conference 2000)

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Youth Exchanges World-wide

Exchanges involve 2 or more different groups and countries., and normally last between 1 and 3 weeks. Exchanges with Commonwealth countries can be funded through the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council. Youth groups undertaking international exchanges usually raise funds locally to support the exchange, through their own efforts and local grants and sponsorship.



Gloucestershire visit the South Pacific

Five young people had the trip of a lifetime over Summer 2006, spending 3 weeks in Tuvalu, a group of nine islands in the South Pacific (try to find it on a map!).

The trip was organised by Gloucestershire County Youth Service, with a group of young people from the islands due to visit Gloucestershire in 2008.

The purpose of the visit is to give the young people from both countries a chance to gain first hand experience of a totally different way of life. The Gloucestershire young people will produce a full report on their experience in Tuvalu to share with both communities, and youngsters from the islands will do the same when they come to the UK.

17 year old Shane gave his first impressions of Tuvalu: 'It's mind blowing! Apart from how amazing this place is, we've also been given the most incredible welcome by such hugely warm people'

The trip is truly unique in that it is the first ever exchange between Tuvalu and another country. Sadly, the islands could soon be lost due to climate change, with some claiming that the area will be underwater in as little as 10 years time.

Most of the costs of the exchange were met by local fundraising and donations, with a grant of £5,000 from the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council.



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Dorset Youth Service in South Africa

Dorset Youth & Community Service has co-ordinated an exchange with Alexandra Township in Johannesburg over more than 5 years.

Themes for exchanges have included Basic Literacy and Numeracy, outlooks on educational opportunities, wealth and poverty and democracy. The most recent exchange looked at the impact of HIV/AIDS on young people in Alex.

The programme consisted of discussions with youth groups in the township, visits to historical locations, schools and HIV/AIDS facilities, a Game park and the cities of Johannesburg and Durban.

Young people found the exchange, supported by Dorset County Council and the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, an amazing experience.

'I just wish everyone could see and do everything we did! Definitely the experience of a lifetime!'

'Material possessions are not important when you have a close community, friends, dignity and hope'



'Youth Exchanges create a world of winners'

'HIV/AIDS is taken more seriously in South Africa than I expected'



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Hartcliffe & Withywood in Brazil

Young people from Hartcliffe and Withywood visited Sorocaba YMCA in Sao Paulo, Brazil last year as part of a fact finding visit.

Accompanied by youth workers, they explored how Brazilian young people live and what similarities and differences exist between them and their own lives. The group from Hartcliffe and Withywood were part of a senior member training course looking at Youth Leadership, organised by Hartcliffe & Withywood Youth Locality Team.

The trip was organized and planned by the group as part of their training. Issues the group explored included youth crime, educational opportunities and underage sex/teenage pregnancy.

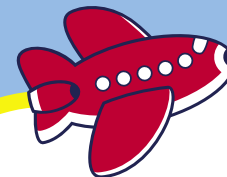
The visit included many trips to agencies and government departments which have a responsibility for the welfare of young people. The group researched how these organisations encourage and support young people to get involved in decision making and strategic developments to prevent young people being involved in behaviour



which could have a negative affect on their lives. One of the visits organised for the group was to a local 'favela', commonly known as shanty towns, where the young people witnessed such extreme poverty and lack of opportunity faced by the community who live there it moved them to tears. The impact of this experience will stay with them for a long time.

Not only was this visit successful in meeting the agreed aims, it was such a fantastic experience for the group that they feel they will never forget, the wonderful hospitality, culture and friendliness of everyone they met. This has impressed them so much that they are now busy planning fundraising events to enable them to host a return visit for some Brazilian young people this summer.

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Multi-lateral Exchanges

Multi-lateral means more than 3 participating countries. The European Youth in Action Programme will fund these exchanges for EU and partner countries. They can be a huge learning experience for the young people involved, and often lead to exciting and innovative joint projects. Here are some examples.

Devon Young Farmers Link with Europe

Devon Federation of Young Farmers Clubs is an organisation run by members, for members and offers a huge range of activities for the 1,400 young people from rural backgrounds, aged 10-26, who form its membership.

One of the activities DFYFC run is travel scholarships, and we took this one stage further by organising a multi-lateral project.

6 participants and one leader attended the project from 7 EU countries: Austria, Poland, Latvia, Republic of Ireland, Finland, Germany and UK. All participants were from rural areas of their country with similar interests. We split the programme into 3 categories, Rural Youth, Environment and Culture.

The project base was Bicton College, which provided accommodation, food, and a full range of outdoor activities. All activities were aimed at every country talking about the 3 topics, to see how different or similar we are, living in the European Union. Activities included a visit to the Eden Project, farm tours, hiking on Dartmoor and making sculptures out of willow.

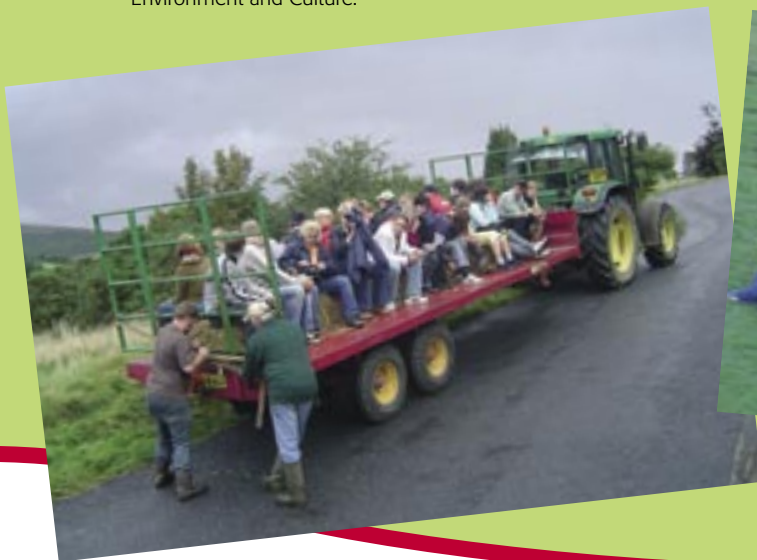
The week finished with a presentation from each topic group on what they had learnt about each other's countries.

The project was funded through the European Youth Programme.

'It was great to see so many people my age with my interests and from so many different countries. I learnt so much about their cultures and traditions'

'I enjoyed the whole experience, meeting people, touring the Devon countryside and just doing something I had never done before. Thank you'

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Poole, Poland and Partners

Members of Poole Youth Forum joined a party of 25 English young people participating in an exchange visit to Poland, along with young people from Finland, France and the UK.

The exchange is part of a rolling programme to be hosted in each of the partner countries. Poole Youth Service helped to facilitate the process, ensuring that the participating group was culturally diverse.

Young people stayed with host families and experienced Polish hospitality. Activities included a regional music festival, drama, dance and art workshops as well as cultural topics relating to Poland's entry to the EU. The work continues with delegations to France and Finland in the autumn and winter.

The French element of the exchange consists of work with Circe Ecole, a French circus school based in Cherbourg, Poole's twin town. 3 days of intense rehearsals culminated in a circus performance to an audience of 200 from the local community. Other cultural activities included experiencing restaurant life, and mixing with young people from the estates in Octeville.

The Finnish section, entitled 'Snow and Ice' utilised the Finnish landscape for activities and experiences that could only be had in that part of the world, moonlight walks by frozen lakes with snow clinging to the branches of trees, to sitting in saunas and sipping tea.

One of the organisers pointed out 'The value of this work cannot be underestimated as young people make contacts and develop their own links and friendships'.

'this has been a life changing experience for me, thank you'

'I felt so welcome and happy there that I was TOLD to come back and visit, which was lovely'

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Point Europa International Centre

Point Europa is an education and training charity which works with the EU Youth in Action Programme to offer:

- Group exchanges: accommodation, support with programmes and events and funding applications for groups of up to 50 young people
- Individual volunteering opportunities, through hosting and sending volunteers funded through the Youth in Action Programme
- Training and network building, through hosting conferences, job shadowing, training courses and other aspects of the Youth in Action programme

'I met a load of people from countries that I'd not really heard of. The Human Rights thing sounded boring, but some of the workshops were amazing. I learnt stuff that I'd never know if I hadn't gone to Poland, including about myself and how easy life is in England' (young man taking part in a multi-lateral exchange in Poland)



'We shared everything as if we were a family. It was difficult and I'm very tired, but it was really good for me. I made new friends and I've done things that I never thought of doing' (young woman after a 2 week environmental project with 5 countries, based in Cornwall)

'The Irish guys were really class. We're still in contact with some of them. I did not want to go home after the week. It was an amazing time' (young man participating in a 5 country music event held in Cornwall)

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Volunteering Opportunities

A surprising number of young people in the South West have been involved in volunteering in other countries in Europe and beyond. The South West also hosts volunteers from other parts of Europe to help with projects from the environment to community care. Opportunities in the EU and its partner countries can be funded through the Youth in Action Programme, and a wide range of youth work organisations and others have made their own links with organisations in other parts of the world, which enable young people to experience life as a volunteer, either as an individual or as part of a national or multi-national group. The examples here show how positive these experiences can be, both for the volunteers and for the communities in which they work.

European Voluntary Service... in Peru

James Condor spent a year in Peru on an EVS conservation project. This is one excerpt from his entertaining and revealing e-diary of the experience.

'It might be slightly unwise to suggest to people you like snakes!

On Monday I fought earnestly to be the one who got to release a captive boa into the creek that runs through the centre of Chaparri. Boa constrictors are the

commonest snakes in Chaparri and can grow to four metres long.

Until last week I hadn't seen one, but that run was broken when I found one in the shower last Thursday. This particular boa was a baby, and I released it in a little pool and watched it swim anyway with paternal pride. So now I'm the snake expert, and we have five deadly 'falso cascavels' to liberate into the wild.

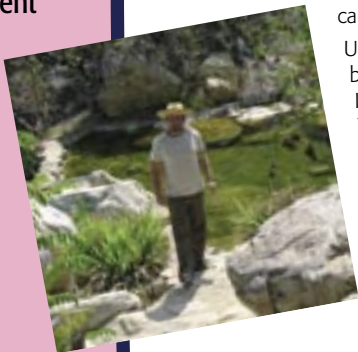
Heinz asked me if I would release these too when I went down to the deer pool the following morning. It seems this snake is blessed with fangs both in the front and the rear of their mouths for added

effect. My five were also young, and thus would not have learnt how to regulate their poison reserves, therefore, increasing the odds that a bite would be lethal. I said I was confident that should an accident occur, we had plenty of time to get the antivenin from Chiclayo before my 24 hours were up.

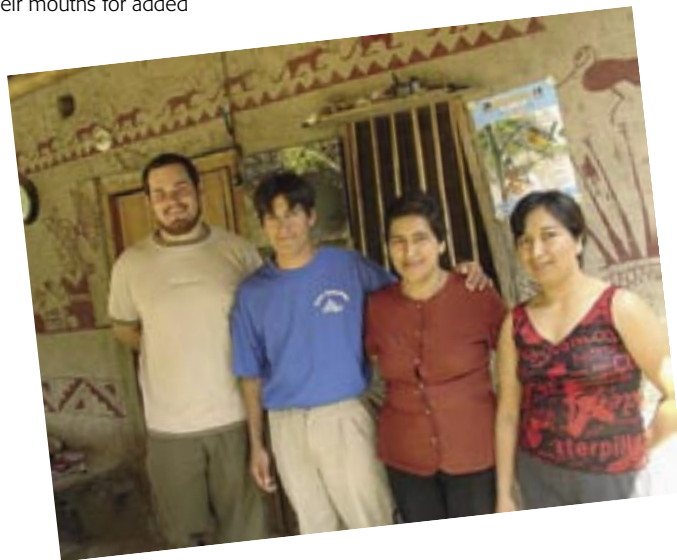
"Yeah," said one of the girls "but like, you wouldn't have time to save your arm or leg, or whatever."

Anyway I digress. The following morning I roped in Javier for some moral support. We chose a spot, and I carefully opened the box and dumped five angry snakes onto the ground before me. In true Indiana Jones style they immediately reared up hissing, these guys certainly knew how to impress their nastiness on you. I hopped away, glad not to be having to make an interesting claim with the medical insurance. Three immediately wriggled into the vegetation, but a couple stayed behind and kindly subjected themselves to a firing squad of photos. Javier obliging herded them onto a rock to more photogenic positions with the aid of a very, very long stick.

I was able to return to camp feeling like a true conservationist!



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Turtles in Guatemala

Around 20,000 turtles nest on the Pacific Coast of Guatemala every year. Although each nest contains an average of 80 eggs, the turtle population is in serious decline because nearly all of the eggs laid are collected by locals and sold.

Project Mango addresses both turtle conservation and socio-economic improvements for local people, and gives young volunteers from Europe the opportunity to live in a village in Guatemala and work with local people on both conservation and community projects.

Volunteers work in the hatchery, raise awareness of the vulnerability of the turtle population and encourage sustainable use of the eggs as a source of income. A volunteer's day can encompass beach patrols, collecting turtle eggs, teaching local school children, fishing in the mangroves, monitoring weather and hatchery conditions village clean up days, surveying the beach and releasing baby turtles. In addition to the real achievement of helping to protect the turtle population by working closely with the villagers, volunteers get an insight into the vibrant Guatemalan culture.

Contact: Jack Scuse, Igomango Project
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'Living and working in the village made me feel as though I was doing something really worthwhile, contributing to the cultural development of a small community and to the vital conservation of Guatemala's turtles'



'Through my time in Guatemala I learnt a lot about turtles, about Guatemala and about myself. I tried lots of new activities and enjoyed the challenge of living in a culture so different to my own'



Devon Youth Service in Uganda

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A group of young people from Mid Devon took part in a three week voluntary work project in Uganda.

The project came out of contacts made by a Ugandan youth worker who was in Cridton for 2 years. Young people were so intrigued by his stories of Uganda that they wanted to see for themselves, and asked the youth worker to help them organise a trip to Uganda.



It took 3 years of fundraising to finance the project and prepare for such a life changing opportunity. Some of the young people involved had never been out of their own county, let alone their own country.

The project has been an amazing journey for the young people involved. The project has helped them to truly understand the difference that poverty makes, and the opportunities they have had by virtue of being born in Britain, such as education, health services and being able to travel to other countries without prejudice or discrimination.

The young people worked really hard to raise money to build a house in Raiki for orphans living in a rural community. In a week, they built the house from nothing, and learnt a lot about building techniques in the process. Team work was a key issue, and everyone rose to the challenge. Many of the Ugandan young people could not believe how committed and hard working the Devon young people were. The work was hard, involving carrying jerry cans of water for three miles to mix cement.

Once the building was in place, the volunteers worked alongside a Boy Brigade supporting orphans in Kampala, sharing skills, language, culture and education about HIV/AIDS. The time to reflect on their own life back home and what it is to 'need' something was quite refreshing.

Now back home, the group are working with other young people sharing their knowledge and skills, working on raising money to bring the Boy Brigade over from Uganda to England to share more experiences. Amongst the positive outcomes for the group are one member deciding to return to school to complete their education, as they felt they owed it to themselves and the young people in Uganda who could not afford to go to school. Others have gained confidence to apply for college or work placements, and some have started the process of training to become youth workers.



European Voluntary Service... in Cornwall

Point Europa is a sending and hosting organisation for EVS in the region.

Based in a small village in Cornwall, it provides volunteering placements for young people from all over Europe, who stay for up to a year, improve their language skills, and contribute to a wide range of projects in the area around the Rame Peninsula. Projects can include environmental work, child care, work with local primary schools, community work, language teaching and working on the range of international exchange and music projects hosted by Point Europa.

Point Europa also uses its huge range of contacts in other EU countries to provide volunteering placements abroad for young people from the South West region, on a similar range of projects to those offered in Cornwall.

One participant commented, prior to leaving for a year's placement in Spain 'I can't believe all this is possible. I really want to try living somewhere else for a while'

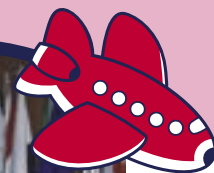
Contact: Leo Kaserer, Point Europa, The Manse, Garrett Street, Cawsand, Cornwall Tel: 01752 822444 Email: leo.kaserer@pointeuropa.org

Girlguiding in India

Lilian Piner worked as a volunteer on a mobile crèche in India, thanks to the World Girlguiding Centre in Sangam in India along with 3 other Guides from the UK, USA and Australia. Lilian writes:

'The Mobile Crèche was not my first choice. Small children, feeding, health care and little prospect of any of the children speaking English was too scary for me to comprehend. Now there is nowhere else I would rather have gone. Mobile Crèche caters for children of migrate construction workers. There are over forty languages in India and often when they move from state to state they are unable to speak the local language of their new community. Some children attend school but as many of their births have not been registered and they don't speak the local language many are unable to. Pune's Mobile Crèches, among other things, teaches Marathi (the state of Maharashtra's local language) and Hindi in order to enable the children that can go to school to go. They also feed the children three times a day, give them vitamins and limited medical care.

My role at the crèche was to help teach the children English, songs and crafts. We did projects on birds, air, the Earth and sea life. I also helped organised an exchange of drawings with my niece's school in England and my crèche. They enjoyed learning new songs especially ones



with actions, which I have always disliked so I'm proud of myself too. I often saw them in fits of laughter over the latest action song I had taught them and it was worth me feeling a fool to get the reactions I did.

Sangam itself has been a wonderful and beautiful haven. It is the perfect place to escape to after a tough day. While there I've met people from all over the world with different cultures, habits and points of view. I have gained knowledge of Guiding and Scouting in different countries and made many new friend. All the staff have been incredibly supportive and there was always someone to talk to if you need help or advice. We have had the opportunity to join in several event activities and learn many things about India and it's culture. I have had

lessons in Marathi, Warli art, Bollywood dancing, Yoga, attended campfires, helped at Bulbuls (Brownies) and have taken part in a seminar on Children's Rights Advocacy. On weekends off I've had a chance to travel and see a little more of India and its culture. I have had an amazing experience and feel I have achieved much. I have gained in confidence and knowledge. I also have a greater understanding of how different cultures should be respected and the way they interrelate and reflect on each other. I now know how important WAGGGS is in the globe. I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I just hope the children have gained as much as I have.'

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Arts and Culture to help Communication

Many really exciting international youth projects are based around arts and cultural activities and themes. Arts, drama, dance and music can all provide common ground amongst young people who might struggle to relate to each other by relying on the written or spoken word. In many projects, young people from different countries and cultures come together to create new pieces, which can be a lasting legacy of their time together.

Kazdanz in Latvia

Kazdanz, a youth dance group from Somerset, spent a week in Latvia in February 2006 as guests of a youth dance group from the small town of Aizkraukle. This was a week of shared dance and many other exciting social activities.

In October, the return leg of the exchange brought the Latvian group to Somerset, for a week of renewed friendship, shared dance and activities and several shared public performances.

It was an unforgettable experience for both groups. One Latvian leader described it as 'the most memorable week of his life'.

Danzatak Youth Dance Company, a sister organisation to Kazdanz, has been invited to participate in a dance exchange with a similar group from the town of Pereslavl in Russia in February 2008. Both groups have previously exchanged with dance groups in the Czech Republic.

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EVS with Circus Maniacs

Circus Maniacs is the UK founder member of NICE (Network of International Circus Exchange).

NICE was formed in 2005, following an international conference in Berlin, and includes over 15 European countries. It initiates a large number of inspiring activities such as a yearly international meeting, exchange programmes, workshops and seminars for young people, teachers, trainers and coaches and a grand youth circus festival.

Circus Maniacs offer European Voluntary Service placements, both in the UK and with partner organisations in Europe. A typical volunteer (if they

exist!) would have an interest in circus skills, youth work or administration of arts or youth projects, and could opt for a wide range of opportunities including working in conflict zones, with young people with special needs street children, and much more. Potential volunteers who may not have much prior experience can undertake a volunteering placement with Circus Maniacs while their EVS application is being processed.

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Bristol Adisa Project

The Adisa project is a partnership between 3 Bristol based youth groups and Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives Services.

The project involved young-people of Afrikan and Afrikan Caribbean descent, to engage them with exploring and communicating the history and legacy of the transatlantic slave trade in Bristol and Ghana. The culmination of this being an exhibition at the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery May 5th-June 17th 2007 the exhibition is called 'Bristol Faces, Afrikan Footprints'.

In February 2007 8 young-people flew from Gatwick Airport on what would be a life changing experience as they embarked on the journey taken by many enslaved people as they left the shores of Afrika transported to the Americas or to England never to return to their homeland again.

Our journey started in Accra where we were greeted by the Ex-aid youth group who would host us for the first 3 days of our trip, we went to Kumasi where we visited the Elmina Slave castle and then Cape Coast castle. These experiences were quite moving as the young-people actually went into the dungeons where the slaves were kept. From there we travelled north to Tamali which for many slaves was where their journey started, at the Slave market where the slaves were bought and sold, washed and 'prepared' for the journey south. The young-people also visited a shea butter project which produces the product to be sold through the Body Shop.

The young-people heard lectures about the impact of slavery on Ghanaian culture and history of Ghana.

Many of the young-people feel that their outlook on life and the communities in which they live have changed as a direct result of the experiences they had on this trip. They returned to Bristol in mid February having collected a range of artefacts to go towards their exhibition.



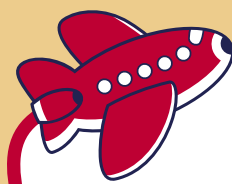
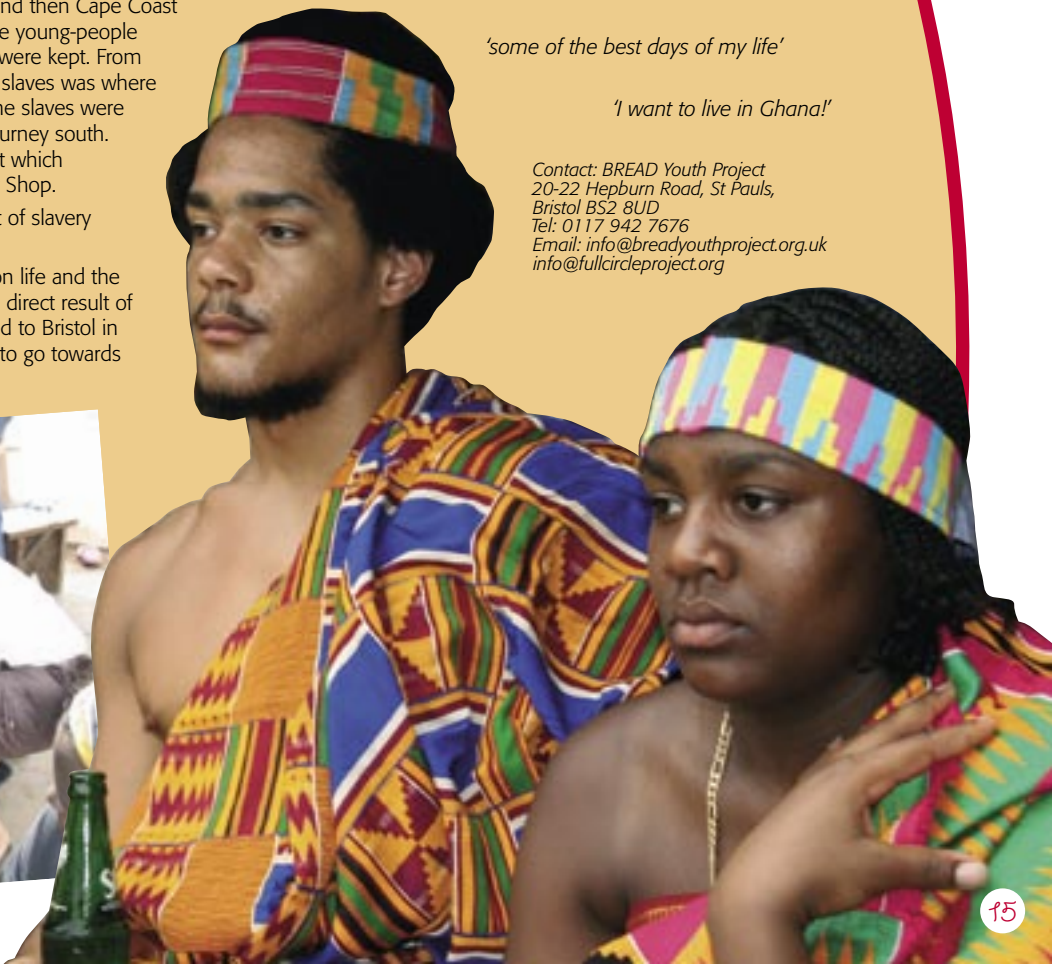
'they have so little yet share what they have'

'it has changed me – how I look at my life and the decisions that I make which affect the rest of the world'

'some of the best days of my life'

'I want to live in Ghana!'

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Somerset Scouts visit Scouts in Egypt

Understanding the World

Work with an international dimension can really help young people to gain a greater understanding of important issues affecting global politics, economics and environment. Not all the projects described here involve travel, showing that international perspectives and communication can be introduced into more everyday work with young people, with tremendous benefits. Youth projects and Development Education providers have forged some valuable partnerships to take this work forward.

The Scouts have a long tradition of international links, with Scouting organisations based all over the world.

Somerset Scouts were hosted by the Arab Scout Region for a week in Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt. They met leaders from other Arab associations, visited local Scouting activities and learned about the life and customs of the region.

Their visit coincided with a regional event to explore the implications of recent World Scouting Conference recommendations for Scouting in the Arab region, with delegates from all over North Africa and the Arabian peninsula.

Highlights of the visit included visits to the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Egyptian Museum, old Cairo and the local markets.

To see so much and enjoy the hospitality of the Arab Scout region and to meet so many Egyptian Scouts and leaders made this a memorable week for every member of the study visit. It was both enjoyable and a tremendous learning opportunity.

For more information visit www.uk-arabfellowship.org.uk

'it was a great introduction to Egyptian Scouting and we made good friendships during the week'

'standing inside the Great Pyramid was like being transported back 4,000 years'

'I was inspired by the friendship, the school children at the Museum, street life and bartering in the markets'



Global Bites

GLADE Development Education Centre in Somerset has produced 'Global Bites' as a toolkit to help workers introduce world issues into their work with young people.

'Global Bites' provides short, snappy inputs to raise awareness and engage young people's initial interest. They give an easy, relaxed, fun approach to difficult global issues. Some work with individuals, some work with groups. Development into a longer project can follow if appropriate. For example:

- **WORLD WALL MAP** Choose a theme (where young people come from; food, clothes they wear...). Put stickers on the map. Over the weeks it becomes a conversation piece
- **NONOPUS** Identify concerns and position them locally/ globally on the tentacles. Which concerns can young people take action on?
- **PHOTOGRAPHS, MAGAZINES, FREEBIES** left around will inspire conversation
- **POSTERS** (for example, the Millennium Development Goals). Put them up and wait for the talking to start
- **VISITORS** Ask someone from another country to come in for a cup of coffee
- **MUSIC** Play a piece of world music

Global Youth Action, The GLADE Centre Ltd
Frog Lane, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 0AP
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Penzance YMCA Explores Migration

Since 1999, Penzance YMCA has offered support to a small group of asylum seekers, acting as advocates on their behalf and helping them to integrate with the local community.

We have raised funds for an Education Fund by hosting internationally themed dinners, and have developed an outreach project which aims to educate members of the community about issues surrounding asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers. We promote positive attitudes towards cultural diversity and help to challenge stereotypes and prejudicial thinking.

Through games, role play and specific case studies, children and young people can understand what different categories of immigrants mean and why some people flee their home countries to escape violence and persecution, and others leave voluntarily to find work.

The project helps to build links between the existing community and immigrants, which helps to foster empathy and understanding. We have encouraged local interest in global issues such as international justice and human rights, identity and difference and the world economy.



'the stories about refugee children were fun but sad and made me think about what I would take with me, what were my favourite things'

'the talks and workshops helped me understand that what I read in the news and see on TV doesn't always reflect all of what really happens'

'I didn't know that migrants and asylum seekers were different: the project helped me to see what they meant'

'talking and listening to asylum seekers about their previous life and the reasons why they left their own countries has helped me understand more the world we all live in'

Contact: David Smith
YMCA Cornwall Tel: 01736 334822
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Bristol Centre in Hiroshima

In 2005 two young people from Bristol Youth and Play Services and one youth worker attended the 'International Youth Conference for a common future in Peace' in Hiroshima.

This was to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Over 100 young people from 10 countries and 15 cities took part.

The young people encountered an extraordinary range of new experiences which challenged them on many levels. These included attending the 60th anniversary ceremony in Hiroshima Peace Park with over 1 million people from around the world in temperatures of 37 degrees. They also gave speeches and took part in public discussion panels. Much of the 2 weeks was spent on intercultural exchange and building friendships across the continents which was an exiting, intense and at times emotional experience.

What did the young people get out of it?

They described it as 'life changing' and afterwards felt; 'more confident,

more independent and so much more aware of other cultures and how people feel'.

Learning about different cultures, for example; ' body language, personal space issues, bathing, food, behaviour and education systems, and respect for older people'.

They were amazed at how youth work and participation is; 'different in other places – can really see the benefits of UK system' .

They were shocked at; 'what different pressures young people have in Korea, China and Malawi compared to UK – they even brought their home work with them on the exchange!'

Key outcomes:

- Increased personal confidence
- More assertive and better at negotiating
- Awareness of self and others
- Re-evaluation of personal prejudice, values and assumptions about other cultures
- New sense of responsibility towards themselves and others
- More independent
- Increased motivation to take on new challenges back home
- Gained accreditation
- Range of new skills, for example language and speech giving

Contact: Kaz Williams, Personal Safety Project Officer
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There is no truth in the rumour that young people are not interested in politics, as these examples show. Young people are actively involved in decision making in the UK and many other parts of the world. To help young people develop international links with others, the EU Youth in Action Programme now contains an allocation for Youth Democracy Projects which will be of real benefit to young people in the South West .



In 2006 9 young people from Bristol travelled to Germany, alongside German and Polish young people, to take part in an international youth conference to look at the effects mass media has on democracy.

Young people participated in morning and evening conference sessions exploring different media and their impact in different countries.

In the afternoons they visited the local area, and local media organisations, including a newspaper, radio station, publishers and internet company, where they learnt how media works from insiders.

Young people from different countries worked together in groups and each nationality presented a small show to explain the way the media is used in their country and compare with other groups.

After the conference, participants travelled to Hannover, which is twinned with Bristol, and visited the Town Hall and met the Mayor, who was leaving office that day, after 33 years! Group members also visited the football stadium, a venue in the 2006 World Cup, and met the team manager Dieter Hecking.

The journey back to Bristol gave everyone the chance to relax, talk about the week and share photos. Many new friends were made, and all had a great experience, enjoyed themselves and achieved a lot. For some, gaining the confidence to talk in front of a big group was a massive step in their life. Everybody learnt a lot of new educational and life skills, and had an amazing time.

URBACT Young Citizens Programme

Young people from Bristol participated in the URBACT Young Citizen's Project which ran from 2004 to 2006; it was the product of an active collaboration between 9 European cities from six member states.

The basic aim of the network was to explore models of participation designed to empower young people to make a contribution to civic life in their cities. We learned from each other, and produced a 'toolkit' of ideas and recommendations useful whether you are just starting out in participation, or well down the road to involving young people as decision makers in the community.

Amongst the recommendations of the network:

- No single solution is suitable for all cities.
- Disadvantaged and excluded young people often need to be pro-actively engaged with and encouraged. Taking a number of different approaches, in terms of the forms of participation you adopt, will help to ensure that more young people are reached.

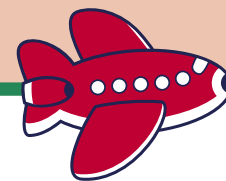
- Recognising the contribution of young people to the setting-up and running of a participation process or project is key to maintaining their motivation and commitment.
- Participation is increased through accessible language and structures, including providing creative ways to give young people a voice; this could include the use of performing and other arts.
- Organisations seeking commitment from young people must be open and honest about what they want to achieve through their participation.



The toolkit and supporting documents are available online at www.urbact.org, selecting YOUNG CITIZEN'S PROJECT from the drop-down menu on the right of the page.



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Want to know more about international youth work?

The South West International Youth Work Partnership (SWIYP) has recently been formed to promote and support international youth work experiences for young people in the South West region.

SWIYP brings together interested individuals from local authority and voluntary sector youth organisations, European Officers in local authorities, Development Education Centres, arts projects and volunteering organisations with an international dimension – and anyone else who is interested in supporting international youth work!



For general information about SWIYP and international youth work opportunities in the South West region visit the Regional Youth Work Unit pages at:

www.learning-southwest.org.uk

or contact:

Gill Millar, the Regional Youth Work Unit @ Learning South West, Bishops Hull House, Bishops Hull, Taunton Somerset TA1 5EP

Telephone: 01823 365441

Email: gill_millar@learning-southwest.org.uk

For information, advice and funding support on a wide range of opportunities offered through the European Youth in Action Programme and related activities, contact Connect Youth International, the UK National Agency recognised by the European Commission:

www.connectyouthinternational.com

For information, advice and funding support on exchanges with other countries in the Commonwealth, visit the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council website:


www.cyec.org.uk

or contact the SW representative:

John Batt, Project Manager – Participation, Somerset County Council, Children & Young People's Directorate, County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY

Telephone: 01823 358065

Email: jbatt@somerset.gov.uk



**REGIONAL
YOUTH WORK UNIT**
HELPING YOUTH WORK WORK

The logo features five stylized human figures in silhouette, standing on a yellow and white background. Below the figures is the text "REGIONAL YOUTH WORK UNIT" in bold, uppercase letters, and "HELPING YOUTH WORK WORK" in a smaller, italicized font below it.