

## Report on the Workshop „Knowledge transfer between generations“, Bonn, May 15<sup>th</sup> 2008

On Wednesday, 15th May our group of around eighteen international Students from **IAAS** (International Association of Students in Agricultural and related Sciences), participated in the workshop “*Knowledge transfer between generations*”. It was organized and instructed by two students from the faculty of organic farming in Witzenhausen and held in the framework of **Planet Diversity**.

As there were also people from other NGOs participating, we were an international group of approximately forty people - there were people from Africa, Asia and Europe participating. In the beginning everybody presented himself. Then we divided into working-groups of five to seven participants with the task to design a poster depicting the results of our experiences.

In my group there was a woman from Nigeria who told us about an old tradition of the ethnicity of her father that is really hard to continue with. In her country there are more than 40 different ethnicities and for each of them it's important to conserve the old knowledges - in this case the tradition of her father, which says that every family should have at least one cow.

As the family lived in a small two-room flat inside the city it was really hard to keep on the tradition, but they always did. They didn't even get milk as the animals always were oxen, but they had to feed them every day and when they were big and strong enough they sold them. At least they used the excrements as fertilizer in the mother's garden, which was situated in another part of the city.

When the children left the house their father told them to have a cow each one. Our friend thought it would be impossible, living in the city, but she solved the problem having a place for her animal in a farm outside the city. In the funeral of her father the children brought their animals and everybody of the family could see that they kept on the old tradition.

Like the woman from Nigeria, everybody in our group told his own story and with those collected information we tried to find out weather and how generations still are able to communicate, which are the problems and which solutions there are to enrich elderly and young people.

Finally, every group presented their poster and, apart from one professor, who tried to take the job of the students from Witzenhausen in a very ungentle way, everybody in the workshop seemed to be interested in following the results of the other working-groups.

I got the impression, that also the other IAAS Members learnt a lot in that workshop. For example we found out that there are some problems which are similar in almost every country like the growing gap between generations. Furthermore, in the industrial states, families don't use to live together or close to each other any more – those processes of society changing complicates the communication between generations.

The workshop was a very good opportunity to learn and focus on those circumstances and to give an impulse to think about the importance of knowledge transfer between elderly and young people and our future.

To me, personally, it was an interesting event, especially for the exceptional story of the Lady from Africa.