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VIP building bridges between Europe and China through intercultural dialogue

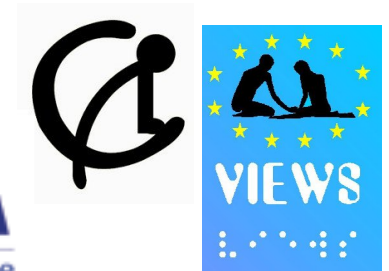
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AISBL VIEWS Belgium and school ZCMX
massage China



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The "VIP building bridges between Europe and China through intercultural dialogue" is a Youth in Action project, funded and developed in the framework of Action 3.2 (Cooperation with other partner countries in the world).



It takes place in Liège (Belgium) and Beijing (China) between 01.10.2012 and 30.12.2013. The project is a partnership between the International AISBL VIEWS Belgium and school ZCMX massage China.

Topics:

- Youth policy
- Intercultural dialogue
- The situation of visually impaired people (VIP) in the participating countries

Activities

1 . Feasibility Visit Belgium (25-29 November 2012)

The discovery of formal education and non-formal opportunities available for French VIP Community of Belgium

For a few days, Niu Yue and Zhang Cheng came to visit us at Cork to meet us and get to know us. We talked about the Youth in Action program and the objectives we wanted to achieve through our cooperation. We then prepared all the project phases.



and the effect of it are rich and positive. Such as "know Belgium", "China's traditional culture", and "traditional music", etc., let us feel the different novelty and magic. We began to understand their far and mysterious world, that is where we always yearning for. If our distance exists in the world, this time the activity undoubtedly played a "bridge" role, enables us to see a different world .We are listening to the wonderful music, the legend of magic, and intriguing story. It is a feeling beyond time and space, slowly permeating our mind, quietly changing u

s
"Eye due to flow more tears while increasingly clear, cardiac careworn and increasingly good-natured." Our mutual exchanges, like the trees in the draw nutrients accumulated bit by bit, but will eventually grow into a big tree. Significance of it is important and irreplaceable.

It is helpless for the time pass by and it will always make people feel sad and sigh. In my subconscious, still holding out hope that we can meet again, reunited again.

At that time, I think we will become more outstanding!

Zhang Zhiwei



Since the birth of human being, completeness and defects were always coexisting. But defects, after all, more than completeness. For these, on young people, the best way to chasing perfection is "action".



The meaning of "Action" seems to me should be more than its own, because the essence of it produces a profound and positive impact on upward. For visually impaired people, "action" is undoubtedly the best way to create value and remedy the defect.

I have always insisted on the concept, the ultimate goal of "action" is to achieve what we want to achieve in "better" level. And to achieve such a "better" level, in terms of our young people, not the requirements and obtain a copy of the so-called good "thing", or even better material life . In China, there is a saying called: "Teaching man how to fish rather than simply giving them fish." Intended to show that not only in material aspects as its pursuit of "good" in a hierarchical manner, but should be more far more meaningful purpose, based on the most fundamental origin to grant the pursuit of "good" level methods. And throughout the history of human civilization, "culture", for this purpose, is its best carrier.

I am very glad in today's such a pursuit of quick and fickle era, there are still someone able to calm down and explore culture, the connotation of culture, cultural heritage. I think for human progress, there are no any other things we can substitute except culture. I thank my friend, can let I had the opportunity to appreciate the elegant of culture with them. The trip in Beijing will be cherished all my life!

In fact, "culture" itself has an extraordinary significance, so that people will always go to worship and learn from it. I think us always with good purpose, to touch and appreciate it.

For this time of the "cultural exchange", our harvest is great. Because it is refracted up things of beauty. If I said that a "cultural exchange" communication is not only our each other's culture of the motherland, but also enjoy humanity itself inherent quality, it is not exaggerated. Activities of the project



2 . Job shadowing in Belgium (28 February-19 March 2013)

The purpose of this phase was to learn more about the youth work in the host organization. Luyao Li , QI Huisheng and the interpreter Xu Xiaowei spent almost three weeks in Liege observing the work of VIEWS International and discovering the VIP's life in Belgium.



3 . Study visit to China (5-16 April 2013)

The aim of this visit was to discover the formal education and non-formal opportunities available for VIP in China. A group of eight young people and youth workers went to Beijing to meet the Chinese VIP as well as learn about their social and professional life, but also to share with them the life of Belgian VIP.



4 . Job shadowing in China (30 June - 19 July 2013)



Throughout this phase we wanted to learn more about the youth work in the host organization. Anca David and Carmen Todorut, two youth workers from VIEWS International, traveled to Beijing and for almost three weeks, observed the work methods of our partner.

5. Youth Exchange in China (6-19 July 2013)

The objective of this was to promote intercultural dialogue between young Europeans and Chinese (VIP or sighted persons), through art and other outdoor activities. Two groups of young people (Chinese and Belgian) jointly participated in a cultural exchange for two weeks. They organized cultural and sports activities, sharing their Chinese and European experiences.



of living and debates. For example, I heard that when you cross the street in China, car drivers better mind a guide dog than a visually impaired person with a white cane... we anyway must say that crossing a street in China is dangerous even for a sighted person: I got very impressed by the number of pedestrian people and cars running in Beijing! However, the Chinese pavements are better equipped in tactile lines than the ones of our country!

What I remember from my trip in Beijing: our hosts' kindness, the continual noise because of people everywhere (particularly in the metro!), a really captivating culture ; I liked so much the massage (so relaxing that we asked for more!). I enjoyed the visit of the Braille Library adapted museum; it's a great one and I would like to go back again: interesting and lots of things possible to touch!

In a more personal point of view, I learnt to manage better with my disability, I progressed in mobility, I made me new friends and, especially, this youth exchange gave me the trip virus!

Laurence Michel (participant from Belgium)

I learned through the presentations of the organizers, the situation of the visually impaired. I also learned to communicate with people with visual impairments , to be their guide, to ensure their safety, especially on the street and in front of the stairs. Besides that, in the activities organized by the participants and volunteers , I had the opportunity to know a little French and Belgian culture.

Wang Sihang (volunteer from China)

China and I lived my longest flight. In brief, a whole experience!



The study visit allowed to discover the ground actors with regard to disabled people. We could meet the massage school director who was our elected partner for that exchange.

The exchange took place in the Chinese Braille Library of Beijing. This library is very big and looks like a normal one (with armchairs and desks equipped to read on site). I would like us to have a braille library of the same style in Belgium: here, at mine, there is no room for readers; books are sent by post.

During the youth exchange, I could discover Chinese culture: visit of the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City and a temple. We also could benefit from initiation into traditional music, calligraphy, massage, tasting tee, food. A theater workshop made me discover one of the Chinese legends.

The exchange obviously happened in a bilateral way: times were foreseen for us to make discover Belgium and Europe to our hosts (games, music, common ice-breaking activities). By this way, I learnt some small magic tricks and a bit more about relaxation therapy. All of us enjoyed a lot the activities to learn Chinese language; now, I know some words like: hello, goodbye, I love you, my name is... but I'm not able to write them. Thank goodness we had Chinese-French or Chinese-English interpreters to communicate with each other! The interpreters were volunteers, they participated in most of the activities with us and were very nice; we will try to keep in touch also with them.

It was also interesting to compare the ways of dealing with disability in each country (help from the State, integration, schooling, work, leisure, moving... through accounts of ways



6 . Evaluation visit to Belgium (25 November-3 December 2013)

This will be the general evaluation of the results of the project and each activity in particular, discussions on possible follow-up activities, and the creation of tools to support the collaboration between the two partner organizations, (VIEWS International will host a group of six Chinese participants who took part in the project from the beginning). Overall, the Belgian and Chinese evaluate the project and work on new project ideas.

Participants' points of view

Zhang Cheng believes that the theme of this project is closely related to his personal interests and needs, as well as other members of his school. It is necessary for the development of both him and his school to expand their horizons and learn about advanced experiences of other countries in education and employment of visually challenged persons.



It is the first time for Zhang Cheng to visit another state, as he visited Liege and Brussels and met Belgian friends. Through such visit Zhang Cheng has experienced the difference among states and cultures, and comprehended a preliminary understanding concerning the living conditions, education and employment of visually challenged persons in Belgium.

Zhang Cheng (after Feasibility visit to Belgium)

I'm really pleased to have been chosen to participate in this program. Indeed, it was my first experience abroad. Through this exchange, I was able to travel to the heart of Europe, the continent that I love the most. I was immediately able to discover the life of the people who live here, their education,

their conditions of work, minimum wage and Social Security, etc., all of which is very different from what we know in China.

What strikes me the most is the spirit of independence of the visually impaired people (VIP).

Indeed, almost all VIP from Belgium can live and manage their daily lives independently, which greatly impressed me.

Another important point is education. Each student has their own educational support, which certainly greatly increases the quality of learning. VIP can, thus, have the same degree as the sighted people, which I never would have imagined until now.

Moreover, in Europe the visually impaired people, can work in almost all areas, whereas in China, massage is the most common occupation for them.

In addition, the minimum wage in Europe proves to be sufficient to ensure an acceptable quality of life.

Social Security is also a special tool of the European system for VIP because it guarantees a good quality of life , including retirement.

All this gave me a general idea of humanity and has changed my thoughts , my mind , my views and those of my friends to.

This unforgettable experience will accompany me and encourage me throughout my life.

Qi Huisheng (after Job Shadowing in Belgium)

Hello,

I'm Li Luyao, I am a young Chinese non-sighted girl.

I am one of the radio journalists who presented the Beijing Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2008.

At the same time, I was one of the actresses who participated in the first theatrical performance of blind MAETERLINCK entitled under the Sino-European cooperation, organized by the Association for the Visually Impaired people in China.

I am currently in charge of the artistic group of a school for the visually impaired people.



I am very happy and grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in this meeting between Europe and China. This allowed me to understand the living conditions, education and the way visually impaired people work in Belgium.

During this exchange, I was very impressed by the Belgian culture and the work done by VIEWS International for Youth VIP.

During our observation project of the workplace in Belgium, I visited a school and a kindergarten for VIP, the training school for guide dogs, as well as the center of activity of the VIP in Brussels. I also met a blind man working at the police station in Charleroi, and I could also observe the conditions of the VIP families. In addition, VIEWS International invited us to visit an exhibition of photos taken by our VIP friends, one of their activities.

I particularly appreciated the aid methods introduced by VIEWS International for its youth workers and VIP volunteers adaptation to the environment , I think including the creation of tactile maps and provision of instructors mobility for the identification of key sites for their lifestyle. I think these efforts are an important aid to their movements.

I hope that my experience will be useful for China !

I would like to thank VIEWS International for its efforts and for giving me the opportunity to observe the living conditions outside the Asian continent. I am convinced that the VIEWS International staff has done its best for the organization of this project. I am confident that our work will be very successful.

Li Luyao (after Job Shadowing in Belgium)

I participated in the study visit and the youth exchange in the framework of the project «How to build bridges between Europe and China through intercultural dialogue». The study visit took place in April 2013 and was useful for testing the ground to prepare the youth exchange of July 2013 (contacts, places to visit).

For me, it was series of first times : without my family, I visited a country with young people of my age, I had never been in