

## INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING: ADVENTURE, BUSINESS, COMMITMENT?

**We would like our volunteers to be influenced by the experience in a vital way**

Volunteering is seen as a good thing. When someone claims to be a volunteer, it looks like if this person right away belonged to the category of valid, important people. It seems that by saying "I am a volunteer" one should automatically be respected, recognized and trusted. In the case where the volunteering period extends from six to twelve months- the so-called international volunteer- these impressions can be easily more intense: "Did you hear that so-and-so went to Peru for a year as a volunteer? How amazing!"

Trying not to fall into a groundless pessimism but stemming from our own personal and group experiences, we believe that we must study in depth the sense of volunteering we would like to promote in our small NGOs "Claim for Dignity e.V." and "Clam per la Dignitat". Volunteering can be understood in many ways and it can be the cover of many activities that on the medium and long-term neither favor the beneficiary of the action nor the volunteer. Depending on the type of volunteering we support we will enhance either a positive type of international cooperation that on the long term creates more dependency from the developing countries, or a positive cooperation where the principle of self-sustainability and development of beneficiaries is a major issue.

We are aware of the fact that some associations in developing countries collect money

## editorial

through international volunteering programs, in the form of volunteers' accommodation and maintenance expenses. Regardless of how fair that may be we prefer not to follow that approach and therefore, we have decided that our volunteers have to manage their own accommodation and resources. In other occasions, the countries sending the volunteers –in this case Germany- charge their volunteers a fee for capacitating and sending them abroad. In this case we would also like to step out of line as association: we prefer not to demand any fee from our volunteers. If the circumstances forced us to do so in the future it would be made within a framework of justice and transparency.

It is clear that in order to spend several months or a year in a foreign country, a considerable level of curiosity and adventure is required. Nevertheless, we support and encourage volunteering based on a solidarity spirit. We would like our volunteers to be influenced by the experience in a vital way. Solidarity does not end with a project.

In the type of international cooperation we would like to promote, either we all win (beneficiaries, volunteers, professionals, mothers, fathers....) or something is not working. Therefore, we support international volunteering that aims for more than a brief adventure; we support healthy volunteering, without being the target of a lucrative business. We support volunteers that look at their day by day with other eyes, working for a better world with modesty and commitment.

In this issue we present an article about volunteering from Deisi Betancurt in Peru and Édison Fañanás in Germany.

The Council

## VOLUNTEERING FROM GER- MANY (AND SPAIN)

**Offering a general framework for projects of cooperation that will facilitate encounters and experiences that could change the way we live.**

The profile of our small NGOs "Claim for Dignity e.V." (Germany) and "Clam per la Dignitat" (Spain) is based on three main pillars: (1) the commitment to the community we live in, (2) the commitment to projects of cooperation as well as (3) sensitivity and education. The friendship and personal relations we experience through these three pillars should be the soul of our small NGOs. This is the same spirit many of us already experienced as adolescents in church communities and that later drove us to found these NGOs. For many of us religion remains the most important leitmotiv of our commitment.

Through our history – soon we will have our 10th anniversary - and most of all through our previous history, it becomes obvious that we do not have big economic aspirations since we are not primarily in search of money to implement projects of cooperation. Our main asset is, however, the human factor offering a general framework for projects of cooperation that will facilitate encounters and experiences that could change the way we live.

Within these premises and after years of search it seems we finally found an organization that complies with our wish to support projects of cooperation through a professionally managed volunteering program with a significant temporal commitment of one year. But we are not alone: We collaborate with the confederation of the German catholic youth (the BDKJ, or "Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend") of the diocese Rottenburg-Stuttgart, the region where our office is registered. The BDKJ is an organization of the Catholic Church that has itself a large experience with international volunteering and offers a network of other small

## thoughts

NGOs and churches also working with international volunteers.

The collaboration between BDKJ and "Claim for Dignity e.V." is imbedded within the organization for international volunteering "Weltwärts" (i.e. world wards) of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This program economically supports young people between 18 and 29 years during their international volunteer experience. In return, both, the dispatching and the receiving organization have to fulfill clear terms and conditions that also concern the content of the assignment. There are for instance 25 mandatory days of training: 15 before, 5 during and 5 after the volunteering period. Volunteers are also assigned a qualified mentor at the place of their volunteering and who is not related to the project.

As of August 2010 Sarah Ament and Judith Manusch, who just passed their final secondary-school examinations at the Robert-Bosch-Gymnasium in Langenau, will be the first two volunteers of "Claim for Dignity e.V." participating in this program with a one-year assignment in Arequipa. We want this to be a mutually benefitting experience for everyone involved: For them, for those who will receive them, for those who will work with them, for those who will benefit from their work and for us who will accompany them.

Édison Fañanás Lanau



## VOLUNTEERING FROM PERU

## experiences

**We hope that the desire and enthusiasm with which you start work are maintained throughout your stay with us**

My name is Deisi Betancur H. I'm a nutritionist and I am 26 years old. I've been involved in the "Education versus malnutrition and poverty" project since its beginnings in 2007. The project's execution began in March 2008, with the completion of a functioning community cafeteria in "La Mansión", a young town in Arequipa (Perú). The project has 2 important functions:

(1) Training. These trainings are aimed at education on issues of food, nutrition and health on a permanent basis for:

- mothers and fathers
- school children

(2) Operation of the community cafeteria. Work begins in the cafeteria in the morning (9:00 am), where four mothers or fathers (scheduled on a monthly basis) are responsible for cooking, under my direction, or under the guidance of Pamela (verification and recommendations of hygiene needed during preparation, proper distribution of rations, acceptability of the food preparations for the children, etc). To date we are distributing 125 rations (120 children, four mothers and a nutritionist). The preparations were made based on the planning of menus according to the nutritional requirement of the children.

What we propose to the volunteers of "Claim for Dignity e.V."?



Help in the areas of:

(1) Training or education

a) Support in the development of training materials, for both children and parents (puppet shows, sheets, and others).

b) Contribution in the implementation of the workshops (staging puppet shows, application of assessment tests, etc.).

(2) Community cafeteria

a) Teaching of hygiene and manners when eating meals (this is an area that requires much work and attention because young children do not receive adequate training in their homes). It is important to be together with the children on time for lunch and to eat with them.

(3) Others

a) Monitoring of cases (home visits) to identify and propose solutions when children or their families are experiencing any difficulties or are not sensitive enough to participate in the project.

b) Support in nutritional assessments (weight, height and the processing of the obtained data).

c) Opening of activities or workshops in which you, the volunteers, may teach or share your knowledge, tastes and skills with children (teaching English, singing, theater, sports, etc.).

What we expect from volunteers „Claim for Dignity e.V.“?

Since we are already aware of their desire to work, what we hope is that the desire and enthusiasm with which they start work is maintained throughout your stay with us, taking into consideration, our cultural and social differences.

We are also very interested in your initiatives and innovations that can contribute to improve the project.

Your participation is very important to us and will be very helpful, but it will be, most of all, a joy for the people of the house, who find reasons for joy, and hope in knowing that there are people willing to invest not only their time and knowledge, but also their happiness.

Deisi Betancur H.

# news

## NEWS OF "CLAM PER LA DIGNITAT" – SPAIN

- On Friday 5th of March at 21 pm at the Sarrià's Parish Center, it was held the traditional „Sopar de la Fam“ (a dinner organized in support for the poor) to raise funds for the project „La Mansion“ in Peru. Stephanie Wildenberg, a board member of „Claim for Dignity e.V.“ as a cooperator in Arequipa (Peru) spent six months working in the project, made a presentation and shared her experience in relation with it. The collection amounted up to € 285. Thank you all!
- In May will take place the 11th edition of the Fair Trade Festival and the Ethical Bank Day in Barcelona (Sarrià). CxD is a collaborating institution. Throughout the month there will be exhibitions, conferences, talks ... and on Saturday, the 8th of May at the Plaça de Sant Vicenç de Sarrià (Barcelona) will be a trade fair involving different activities (concerts, storytelling, eco-lunch...).
- Last 20th April was born Gisela Esparza Muñoz, the daughter of Mireia and Antonio. Congratulations!
- We need volunteer translators (Catalan / Spanish, Catalan or Spanish / English).
- Anyone interested in volunteering for „Sostre Project“ in Barcelona, contact Xavier Laguno (xavierlaguno at gmail . com) or with secretary of CxD.

## NEWS OF "CLAIM FOR DIGNITY e.V." - GERMANY

- 22. and 23.01.10 Michael and Stephanie take part at a conference of the BDKJ (Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend). The BDKJ is since 2008 a registered organisation for the volunteer service „Weltwärts“ of the german ministry of economic cooperation and development.
- 02.02.10 Stephanie presents the Arequipa-Project at the Christian-Morgenstern-School and youth-aid in Reutlingen-Rommelsbach. After the presentation there is an intensive and interesting discussion. The young people decide to support the project.

- 19.02.10 – Meeting of the members of the association in Tübingen, in which decisions for the strategic development are discussed.

- 26.02.10 – Meeting in Langenau with students, teachers and parents of the Robert-Bosch-Gymnasium for the preparation of the Weltwärts-stay of Judith Manusch and Sarah Ament

- Presentation of the Arequipa project on the website of betterplace.org  
www.tinyurl.com/arequipa2010

- 16.04.10-19.08.10 Josephine Asche from Tübingen is a field worker on the Arequipa project. www.phincheninperu.blog.de/

- Lucia and Serge marry in April in Peru. Our congratulations.

- 26.04.10 Meeting of Michael, Sarah and Judith and the video study group of the RBG. Planning of a video documentary of the Peru stay

- Banchu Fañanás-Hernández ist the newest family member of Maria and Edi. Banchu was born 21.05.2009 in Mizan (Ethiopia). Edith, Mercè and Tomàs are very happy about their new sister.

- 28.04 - 02.05.10 Sarah Ament and Judith Manusch receive the first part of the training from the BDKJ for the Weltwärts program. Both are from August 2010 to July 2011 in Arequipa (Peru) to support the project „Poverty and malnutrition versus education“.

- 03.05.10 Meeting of the members of the association in Tübingen to prepare the general assembly

- 05.06.10 general assembly of the members of the association in Tübingen

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### Published by Clam per la Dignitat

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