

Jete's EVS experience in Slovenia

During the summer I had a situation in my life where the future seemed unsure and I decided to apply for an European Voluntary Service in Slovenia. Everything went well and I was chosen! And before I knew it, it was time to pack my bags and fly to a country I had only imagined before.

During the 5 weeks in Slovenia we lived in 5 different towns. The first week in Ljubljana, the capital, was overwhelming in many aspects. I met many amazing people and it took only numbered days to form really good friendships. Ljubljana itself felt surprisingly home-like to me. Furthermore, we visited many organisations and gained so much new knowledge that 'too much information' soon became an inside joke between the participants.



Picture 1. Evaluation circle

The second week came around faster than any of us would have wanted and that meant that it was our turn to take the action and start with the presentations. Doing presentations was one of our main tasks during this project and our goal was to introduce Erasmus+ mobility possibilities to youngsters and also encourage them to be more tolerant. In my eyes I learned

the most during the process of preparing it. The importance of time management soon became evident. I learned a lot about my own personal strengths and weaknesses, and how to motivate myself individually. But more importantly, how to work as a group. It wasn't always easy to get 16 people to agree on the same idea, so I also learned quickly when to make compromises and when it's important to push your ideas, because they could benefit everyone, even if they didn't know it beforehand.

Doing presentations was a great fun and I enjoyed getting in contact with the young locals. It wasn't always necessarily easy, but we improved throughout the month and by the last presentations we more-or-less knew what worked to make it great. Presentation skills are another great asset I took home with me. It was also amazing to see the other participants grow in such a short period of time. This day, I wouldn't believe any of them if they'd say that they are shy people.



Picture 2. EVS volunteers with Ajdovščina high school students after presentation and workshops

Slovenian locals let me believe that they are extremely kind and helpful community. I think they welcomed us to their society and let us experience the life as locals rather than just tourists. Although, I wish I could have experienced it even deeper level, it is hard to do so, when you move around that often and also, when you are constantly surrounded by big number of other volunteers who you try to socialize as well.

After arriving to our first hostel where I had to share a small room with 5 other girls and after seeing how many people 16 actually is, I thought that my biggest fear would be not having any personal space. As an average Estonian I take my 'own time' very seriously. But quite surprisingly, living together was the most enjoyable time. We cooked together, we ate together, we hung out together and we even brushed teeth together. Everything was a team activity and it taught me a lot how to be less selfish and more of a team player. I was constantly inspired by the people I worked with.



Picture 3. Volunteers enjoying a joint meal

Therefore, preparing for our final event - The Museum of Tolerance - went rather smoothly. Although, we didn't have as many visitors as we had hoped for, I felt succeeded because we all worked really hard and I was proud to be part of this amazing EVS family. These five weeks were one of the most amazing times of my life, I met so many great people and gained very valuable experiences. I'm proud I found the courage in myself to do EVS and I wouldn't change the experience for anything.

Eesti keeles

Suvel oli mu elus selline hetk, kus tulevik polnud päris kindel ning seega otsustasin kandideerida Euroopa Vabatahtlikule Teenistusele Sloveenias. Kõik läkski hästi ning mind valiti välja! Enne kui isegi päris täpselt aru sain oli käes aeg asjad kokku pakkida ning seada sammud riigi poole, mis varem eksisteeris vaid minu kujutlusvõimes.

Sloveenias veedetud 5 nädala jooksul pesitsesime 5 erinevas linnas. Esimene nädal möödus Ljubljanas, Sloveenia pealinnas, mis oli ülevoolavalt meeldejääv. Ma kohtusin paljude imeliste inimestega ning uute heade sõprussuhete loomine võttis vaid mõned päevad. Ljubljana ise jättis mulle väga koduse mulje. Lisaks külastasime ka mitmeid kohalikke organisatsioone ning saime tohutult palju uut informatsiooni. Seetõttu sai lause „*too much information*“ („liiga palju informatsiooni“) peagi meie omavaheliseks naljaks.

Teine nädal saabus kiiremini, kui keegi meist oleks soovinud ja see tähistas ka meie töö algust. Meie üheks peamiseks ülesandeks oli viia kohalikele noortele läbi esitlusi, milles tutvustasime Erasmus+ mobiilsuse võimalusi ning sealjuures üritasime töötubadega julgustada noori olema tolerantsemad. Enda arvates õppisingi kõige rohkem just esitluste ettevalmistuse käigus. Ajaplaneerimise oskuse olulisus sai peagi selgeks. Õppisin palju ka enda nõrkuste, tugevuste ja ka enese motiveerimise kohta. Kuid veelgi olulisemalt õppisin, kuidas töötada meeskonnas. Polnud alati lihtne saada 16 inimest ühele meelele, seega õppisin kiiresti, millal teha kompromisse ning millal on mõistlik oma ideele kindlaks jääda.

Esitluste tegemine oli väga tore ning ma nautisin noorte kohalikega kontakti loomist. See polnud küll alati tingimata lihtne, kuid me arenesime selle kuu jooksul väga palju ning viimasteks esitlusteks enam-vähem teadsime, kuidas muuta esitlus suurepäraseks. Esinemisoskus on üks väärtuslikemaid oskusi, mida endaga koju kaasa võtsin. Lisaks oli ka meeletult tore näha, kuidas teised vabatahtlikud selle lühikese aja jooksul arenesid. Täna sel päeval ei usuks ma neist kedagi, kui nad väidaksid, et on arad inimesed.

Kohalikud sloveenlased panid mind uskuma, et nad on äärmiselt abivalmis ning lahke kogukond. Usun, et meid võeti väga hästi vastu ning saime kogeda osa kohalikust elust, selle asemel, et turistidena ringi kulgeda. Muidugi oleksin soovinud veelgi paremini mõista kohalikku eluolu ja kultuuri, kuid kahjuks meie tige graafik seda ei võimaldanud. Lisaks muutis selle keeruliseks ka meie suur vabatahtlike seltskond, kellega suhtlemine ja sõbrunemine võttis samuti oma osa.

Saabudes meie esimesse majutuskohta Ljubljanas, kus ma jagasin kitsukest tuba veel 5 tüdrukuga ning nähes, kui suur hulk 16 inimest koos elamiseks siiski on, kartsin, et mul jääb puudu personaalsest ruumist. Üllatuslikult oli suures kambas koos elamine, aga minu jaoks kõige toredam osa EVS-ist. Me tegime koos süüa, einestasime ühiselt, veetsime koos aega ning isegi pesime hambaid koos. Kõik oli ühistegevus ja ma õppisin, kuidas olla vähem isekas ja rohkem meeskonnamängija. Inimesed minu ümber inspireerisid mind pidevalt.

Sellest tulenevalt läks ka meie viimase ürituse – Tolerantsuse Muuseumi – korraldamine valutult. Kuigi meie muuseumi küllastajate hulk polnud ehk nii suur, kui oleksime soovinud, tundsin siiski uhkust meie jaoks edukalt valminud lõpptulemuse üle. Töötasime kõvasti ning olen uhke, et sain töökate ja loovate inimestega koos töötada. Need 5 nädalat olid ühed kindlasti meeldejäävaimad mu elus, kohtusin paljude imeliste inimestega ning sain meeletult uusi väärtuslikke kogemusi. Olen uhke, et leidsin endas selle julguse EVS-i tegema minna ja ma ei vahetaks seda kogemust millegi vastu.