Volunteer News

icv

Agenda

Almería, Spain

6 - 7 May 2005
Jornada social y nuevas tecnologías: Cibervoluntariado y Ciberactivismo

Brazzaville, Congo

16 - 18 May 2005
Symposium: link ICT research to development

Fribourg, Switzerland

5-7 June 2005
Swiss Social Forum

Geneva, Switzerland

8 May 2005
Genève Marathon

15-24 June 2005
Landmine Survivors Network

25 July - 12 August 2005
UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights

11-13 October 2005
International Platform for Sustainable Urban Development

Lucerne, Switzerland

30 May - 3 June 2005
European University of Voluntary Service (EFU)

Montreal, Canada

29 May - 1 June 2005
Montreal International Forum (FIM)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

8-10 June 2005
Regional Conference of the World Summit on the Information Society

Tunis, Tunisia

16-18 November 2005
World Summit on the Information Society (Phase 2)

Contact

ICVolunteers, PO Box 755, 1211 Geneva 4, Switzerland

Phone: 41 22 800 14 36 / Fax: 37
Email: info@icvolunteers.org
Web: www.icvolunteers.org
For full list of offices see page 8.

TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS BRIDGE LINGUISTIC GAPS
COOPERATION IS THE KEY

What is the difference between a volunteer interpreter and one that is offering a paid service? There is actually more than just the voluntary nature that separates the two. For volunteers, often one important difference seems to be that they can invest more in the people they work with, apart from offering their professional skills. This is what several of our interpreters and translators have experienced, as well as the people for whom they translate.

Wendy, a professional translator and interpreter originally from the United States, now living in France volunteered with ICV for the first time last year and was pleasantly surprised: 'There is a true sense of cooperation and people go out of their way to help one other', she said afterwards.

'As there is less work pressure and a sense of group spirit, it is quite easy to make friends', Wendy points out -- a welcome change from working as a pro-

fessional translator. 'Translators often work in isolation and get little feedback when they send in a translation job (typically only when there is a problem). Not so when volunteering with ICVolunteers, according to Wendy: 'You are part of a team. Since my first volunteer experience at the 18th IAVE World Volunteer Conference in Barcelona in 2004, I have met up with many of the interpreters. We are more than just colleagues, in fact real partners.'

Volunteer interpreters are expected to be flexible in their work, but the other side of the coin is that there is always a helping hand when the job gets challenging. The volunteer translator or interpreter is less constrained by expectations of a professional role. 'As a volunteer I can concentrate on how to best communicate a message and help people. It is very rewarding', Wendy says.

Another advantage: there is no maxi-

mum age limit for volunteer jobs. In Barcelona, Wendy actually volunteered together with her daughter and other people of all ages. She spoke about 'great dynamics between generations'.

Recipients of ICVolunteers' interpreting services have been equally satisfied. The main reason being, of course, that communication between people of different nationalities is made much easier through interpretation --which can be simultaneous or consecutive-- or the translation of documents. Without volunteers, they would only have their own language skills to rely on, because they cannot afford professionals. Moreover, the cooperative spirit of the volunteers adds value.

"We found it most helpful to have direct contact with the interpreters," said Tidjani Alou and Idrissa Laoualo from Niger, who were attending a course in development at the Graduate Institute for Development Studies (IUED) in

Geneva with the help of ICV-interpreters. In fact, the consecutive interpretation --as used at IUED-- works best if the interpreters develop a relationship with the students and get to know the course materials, says Pierre Dyens, coordinator of the interpreters team. IUED found the help of the volunteers very successful and intends to invite them for next year's 'Diploma of continued education in development studies' as well. Mr. Dyens added that, had he to rely on a paid professional

service, this would simply not have been possible for a program running over a period of 12 weeks. The alternative would have been to offer the courses in English only. However, this would have excluded students who do not have knowlege of English, and also did not seem a good solution for a course given in a French-speaking university and specifically focusing on the effects of globalization on development.

For young professionals and language students, interpreting or translating as a volunteer is also an excellent way to gain experience. ICVolunteer Reuben Imray has been doing voluntary work for this very reason since he finished his studies at the University of Westminster (UK), and has volunteered twice with ICVolunteers. "As a (semi-)professional I gained valuable interpreting experience," he says. "I also made friends in Geneva, which I am considering using as my professional base. I would certainly recommend volunteering for young interpreters like myself starting out in the profession."

Even professionals with skills other than interpretation and translation find it useful to volunteer with their language skills, as Pok Chongcharoen experienced. She volunteered to help the Landmine Survivors' Network that strives to improve the situation of landmine victims worldwide. Pok had worked for various international organizations in the areas of gender issues and child labor, but not as a translator. "I am familiar with social work and felt I could contribute meaningfully," she said. "I translated oral and written texts for Thai and Laotian participants in a workshop leading up to a landmine conference in 2003, as well as summaries of landmine-related treaties, key definitions and other useful information for Thai participants of a landmine conference in Nairobi in 2004. What I got out of it myself was satisfaction, knowledge about new issues and contact with people."

ICV is one of the very few volunteer networks offering this kind of service to NGOs, as demonstrated by a study by Mélanie Curtin with the help of a Fellowship from the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University, and in partnership with ETI (*Ecole de traduction et d'interprétation*) at the University of Geneva. Volunteer interpreting and translating responds to a

clear need, she discovered. NGOs are often on the cutting edge of the increasingly interconnected world, and therefore deal with multiple languages. They act as communication facilitators, including cross-cultural and cross-language communication, and yet often work with very limited means. Mélanie Curtin concludes: "Interpreters and translators -- especially recent graduates or professionals adding a language-- can gain practical and useful experience in the field by volunteering for NGOs. This exchange can provide valuable experience for interpreters and translators, a valuable resource for NGOs, and overall promotes international cooperation and understanding." *(VK / CS)* ∎

INTERNET TIPS FOR TRANSLATORS

Dictionaries

- http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlfv3.htm: treasure of French
- http://europa.eu.int/eurodicautom/Controller: translation for all languages of the EU
- www.granddictionnaire.com/btml/fra/r_motclef/index800_1.asp: translation to and from French and English (Quebec French office).
- www.pons.de: German dictionary PONS (translation to and from French, English, Italian, Spanish, Polish)
- www.babels.org: Social Forum interpreters network
- www.telematin.fr (les 4 vérités, revue de presse) "Translations without Borders"
- http://www.google.com/language_tools: Google automatic online translation
- www.unige.ch/biblio/eti/04basetermi.htm: terminology links of the ETI
- www.lexicool.com: Dictionary of bilingual / multilingual dictionaries

Interpreting services study

- http://piit.beplaced.com: Public interest Interpreting

More links can be found in the link section of ICVolunteers' website www.icvolunteers.org

SOCIAL INTEGRATION THROUGH ICTS

FLEDGLING CYBERVOLUNTEERS PROGRAM TAKING OFF

Our CyberVolunteers Program is well and truly taking off. Our fundraising dinner in January was attended by more than 60 friends and members of ICV. While the benefits are not quite enough to cover the costs of an international cyber-volunteer, they did help us launch the Program in Mali, Congo-Brazzaville and Uganda. Marouen Mraihi, cyber-volunteer from Tunisia, is finishing up the first project, a portal for Malian Municipalities, with a Malian team, and a locally based US cyber-volunteer graphic designer, but living in Mali, who is working on the design of the site. Marouen is doing fine, as you will see on page 8.

Capacity building for women in Congo-Brazzaville

In Congo-Brazzaville, Azur Développement, partner organization and representative of ICV in Congo, is in the process of launching a multimedia center. International and national cyber-volunteers are preparing to support the activities of the center, focusing on information and communication technology (ICT) training for women. This will provide them with the tools they need to enter active life and entrepreneurship.

This seems particularly necessary in Congo-Brazzaville, a country emerging from several years of armed conflict. According to the UNDP Development Report, the average revenue for women is significantly lower than that of men. We had the opportunity to meet H.E. Ms. Leckomba Loumeto, Minister for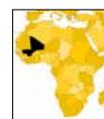 the Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women into Development in Congo, who told us that equality of salaries between identical positions is in fact foreseen in the country's constitution. However, she underlined that the disparities are mostly due to more severe poverty of women. In order to address this challenge, the Ministry has launched a micro-credit project for women-entrepreneurs. In this way, Congo-Brazzaville following the example of other countries, where such projects have experienced great success.

While ICV' cyber-volunteers especially focus on developing Azur's multimedia center, they also interact with other actors, including the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and particularly its "Maison de la femme", a documentation center aimed at women who wish to learn more about their rights, and to read other documents not affordable and / or obtainable elsewhere.

From 17 to 18 May 2005, ICVolunteers

contributed to a symposium organized by Azur Développement in Brazzaville, on the theme of research and ICTs for development. Approximately 80 students, representatives from associations and governments participated in the meeting. Viola Krebs, ICVolunteers' Director, gave a seminar on research tools on the Internet. In addition, her presence at the Symposium was an occasion to launch the working group on "volunteerism, youth and ICTs" in Congo, whose mission it is to prepare a report and recommendations related to volunteerism and ICTs in view of the Tunis event of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to be held in November 2005 (www.itu.int/wsis).

Mali: Shindouk, Touareg from the region of Timbuktu publishes journal

Shindouk, the main character of the documentary realized by ICV and CERN in 2003, just finished writing a travel journal entitled 'The West through the eyes of a Touareg.' The nomad, leader of a tribe of 1,500 persons in the region of Timbuktu, describes his recent and first ever trip to Europe from Timbuktu to Geneva, where he attended the Cyber festival, organized on the occasion of WSIS. Since then, Shindouk has become the first nomad cyber-volunteer. We are currently looking for funds to print his story in book form.

On 24 March 2005, ICVolunteers organized a meeting in Bamako, to launch the national working group on "volunteerism,

ICV launches the website of CyberVolunteers

ICVolunteers proudly presents its new web site for the Cyber-Volunteers Program, designed as a volunteer contribution by Jim Rudolf (SoftWares) and Randy Schmieder (MCART), both members of the CyberVolunteers Program Technical Committee. The web site contains information about the Program, work in progress and plans for the future. Just have a look at http://cyber.icvolunteers.org.

youth and ICTs." The meeting brought together some 50 organizations, as well as government and UN representatives. It was made possible thanks to the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Communications and New Information Technologies. In Mali, the meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Adama Samassékou, President of the PrepCom of the Geneva phase of the WSIS, followed by speeches by the Tunisian Ambassador to Mali and representatives from the two Ministries. The aim of the working group is to prepare a national report for Mali on the topic, outlining what volunteers do in the country, as well as to bring forward specific recommendations for the years to come.

Partnerships with Universities in Senegal

ICVolunteers has started to work with the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar and the 'Centre de formation supérieure' (CESAG) which trains students for the sub-region and has an international reputation for business studies. The aim of these partnerships is to allow students to participate as cyber-volunteers in different projects, be it during or after their studies. This is especially the case for both projects in the sub-region and at CERN (European Center for Nuclear Reserach) in Geneva and neighboring France. *(VK)*

Read more about the Cyber-Volunteers Program on page 8. ∎

COVERING THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS:

LEARNING BY SEEING WITH YOUR OWN EYES

Sending reporters to the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has become almost routine for ICVolunteers. But the service is being constantly improved. This year, the volunteers received great compliments.

Every day for six weeks in March and April, ICV's volunteer reporters and editors worked at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Always enthusiastic and committed, they delivered reports on the daily meetings of the Commission as well as on numerous 'side events' organized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on the protection of human rights. And what a job it was.

"I wrote reports on many different subjects and learned a lot," said Maria Lazarte, who holds a degree in international relations and anthropology from London and now lives in Geneva. "It was my first time as a volunteer reporter and I quite liked it." One of the things she noticed in particular was the difference in how the United Nations work ('political negociations'), compared to NGOs whose experiences are firmly rooted in society. As Stefan Roesch noted as well: "It was great to see it with my own eyes instead of in the newspapers."

Both Maria and Stefan are thinking of becoming journalists, and they enjoyed the experience very much. As a third-year student studying international law, Stefan also discovered that reporting is not all that easy. "It took a lot of time, because I do some research into the subject before I write," he explained. At the same time, the reports had to be written quickly, to keep the online news center, ngoCHR.org, up to date as far as possible.

Stefan can rest assured: the volunteers received great compliments, from their editor Sarah Webborn for instance. She said that in general, the quality of the reports in English was very good. And from volunteer coordinator Philippe Dam of CONGO, the organization uniting NGOs affiliated to the UN, in collaboration with whom ICVolunteers and MCART set up the online news center. "Although many of them did not have a human rights background, the volunteers showed the same interest and commitment as our own interns and employees and brought complementary skills and interests as well," he said. "Together, we were able to provide very good coverage of the events. In fact, ngoCHR.org was the only website covering the Commission and the side events extensively, including both official statements of the Commission and a lot of complementary information. It is very important that all this information gets known outside the Palais the Nations."

Philippe was also very pleased with the large number of volunteers, which gave the reporters time to do separate interviews as well, and write reports in different languages (English, French and Spanish). The only thing Philippe would want to improve is the geographical background of the volunteers: it would be nice to have even more volunteers from Asia and Africa. With ICVolunteers expanding, that may be solved in the future.

Oh, and perhaps another thing to think about for next time: the volunteers would have liked more opportunites to meet their fellow volunteers and get to know each other. Their commitment often kept them rushing past each other, they said. The few parties that were organized, were great fun. Well, with pleasure -- ICVolunteers is always ready to improve! *(CS)* ∎

VOLUNTEER REPORTERS BRING A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

CONFERENCE REPORTING OVER THE YEARS

ICVolunteers' conference reporters contribute an important element to a conference that many professional reporters have lost: tons of motivation and a fresh perspective. With nearly ten years of experience in bringing together non-profit organizations and volunteer reporters, ICVolunteers manages to satisfy both parties.

It all started with the 12th World AIDS Conference, in the late 90's, when a team of volunteer reporters worked hand in hand with InfoLink and MCART, in charge of the onsite reporting service, covering the many sessions of the event. That same partnership is now bringing ICV reporters together to cover the International Forum of Montreal in Canada at the end of May, focusing on global governance and democracy.

This year was the third time already that ICV sent volunteer reporters to the meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva to work in partnership with the Conference of NGOs in Consultative relationship with the United Nations (CONGO).

Over the years, ICVolunteers and MCART have developed an effective reporting system and valuable experience in training volunteer reporters to write reports on conference sessions as well as articles and interviews. The volunteer reporters provide the contents for an on-line news service, which can serve as the basis for a final conference report in print or CD-ROM format as well.

Reporters do more than just provide texts, although that is their core activity. They fill in several important gaps. For instance, NGOs that want to attend the Commission on Human Rights cannot send delegates to every session, but still want to be informed. Some organizations do not even have the money to send anyone at all. The volunteer news service allows them to know what's going on despite those constraints.

Rik Panganiban, CONGO's Communications Coordinator, also points out that the volunteers commit to monitor entire sessions, something NGO staff who come with very specific aims often cannot do, let alone professional journalists. "We can really rely on the volunteers," Rik says. "In general, the volunteers are eager to gain experience, and they have a strong desire to be effective and follow the instructions very well."

Most volunteers are no experts in the subject matter of the conference at hand though, and sometimes their reports need to be edited a little. That also serves a purpose, according to Rik: "Some of our NGOs concentrate on field work or have limited experience with the Commission on Human Rights and need more background. Our challenge is always to serve both expert and non-expert audiences and as volunteers often have the same questions as non-experts, they are very helpful."

The fresh perspective of the volunteers actually are an important added value, points out Randy Schmieder, Director of MCART. "Professional journalists are limited by the constraints of their field. They cannot always report everything the way they see it for fear of losing their job. Volunteer reporters, by contrast, are free to report objectively. If you know a lot about a subject, it can make you biased." And when they are biased anyway (because it is very difficult not to be), the volunteers bring in a different perspective to the more experienced participants. "Volunteers help to produce a more balanced picture," says Rik.

Let us not forget that the reporters would not be volunteering but for the fact that they possess valuable skills and are extremely interested in the job: many are students for whom it is an excellent way to take a look behind the scenes of their future working field. Without their participation, the job would be impossible to do.

Randy of MCART: "I am always impressed with the professionalism of the volunteers. A little motivation goes a long ways." *(VK/CS)* ∎

CONFERENCE REPORTS

A partnership program coordinated by ICVolunteers and MCART

- www.conference-reports.org

Past news services:

- IAVENews.org, August 2004, Barcelona, Spain

- ngoCHR.org, since 2004, Geneva, Switzerland

- 4th Intl Conference on Healthcare Resource Allocation for HIV/AIDS & Other Life-Threatening Illnesses, October 2000, Cairo, Egypt

- Harm Reduction Conference, March 1999, Geneva, Switzerland

- World AIDS Conference, July 1998, Geneva, Switzerland

FEEDBACK: TO BE PART OF THE ICV OFFICE TEAM...

The volunteer team at the Geneva office is a critical part of ICVolunteers, without which the organization could not run. Long-term volunteers, taking on responsibility for membership services, fundraising, translation and more, help the organization in a significant way. Each year, ICVolunteers offers a number of internships, in particular in the field of translation (specifically for English, French and Spanish). Louma Atallah and Caroline Daunes share their experience...

Louma Atallah, intern at the ICVolunteers office from April to June 2004: "I did the internship to gain professional experience. I was studying at the '*Ecole de traduction et d'interprétation*' (ETI) in Geneva at the time. My job was to translate the annual report of ICVolunteers from English into French. Was it useful? Yes very much so. The experience gave me the opportunity to work quickly and efficiently on a long project, taking into account the constraints which present themselves. Roughly, there were constraints of time, quality, jargon of the field and the main idea one tries to transfer. I particularly enjoyed accomplishing a job from the beginning to the end. And also the initiatives that ICVolunteers let me take, and the confidence and encouragement of Viola (ICV Director) and Kathy (ICV Volunteer Coordinator). I have now just finished my studies and am looking for work."

Caroline Daunes was an intern from October to December 2004. She studied English in Toulouse and finished her studies in Vancouver (Canada). Back in Europe, she decided to complement her education with translation studies (French / English / German) at the ETI. Caroline: "I became an intern to be able to work and translate for an extended period of time. I wanted to know if I would still like it after some time. What I really appreciated was that René [a longtime volunteer translator of ICV, ed.] reviewed my texts, and the work we did together. Moreover, the subjects were always interesting, never forbidding, and rich in content and substance. Conclusion: fortunately, I have made a good choice in the course of my studies!

My computer skills, were not completely up to date when I started, where the internship was very useful too. Some advice for colleagues: do not hesitate to ask when you are not sure about something. For instance concerning the terminology used by international and non-governmental organizations. Internships are useful insofar as they allow you to use what you have learned at university in a different context. It is useful for the hosting organization as well as the translator, a win-win situation for everyone." ∎

PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE APPLIED TO THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR

Vijay Singh from India, was a volunteer at the ICV office until January this year. Armed with sales and marketing experience, he helped to contact companies in Geneva to interest them in sponsorship for the CyberVolunteers Program. Vijay has now joined his wife and son in New York.

Vijay (right) at the Hewlett Packard charity exhibition

How did you get involved in ICV?

For the last eleven years or so of my professional career, I worked in sales in different countries. That gave me opportunities to work and interact with people from different geographical backgrounds. I moved to Switzerland from Kenya with my wife, who works for the United Nations. Once in Geneva, I used my so-called 'sabbatical break' to discover activities which probably would not have occurred to me otherwise.

One of them happened to be in the field of volunteerism. In order to get international conference exposure, I got involved in the World Summit on the Information Society (i.e. the WSIS conference in Geneva 2003, ed.), where I volunteered for ICVolunteers. One thing led to another and I eventually became part of the fundraising team of ICV, particularly focusing on the private sector.

How different was your volunteer work from previous jobs?

Before ICV I had been using my professional skills to facilitate sales and generate business, following the norms of the profession. Using my experience and skills for community development without any 'materialistic' gain was sort of unusual to my mould! So my volunteering was not only challenging but also an opportunity to learn new dynamics of interaction with people on a totally different level.

My role was primarily to initiate contacts with the private sector to discuss the CyberVolunteers Program and explore possibilities of forming a partnership to support the program. Through the program, volunteers who specialize in information and communication technology contribute to development projects with a special focus on the African region.

How do you rate your experience at ICVolunteers?

Great! It was a tremendous experience. I truly enjoyed working in a field which I only had encountered from a business perspective. Working at ICV also gave me an opportunity to interact with and learn from people with different backgrounds and experience.

Would you be pursuing volunteerism in the future?

First of all, I am happy that I contributed my time and experience to a project that benefits Africa, where I lived for almost eight years. Given the chance, I would be happy to volunteer for the CyberVolunteers Program as a side activity in the future. ∎

VOLUNTEERING IN SOUTH AFRICA IS DEVELOPMENT

EXPLORING CYBERVOLUNTEERS AT THE CAPE TOWN VOLUNTEER CENTER

In December 2004, ICV South Africa, hosted by the Cape Town Volunteer Center, organized a meeting of the Civil Society Bureau of the World Summit on the Information Society. It is now preparing to receive international cyber-volunteers to focus on an HIV/AIDS project.

While South Africa has become the United States of Africa for some since the end of apartheid, it still faces enormous social challenges: one of the world's highest HIV/AIDS prevalence and unemployment among youth living in poor neighborhoods, to name just a few. These are the people the Volunteer Center is working for. During a visit to the Cape Town office, we discussed cooperation in the CyberVolunteers Program.

Serving 300 member organizations which bring together people form different social backgrounds, origins and religions, training volunteers is a core mission for the Cape Town Volunteer Center. The aim: to improve the work of the volunteers, obviously, but also to contribute to the development of South Africa. "We cannot see volunteering as anything but developmental," said Shaida, Recruitment Coordinator for the Cape Town Volunteer Center. "Few young people can go to university, so one

way for them to actually educate themselves is through volunteering. If young people get involved in volunteering, the Center has the duty to make sure that they can develop their skills and learn new things."

Beverley, who is in charge of administration and project management, could not agree more. "One of our successes is that we train volunteers here. We are looking at volunteers with skills and those skills can be put to good use."

So can cyber-volunteers with specific information and communication technology (ICT) skills help train volunteers who are less familiar with computers and technology? Deline van Boom, Director of the Volunteer Center, certainly thinks so. "Our website is terribly out of date, and I have given up on even mentioning it to anyone," admits Deline. In addition, the Center needs help with updating its database and, more importantly, with bringing up to speed the technical skills of the volunteers. Students from Cape Town do help with IT-related work, but only when they have time -- which is less than the Center needs.

In a country that has many IT-skilled people, one of the key conditions is that local cyber-volunteers work hand in hand with internationals. In fact, for local volunteers it is a way of doing something for their environment, gaining experience

and also showing what they are capable of. Jan, coordinator of an international youth program brought to South Africa by Canada World Youth, stressed: "It is very important that whatever international program is being brought to South Africa, it helps to enhance local capacity and does under no circumstance put it at risk."

In light of all of this, the CyberVolunteers Program will in particular focus on skills transfer and capacity building in the Cape Town region, and with the Cape Town Volunteer Center in particular. *(VK)* ∎

LOCAL LOOPS AND MICROWAVE LINKS

VOLUNTEER SHAKES SAND OUT OF HIS KEYBOARD IN MALI

With a qualification in computer engineering under his belt and looking for some real-world experience, young Tunisian Marouen Mraihi seized the opportunity to become a cyber-volunteer in Mali. He summarizes his first impressions as follows:

"Everything is fine at the moment. I admit that it took me some time to get used to life in Mali which is different from my home in North Africa. Above all, the contact with people here has given me a better understanding of local life and made my stay more pleasant.

I work for the Mali Towns' Association (*Association des Municipalités du Mali* or AMM) which is participating in the execution phase of a process of decentralization in the country. My main project is to help the Association in its mission to promote the principles and benefits of decentralization at the level of Mali's regions, towns and local associations. The most effective way identified to do this is to create a web portal grouping together all the documents and information necessary to encourage communities to look for innovative ways of using local resources and to establish inter-communal and international partnerships. I am also available to the Association for any technical assistance related to their network and computer systems, and have been given the task of studying the migration to a broadband internet connection.

Following the first project meeting to introduce the Association's portal project and the decentralization of Mali, I was given three weeks to translate the vision of the various partners in the project into technical components and to prepare a work plan for the following months.

For a computer scientist like me, the most striking technical aspect in Mali is the extensive use of the radio frequency spectrum as the main support for communication. This is visible in the number of local and regional radio stations and the size of their audiences, the fierce competition between the historical mobile telephone operator and the new private operator, and the number of Internet Service Providers sharing their satellite connections to broadband subscribers via radio local loops and microwave links." ∎

ICV GETS CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH THE UN

ICVolunteers has recently obtained special consultative status with ECOSOC, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This is good news! It means that ICVolunteers no longer has to go through an application procedure to attend international conferences convened by the UN, as well as the preparatory meetings of those conferences. In addition, ICV staff (i.e. Viola and Kathy) received badges for the UN, which makes looking for volunteer opportunities a lot easier.

ECOSOC is the main organ of the United Nations to coordinate the economic and social work of UN agencies and commissions. It is the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues. ECOSOC consults with academics, business sector representatives and more than 2,100 registered NGOs. *(CS)*

About ICVolunteers

ICVolunteers is a non-governmental organization that recruits, trains and coordinates volunteers for non-profit projects. The organization has three main areas of activity:

- Mobilization of volunteers for social, humanitarian, environmental and scientific conferences;
- Coordination of projects linked to volunteer sending;
- Promotion of volunteerism.

ICVolunteers works with a network of 1,500 volunteers. To date, the organization has carried out projects in Europe, Africa and Asia and just opened a new office in Canada. In 2003, ICVolunteers worked with volunteers and volunteer organizations from 66 countries.

As the Focal Point of the WSIS Volunteer Family, ICVolunteers coordinates a series of activities linked to information and communication technologies. For more information see *www.worldwidevolunteer.org*.

Ongoing projects:

- Reporting services for the UN Commission and Sub-Commission on Human Rights
- Organizing meetings for the Landmine Survivors Network

Offices

ICVolunteers Headquarters
104, rue de Carouge, PO Box 755
1211 Geneva 4, Switzerland

ICVolunteers Mali
mali@icvolunteers.org

ICVolunteres Congo-Brazzaville
Azur Développement
congo@icvolunteers.org

ICVolunteers Senegal
senegal@icvolunteers.org

ICVolunteers Canada (Montreal)
canada@icvolunteers.org

ICVolunteers South Africa
(Cape Town), The Volunteer Center
southafrica@icvolunteers.org

Phone: +41 22 800 14 36
Fax: +41 22 800 14 37

Email: *info@icvolunteers.org*

Web sites:

www.icvolunteers.org,
www.worldwidevolunteer.org
http://cyber.icvolunteers.org