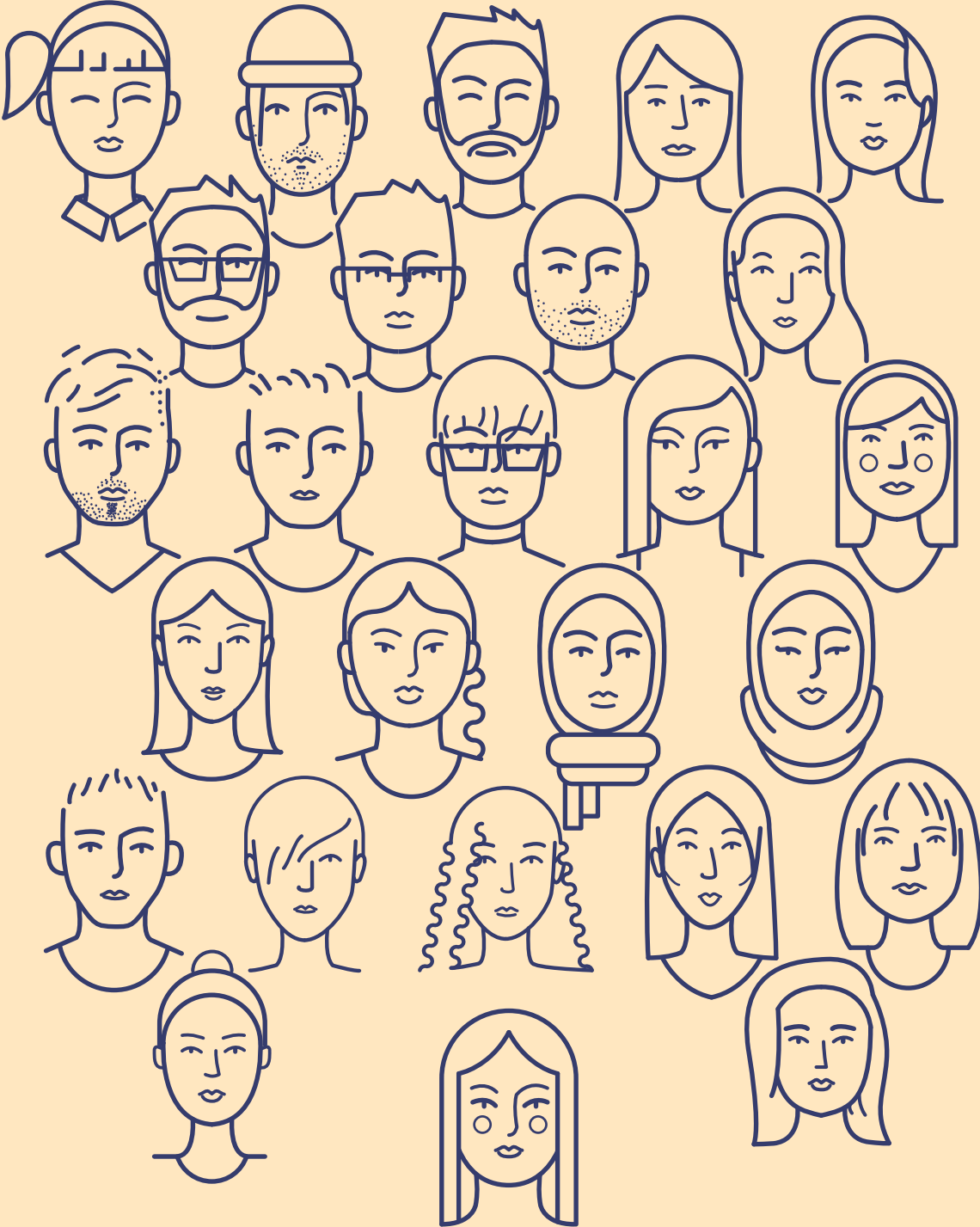


Youth Workers for Better Europe

1. - 9. March 2018.



This brochure is prepared with the purpose of giving an overview of the international Training Course "Youth Workers for Better Future" that was organised by the Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland e.V.

The Training Course took place from 1-9 March 2018, in Berlin, Germany and brought together 36 participants from 6 different countries - residents of the Erasmus+ and Partner countries.

The start of the brochure focuses on the context of the training describing its background, the main aim and objectives, participants' profile, the programme, the methodology that was used and learning outcomes. The concluding part of the brochure gives a brief evaluation made by participants in form of an article.

Why do we need this project?

Discrimination, xenophobia, racism and exclusion are reality in our everyday life. We can see it through media or from our personal experience. Last few years, especially 2015 and 2016, a big number of migrants (received 626,000 asylum applications in 2014 and 1,221,855 in 2015. Data were taken from EUROSTAT) come to the European Union to seek asylum, traveling across the Mediterranean Sea, or through Southeast Europe. The migrants are coming from areas such as Western and South Asia, Africa and the Western Balkan.

Facing with foreigners is not easy for all citizens. As migrants are coming from countries where culture and state authority is quite different from one in Europe; different in everyday life duties, different to confrontation toward women and children, religion and democracy; mostly without any knowledge about European Union or European countries, about law legislative in countries migrants are facing with a lot of problems and staying not included in EU society.

On the other hand, citizens in Europe are confused with such a big number of migrants and mostly have negative connotation toward them. That is coming from low knowledge about migrants, about their countries and culture, reasons why are they coming in EU countries, prejudice about religion and customs, fear about losing jobs or decreasing salaries, fear that migrants will change demographic situation in Europe. The low knowledge about migrants, reasons about their migration in EU countries, prejudice and fears set a good base for radicalization of citizens, especially young people.

The aim and objectives of the Training Course:

The main topics of the project "Youth Workers for Better Future" are EU values, active citizenship, migrations and migrant crisis. With this project we want to prevent radicalization of young people and prevent violence by education of youth workers about active citizenship, European common values (respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities), mechanisms and results of xenophobia and racism, and equip them with competences to be active against xenophobic and racist tensions in their local communities and in Europe and promote tolerance, diversity and inclusion.

Objectives:

- to develop awareness of participants about active citizenship and European values;
- To empower participants to actively work with specific target group of young people;
- To increase participants' understanding of migrations and migrant crisis;
- to create a brochure which will be manual in our future work and call for solidarity, non-violence and share European values
- to share experience and good practice about youth work
- to gain knowledge about the possibilities of Erasmus+ programme and skills how to use this program in order to involve young people to be more active in promotion of European values

Participants' profile:

Participants' profile: 18-25 years old, youth workers and members of partner organizations who work directly with youth with different cultural background, economic obstacles, social obstacles and disabilities. They are using non-formal education methods in their work and interested in learning new methods in youth field on topics: active citizenship, EU values, migrations, migrant crisis, to recognize how mechanisms of discrimination function and EU politics about immigrants. Participants have big motivation to participate on the training course.

Team of trainers:

Mirjana Vasić

Ivana Delač

Ioana Simona Rotariu

Oana Marcela Hoidrag

Dimitrijs Volovniks

Marko Gačević

Aries Leskaj

Filip Nikolić - Brochure design

Methodology:

Non-formal and informal education are the main tools during the project. Techniques such as "brainstorming" or "role-play", group discussion, discussions in small groups, simulations of real situations, sharing opinions and experiences between participants and trainers had been used on the training course. Training course is designed in a way to give participants a chance to speak their mind in all areas.

Learning outcomes:

Through the training course participants had opportunity to gain knowledge, skills and positive attitude toward active citizenship, EU values, migrations and migrant crisis in general and in different national contexts and to create a network of youngsters interested in these topics, the one who are willing to further engage in these topics and ideally realizing future joint-projects getting. Participants had opportunity to learn about the possibilities of EU programs and funds available to support the reduction of radicalization, xenophobic and racist tensions in their local communities.

Partners on this project are:

About the organizer

The organizer of the project is Zentralrat der Serben in Deutschland e.V. organization from Germany. The main aim of our organization is representing the interests of Serbs who are living in Germany; Active participation in the constructive process of integration into German society without losing national identity and as a contribution to the construction of a multi-cultural society.; The maintenance, care and support of Serbian culture, traditions, language and history; Encouragement and strengthening of cooperation between regional organizations and the federal level and their connection with other associations, organizations and authorities in Germany; Support in the realization of various projects with Serbian and Serbian associations in Germany; Coordination of activities of Serbian Associations in federal and a regional level and supporting and promoting the economic relations between Germany, European Union and the Republic of Serbia.

Partners:

- Danish Youth Team
- YOUTH ASSOCIATION OF SERBIA
- Organisation serbischer Studenten im Ausland Wien
- Terra Slavonica
- ASOCIATIA ALLONS-Y

Aleksandra Ćosić

The big problem in our society is that actually not many people knows what the active citizen is, and values they should follow and respect in their countries. For the example, in my country, Serbia, we are so occupied with our personal problems and how can we fix them that we do not see what is happening just in front of our eyes.

What I learned in the Erasmus plus project is that we can help so much just by doing small, simple acts which are very valuable for the person or community in struggle. In Serbia, people became so hopeless that there might not be a bright future that they do not even go out on the elections and the big part of those people is our youth. Their vote is just standing useless while all they do is complaining how bad situation in our country is and doing nothing to change it. What we can do is to help people understand the importance of voting and that everyone of us is just as equal. We need to show much more solidarity and raise the awareness that no matter what the colour of person's skin, gender, religion or sexuality is, we are all the same, we are all human beings with same rights and privileges in this world.

LGBT group of people in Serbia does not have adequate treatment by the society. After the idea of organizing the first pride parade came, people started to complain and when they actually organized it, massive protest appeared. Riots were made and hooligans started chasing them. As a consequence, in the end, one of the members of LGBT was killed. Also, it is a big problem in my country when it comes to contribution of citizens in raising consciousness about protecting environment. There are not enough recycle bins and people actually do not care where they are putting their garbage. Carrying of homeless people is another thing that needs to be improved. For the example, there are not enough public kitchens and those that exist are mostly situated in major cities, so homeless people who live in minor ones are struggling to find something to eat.

By volunteering and collecting some money for the charity or maybe even creating our own fundraising campaign, life condition of homeless people can be improved.

So, if we want to change something, accomplish some goal, we first need to start from ourselves and then trying to transfer that knowledge and experience with others. Because we can do so much more together.

„Be the change you want to see in the world “

Aries Leskaj

“Be inspired. Think big. Take action.” – The three elements of the blue print for a healthy active community.

Through the “Youth Work” workshop, I was able to understand better my role as a citizen, how to become a better active citizen and how to make a change in my community too.

I've come to the realization that it takes two fundamental aspects of active citizenship for a citizen to become an active citizen: POWER AND IMAGINATION.

We have an obligation as citizens to understand power. Power to lobby, power to organize, power to make arguments, power to ensure that our voice is heard, power to advocate for equality, universality, EU values, etc. The more power and voice people have, the more strong, adaptive and powerful those people become.

This brings us to our second aspect: IMAGINATION. In the civic life the power of imagination is palpable.

Imagine new ways of seeing one another, the world we live in. This. This kind of imagination is the duty of all of us. The lack of imagination has consequences like failure and inability of seeing another as oneself. And that creates barriers between us human beings.

To conclude, this training was a big heads up for me to try my best taking part in improving our society, because when you see a gap, you fill that gap.

Bruno Galić

All my life i was thinking about humanity as One. When i was just an 8 years old boy refugees from all over Yugoslavia flooded my neighborhood. That was the first time i met different nationalities, religions, ethnicities. At the time, i understood that being a Muslim meant not eating pork and wearing strange scarfs on the head. Immediately, stories started circulating through the school that they are weirdos, they go to this one noisy building with a rocket pointing up on the edge of the city to smell each other's feet and my personal favorite one how can you believe a person who doesn't eat proshuto? How mind_sick you must be to say no to proshuto? Years passed and i lived with a believe that they are deranged one regular sunny winter day, or what only begun like one. I took my bike and i went for a ride along my favourite biking place, nearby lake. I was going by fishermen, breating in bird songs and feeling the sun kissing my face. Just for a second i completely surrendered and that was all it took for me to end up in the freezing lake!

The next thing I know is a guy is with me in the water and he is puling me out of that hell. Soked and shivering, we ran to his car where he had some extra clothes and some tea. Between sitting with him in the car, thanking him over and over again and drinking his sweet herbal tea he noticed me looking at his strange symbols of moons and stars. He smiled and said: “Yes, I am muslim”. We spent next 2hours talking about Qur'an, Mohamed and 1001 nights, about ottoman empire, Persia and galatasaray.

Samir is now part of my family, my university mentor and my strongest support in life. I even consult him with buying t-shirts and dating girls. All my life i will think about humanity as One but not all of us were that lucky to fall in the lake on a winter day and some of us will forever stay 8year old's.

Corina Madalina Tatu

We all know what it means to be an active citizen, but do we know how it is like not to have our basic needs satisfied, how it is not to feel the love of a family, the care of a mother? Even if we are always complaining about trivial things which are missing, here, in the world we are living in, there are children who do not even have what to wear or what to eat at the dinner.

I learnt that the best way to be aware of something it is confronting with the situation. That it is why I wanted to get involved in a program that helps abandoned and abused children. A group of three people and I are going in a foster home four times a week. In this foster home there are children which have been abandoned by their family, who have suffered physical and mental abuses, girls, who have been kidnapped and. They are young souls in desperate need of love, attention, care, solidarity and sympathy.

Everyday we are doing homework with them, we are learning them different things in funny and easy to comprehend ways, we discuss with them about their fears, their problems, their doubts. Once in a while we are going with them in trips, we are taking them to the cinema or the theatre, trying in that way to give them some happiness and to integrate them in community, taking contact with other people. It is not easy at all trying to make an abused child to forget even for an hour about his pain and trauma, but the smile on his face, his laughter and his sincerely and innocent `thank you` it is the best award.

The life of these children it is full of disappointment and pain and even if for us being there with them it is not too demanding, for them this may be their chance for a future, because in their lifes there is no one to guide their steps, to help them to take the hard decisions and to teach them the real values of a human.

Sometimes it can be hard to see so much pain everyday, but thinking that you have the power to change it won`t let you to give up. Children like them do not have too many chances to do something for a better future if they are not helped by people from the outside. That is the reason I think we have to do more for children in foster homes, to get more involved in programs which help children to develop and integrate in society.

If you only can see that innocent and pure smile on their faces, you will understand how important are for them and how much joy you can bring in their lifes.

For me, taking part in their lifes was the best experience in my entire life, it made me be more aware about how important volunteering can be for society.

Dimitris Volovniks

That is interesting. Interesting how different European values is beeing defined by different personalitites. "Freedom of speach" someone said, "Multiculturalism is a ticking bomb", this is beeing said among peoiple who stands united for Nordic Front. NF is a right extreme movement in Sweden with goal of uniting whole Scandinavia under one flag. And they justifying their speeches by the law of "Freedom speach". Their speach can often be defined like "act of crime" and violition against human rights and Geneva convention it self. But Swedish law protects their public appearance such as gathering in front of the national opera, at the same location where Carl Gustaf the king were shot by his traitors back in 1700, and having a demonstration where the leader can climb up on stage and have anti semitic speach based on his dragging hate for imigrats and refugees. 250 demonstrators were protected by the swedish police to assure they could complete their event.

They were met by tousands of anti-demonstrations on the opposite side of the river. Police assembled an massive force to keep them apart from NF. "Yes its true" said one of the policemen on the location, "It is a massive cost, but otherwise we would witness 200 rasist

smashed to death".

Bypassing woman understod my knowledge for russian language and replied in russian "In russia they would not be protected, Faschist!"

The big question here is: Is freedom of speech something that is beeing defined by the groups?

Swedish rasists, nationalist and anti-semits love this word like waffen ss loved their shiny boots.

European values is something that is dependent on active citizenship. Freedom of speach is one of the values that is sometimes missunderstod in Sweden. This creates confusioun and segregation.

How come hate speach fits in "Freedom of speach" box when it shuts all doors to a safe society and creates tensions between groups?

Beeing an active citizen is to prevent this type of activity, make your voice heard and stand united against this type of hatered. But for this task it takes courage. 2013 we could see the exaple of the active citizenship in a Stockholm suburban area Kärrtorp:

A small number of citizens gathered together to protest against growing rasism in the area wich displayed as graffiti symbols and cheap stickers with rasistic propaganda. It was a rainy day in november 2013 and nothink special were expected to happen. Police was pressent at the location, but not in a big number because sources inform of a "peaceful demonstration" with minimal risk for infrastructure and other inhabitants.

Most of the demonstrators knew each other. It was like families gathered for a barbecue party, and you wouldnt know the difference if you wouldnt see all the posters with messages like "No Faschi-fashion in our neighbourhood." Among demonstrats there was kids of all ages. It was practically a family sunday walk for many of the families.

They were confronted by NF. People witnessed different types of attacks. Nordic Front demonstrators were throwing stones and fireworks against the peaceful demonstrators. In several videos it i possible to whintess how NF demonstrators atacking peacful inhabitants of the area. It is also possible to whitness how police is trying to gain controll of the situation but fails.

This results in several injuries and viral spread story that got big attention in social media. This led to a second demonstraion in the same area. A bigger demonstraion. 30 000 demonstrators and politicians gathered to have a huge event that covered whole football field and surrounding areas and all swedish tv-channels for a whole day. All this to demonstrate fighting will of "freedom of speach" and a safe inviroment free of extremists.

Despite the effort and huge number of demonstrators the right wing nationalistic party of Sweden gained enought votes to become third biggest party within the goverment walls. But they were not even present at the Kärrtorp demonstrations.

Despite that fact there is still fire burning under the skin of people who fight against extremism.

Sweden is most one of the most libiral countries in the world, so is Denmark. But Denmark was first nordic county who had a nationalistic party in the goverment.

This is freedom of speach. Voting and democracy. The reason why this party's in goverment is because of elections. The question is how well is this freedom used and by whom.

An active european citizen is aware of acting to create a safe inviroment. Voting in right dirrection. What direction does your society vote for?

Safety, or rearenging the "freedom of speach"?

Cristina Ioana Alexandru

Active citizenship means in principal involving. This action can be done through different, various ways such as specific organizations, campaigns or just educating not only the young, but also the elderly people. Everything starts up with thinking about the several important stuff, interacting with the people in need, finding solutions and applying them as soon as possible.

The lack of information is standing at the base of not reacting when it comes to helping the others and being an active citizen. Opportunities, experiences and challenges make us gain and construct knowledge, but also make us be aware of the real truth through volunteering.

According to that, I decided to involve myself in helping the children with cancer and their families. The first things to do as a matter of fact were providing companionship, but also a surse of self-worth. Thinking about that specific issues made me realize that giving your love and putting your passion in this situation will make it easier. When I had to face the problem I got to know that everything is more difficult than I thought it would be. The children`s emotions just shock and hit you from the first moment.

First of all, their suffering cannot be measured. They are staying in hospital from their first days of life because they have to take their treatment and in most of cases that isn`t an easily one.

I tried to understand them and to make my stay there as comfortable as I could because for them I was like a sunshine in their completely darkness. I used to paint with them and talk about the most beautiful and relaxed things on Earth. Telling them stories was the best part because I could make the children think that in this life everything is possible, you just have to believe it. I always thought that hoping, smiling and seeing the great things that surround you are the most important cure.

I think that, on different celebrations such as Christmas, my presence was the most important. I used to collect for them clothes, toys and other different presents, but just staying and playing with them made them feel that there is always someone there to support them.

After several weeks, I got to feel like home. It is really hard to imagine what it`s like to be in their shoes and to feel their suffering, but I felt it on myself, that the more you give, the happier you feel. We had such a great connection and I realized which are the most important values in life.

In the end, this experience changed me and now I know that even if you have the wish to do something ant not actually doing it won`t make a difference. I believe that we all have that little thing called kindness which is sometimes really hidden inside of us. You just have to let the doors open when it comes to helping the ones in need.

Iulia-Maria Carpov

Is not easy to create a regular type, from my point of view they are not like a normal category, they are different physically, the actions are a little bit different, it does not matter from where you are, what nationality you have, what colour you have, but the result is the same to make a good change to keep the society united.

Volunteering is one of the most important elements of active citizenship, which benefits the volunteers as much as those they support. My first experience about active citizen was in high school with AIESEC they got to us 2 persons from Poland and then was the first time when I interact with people from outside from my country and the change my thoughts about the different between country and make list with different between these 2 countries and which is the most.

They held trainings and educate us about European Union, their values and how to help people in general. I was really surprised to see people who crossed all that way just to let us and teach us some values. In that period of that I disliked the situation in my country and I really wanted to do something in the future to make that situation better.

I have been volunteering in a Red Cross for three years and always looking for a new challenge. Also, I consider myself as people who dislike public speaking, but I was aware of that I will have to work on it in order to have more confidence and to be more successful in general. Fortunately, I found out for Toastmasters from participants on this project, and I also searched for that kind of club in my city. They have meetings about public speaking and how to improve it. Now I am more opened to speak out loud, because issues in our society cannot be solved in a silence.

On the first walk through Berlin I saw a volunteer action; some young people were raising funds for an association for the person with disabilities. Also this kind of people are in all the countries from EU but a real problem in Romania are now the persons which really do that are less now and the rest unfortunately keep the money for them, and the rest of the people which real want to help and they saw that and now they don`t believe the real active citizen.

In Denmark this problem doesn`t exist.

Volunteering is an altruistic non-profit work that one can do alone or as a part of national/international organization. Usually the aim is to help less fortunate people, minorities and other people in need. One can also volunteer in many different branches such as: volunteering at sport, music and other cultural events, in case of emergency (for example floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters), in organizations and institutions (high schools, universities, hospitals, parliaments ...). For all those who love nature and are environmentally conscious can work in places like nature and national parks, islands, etc. or do some (small) projects in their own community such as planting trees, cleaning trash from nature or do landscaping in general.

When people think about positive effects of volunteering, their first thought is usually that by volunteering we are doing something useful to community and to person we served. But that is only one from many other benefits like:

- 1) gaining work experience that might help us in future to be better qualified for job or something else
- 2) getting extra points for scholarships or at faculty
- 3) meeting new people with similar interests, meeting new friends and making connections
- 4) although volunteering is time consuming like every other activity, that time will be spent on doing something useful
- 5) there are many workshops and projects for volunteers to educate themselves
- 6) it will help you gain confidence because you left your comfort zone and you will feel good because you are doing something you want and it is useful
- 7) one day maybe you will have enough courage to organize your own project
- 8) by volunteering you will develop social skills and empathy for people, and see things from new perspective

Here are some examples where someone can volunteer:

Dora (20, Croatia) - "I volunteered in my local nature park and on Malta. It was great experience because it was connected to my field of study. I met new people and I spent the time doing something I love."

Mateo (26, Croatia) - "My friends and I would organize every now and then and go to public kitchen to help with food preparations for poor and homeless people. We also helped in organizing "social markets", places where less fortunate people come for groceries. Although most of my volunteering wasn't connected to my faculty, the time I have spent volunteering helped me a lot to become better person that truly cares what is happening in the world."

Marijana (22, Croatia) - "After years of volunteering on different projects, I finally took courage to become one of the organizers of volunteering projects in my hometown's hospital. We went there two times a month to play and do creative things with kids. The biggest reward for me was seeing those kids happy."

Mia (20, Croatia) - " I volunteered at two movie festivals in my country. Volunteering there taught me how to work with people and how to organize myself. I made great friendships and saw movies for free. Next summer I am planning to volunteer at sport event. I would recommend this to anyone who enjoys active life and wants to see new places and meet people while doing something you enjoy."

Vedrana (25, Croatia) - "One of my favourite volunteering experiences was EVS in Spain. It was the first time I could use theory I have learned at university. I have also learned Spanish

and gain international working experience that later helped me to find a job. Great things happen when you leave your safe zone."

To summarise, volunteering can be done almost anywhere and at any time. Volunteering doesn't have to be some specially organized activity, one can simply do good acts in every day's life like helping old people. Volunteering will take some of your free time but that time will be well invested. And the most important is that doing altruistic thing like volunteering you are directly making a change in society and helps you to become better in many aspects. For the end I would like to write two things that might motivate you to contact your local volunteering centre: be the change you want to see in the world and some things like volunteering can't be bought with money.



When we talk about the development stage of one's society, as a measure we can use the life quality of its citizens. Even though the humankind found the ways for achieving better healthcare, higher security and more comfortable life, it still didn't find the solution for making these conditions a reality for all people worldwide. What we have achieved until now is significant, but the work is not complete until every human manages to live in decent circumstances. In other words, until we get to the point where every human can go to sleep and wake up in peace. Regarding the experience we draw from history books and awareness about current world events, this idea may sound utopian. Maybe it really is. But there are some steps that are being taken and which are bringing us closer to this great achievement.

European Union officially promotes values that are relevant for making this goal more than just a dream. By recognizing the importance of respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law, every human creates a fertile ground for securing peace and wellbeing for all humankind. If recognition of these values is the ground, active citizenship is the planting. Beliefs and ideas achieve their full potential only with their practical implementation through proactive, persistent efforts.

Even with the existent urge for activity in the direction of positive change of society, taking the world-wide perspective and perceiving limited reach of one's power can be discouraging. But what is true is that cumulative effects of local efforts count and can produce the change relevant on global level. For believing in this thesis, the mindset of individual responsibility expressed through active contribution should be developed in every individual. One of many ways EU makes it happen in youth population is through ERASMUS+ programmes. Giving youth the opportunity to actively participate in their learning process, while being exposed to the influence of intercultural context, is an example of giving support to the development of stronger and more tolerant character. Participants who have had the opportunity of being a part of ERASMUS+ exchange or training, talk about their greater understanding for other cultures, abandonment of stereotypes or even disappearance of tension felt for nations with which theirs share a history of violence. What is more, the feelings of inspiration and personal responsibility arise. Those feelings and new, more positive attitudes make a great starting point for becoming a person who actively recognizes the needs of society and finds the ways of achieving the needed change.

Since the experience of youth exchanges and training courses are intensive and ask for full personal involvement, a melancholy feeling can arise after coming home, back into the ordinary everyday life. The thing is that these experiences produce awareness of capability to transform our ordinary. For example, putting effort into some socially relevant cause would surely be rewarding not only for the society, but for the responsible person also. If we think about it on a more basic level, socially relevant work is internally rewarding since it satisfies all basic psychological needs, something that is necessary for every person's wellbeing. First, the need for autonomy is satisfied by being presented to the choice (which, in case, we always are) and deciding about one's own course. Second, consistent learning and experience of change in oneself and the environment gives the proof of one's competence, also relevant for life satisfaction. Third, while interacting with people, through cooperation or doing work with a target group, the need for relatedness is being satisfied. We also shouldn't forget the feeling of meaning connected with accomplishment achieved on social level.

So, long story short, every single person holds the destiny of one's life in her or his hands. What is more, that destiny is interconnected with many other destinies and it is our choice what we are going to make out of it. Hopefully, right at the reach of the hand, there are resources which we can use to benefit from and to build ourselves as persons capable of development and life-long learning. By doing that, we are becoming persons who own skills and attitudes relevant for making positive impact on the society and making it a better place for other people.



Jelena Maletić

Why are we sometimes so small, and in fact, we are so big?

During my growing up, the European Union was a synonym for a better life and a great capitalist machine in which people do not have the social life, but only working as machines. For a long time, I had no idea that it was really so. I have always wondered what my peers are doing, what their life is, and whether they know and respect the values that I myself have learned, and in fact years later, the system of values prescribed by the European Union is what I never knew, let alone applied.

At the studies, I wanted to know better myself, my character and the world in general. I learned from the experience of my colleagues that there is some training that teach you about social values, give you the opportunity to travel and find out what the EU really is and what its value systems are. Frankly, I did not believe in that much at first, but the joy and the need to get to know me took me to the first, and later to other training all over Europe. The European values that were defined were corroborated by large stereotypes. Until then, equality represented, for me, the distribution of food to the people, but not the synonym for the equality of the sexes, friends, acquaintances and all the people in my surroundings. However, other young people have such stereotypes and such a value system, which was a great surprise for me. First of all, it hurts me that others have a negativity look at the country I live in. On the other hand, I did not condemn them because I also had a similar opinion about them.

Every new training represents a single demolition of these differences, and also changes occur in me. Sometimes the trainers themselves remind me that every living creature needs love and patience to open up over time and get to know themselves and the world they really are.

On this project, I have gained different knowledge on how to influence the local community and act on people around us. They should be conscientious citizens in their surroundings. At the workshop that was related to public exposure, the topic was about how to assimilate a child in homosexual families. Each group had a representative who had to present arguments based on which we saw whether the gay couple had to adopt the child or not. Not only in addition to the argument but also their performance has had a big impact on how the audience will accept the arguments. What I noticed during the workshop was that the youngest people accepted homosexuals as part of their society and saw them completely equally.

For many years I've been living in the delusion that I cannot accept people who have other beliefs and other nations. Obviously, politics and wars have forced the nations to separate and hate each other, and the media play a big role in influencing our thinking. Globalization has made progress, but it is still a step backward in interpersonal relations. Individual attitudes still influence who we really are.

I want to tell you that you are trying, signing up, traveling and spreading your awareness. Life can bring you beautiful moments, new experiences and something that will remain for you all your life, and these are friends.

Katarina Majstorović

Youth trainings are when a group of people are exchanging the experience and knowledge with each other on a workshop, but not only that...

When somebody tells me the story from their local community I can use that experience and implement it in my own life. That kind of talks makes my point of view more open; that include more perspective in problem solving.

And, they are telling me that on a workshops, yeah. But, that happens also after workshops, and then knows to be more effective, because in that non-formal atmosphere people are more relaxed and more willing to share with each other. In that kind of atmosphere there is more space for people to say to each other the things that (maybe) won't come out in the formal part.

Especially on this kind of a project, because here come the people who are involved in this topics so in any cases they will talk about that.

It's important to speak about values, always but that stays only on paper if we don't do that in practice.

Because, I believe in action, and the action happens when somebody on training don't feel well and others go and help without question. And, when we are together in the city and we are looking after each other won't get lost..

When I can see and feel that people around Europe share the same values through their practice than I can be, and I'm happy. Solidarity is something that you do, and, for me, the best way to see that is on "everyday life" level; and "everyday life" in this context is non-formal part.

That is the most honest way of expression, in my view.



The (new) thing in non-formal education (formal part) is that participants are the one that make some part (or whole) programme. They are making their own workshop for the rest of the group.

Why is that good and how is connected to the non-formal part?

Good thing is that this kind of a programme is becoming more active for the people who participate and force them to be involved.

Connection is in the following: the methodology is built, I think, on the awareness that everybody should and can give something to the group. And that is, also, the promotion of good values throws the practice.

In the past, things were stricter. We had a teacher and students and that were pretty much authoritative way to give lectures. Now, as I said, the things are changed. People started to think about education as a two-way street, where bought side can learn something new. When the methodology is like these, then you have promotion of believe in everybody, promotion of thinking that everybody has something that can be appreciated from the rest of the people on a practice level.

Trainings like this are so useful for the youth workers all around the Europe, because they can see with their own eyes that the young people from the rest of the Europe are more similar to them, than they could imagine!

Maja Andrić

My decision to involve in this project was induced by the fact that I already engaged in this subject when I was working on my masters' final thesis. When I started working on that two years ago, I dove into the theme on migrations, especially war refugees. In that period, I did a lot of research and volunteer work. I realized I knew so little about what's it like to be in a situation of those who are unfortunate to live in the wrong place at the wrong time. I wanted to put myself in their shoes.

So I started being very active in a way of collecting necessities for the refugees, supporting the fundraising events, volunteering in camps and bringing up the topic in my own surrounding and discussing about it.

At that point I realized how inactive as citizen I was until then. For that I blamed the media at first. I thought „they“ should do better job of showing the real picture and promoting empathy instead of homophobia. After I visited the camp I blamed the organizations for not being as effective as they could. In the end I blamed the politicians for not acting on the problem enough. The thing is, I would always feel as someone else was responsible, which is the root problem. I learned that active citizenship means acting on the problem yourself, not regarding what others do about it. It also means not blaming anyone or forcing them to make actions, but promoting the good practice.

I was stunned when I saw how much authorities of my country disrespected the EU values which include respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law, even though we were a part of European Union. I learned authorities have the power to disrespect these rules, but moral voices in the citizens are the only thing that can overpower that.

Some examples of that are cases when people went out on the streets to raise their voices for those who have no voice (the refugees), sending a message that they welcome them in their country and that they stand for the human dignity and human rights. Further on, not turning your head from the „ugly“ topics but discussing about it in their communities. Even though you cannot help financially, you can do a lot just by having a discussion and exchanging opinions. Other specific example is a situation when Red Cross didn't allow handing more clothing even though there was plenty more, so other NGO workers did their best to prove them wrong instead of just following their rule.

I went on this project because I feel that one can never stop learning or being active once he engages in the values of being active. Active citizen should keep reminding himself and others of those values.

I can say that I feel so much more motivated and aware of the responsibilities we all have regarding shaping our future after this project and all the discussions we had here. After this experience I realized that citizens really are the ones who shape the future. And good changes can only happen by being active and involved within your community.

Marija Tomić

Respecting each other, treat everyone equally and letting everyone speak freely – to be honest, do we fulfil these duties as citizens? Do we respect each other enough and do we fight for those who can't speak for themselves?

On this project “Youth Workers for Better Future” in Berlin, we learned a lot about EU values, objectives, how they are connected with youth work and also how to be active citizens. These workshops made us think more about our engagement in the society and what we can do to create better future for next generations. Also, after we learn more what democracy, equality, solidarity and other values are, we will pass that knowledge to them.

Bruno, 21, from Croatia, shared with the whole group his thoughts about refugees: “I am really glad that I learned a lot about their struggles when they are so far away from home. Their position is extremely bad right now and I really want to help. I don't see them at all in my community and neither do other people – the feeling that they even don't exist somehow is affecting that people think there is no need to be involved in solving this issue. Can somebody tell me which the options are? ”

Other participants proposed that he could volunteer in some refugee camp in a city near his or to be involved in active campaigns by online media. Also, the Crow Funding may be the option if he wants to collect money quicker and help them.

Taki, 22, from Denmark, had a task to be a public speaker in a debate. He supposed to oppose homosexual couples to adopt children. He found really strong arguments and he won the debate. But, after winning, he said: “I am not a homophobic person and I actually support them. I felt awful because I had to defend the opposite side, but it was just a game. “Participants are loud when it comes to equality, as one of the most important European values. They are voting for gender equality and freedom when it comes to choosing sexual orientation.

Intercultural nights are the inevitable part of this kind of events. Lots of food and drinks from all over Europe – sound delicious, right? Partying and food are uniting us all and helping to realize cultural differences. Also, we had a chance to explore partying in the centre of Berlin and see how the citizens and the migrants live. The whole group had an interaction with migrants in many ways and the conclusion is that they are satisfied because they live in a city like this and have a lot better living standard. Unfortunately, we also saw many homeless people near metro and everywhere in the city – this is something I didn't expect if I take into consideration that Germany is really developed country. On the other side, active citizenship such as giving charity and some country measured initiated by its citizens could help them to get out the street.

I am really thankful because Erasmus+ projects helped me to break some stereotypes and visit 5 countries so far - Romania, Albania, Armenia, UK, and Germany. There is a whole new world which exists beyond this workshop – a feeling that you can visit your friends and be invited all over Europe and maybe do some project together. This is a value that cannot be measured!

Marko Gačević

All my life i was thinking about humanity as One. When i was just an 8 years old boy refugees from all over Yugoslavia flooded my neighborhood. That was the first time i met different nationalities, religions, ethnicities. At the time, i understood that being a Muslim meant not eating pork and wearing strange scarfs on the head. Immediately, stories started circulating through the school that they are weirdos, they go to this one noisy building with a rocket pointing up on the edge of the city to smell each other's feet and my personal favorite one how can you believe a person who doesn't eat proshuto? How mind_sick you must be to say no to proshuto? Years passed and i lived with a believe that they are deranged one regular sunny winter day, or what only begun like one. I took my bike and i went for a ride along my favourite biking place, nearby lake. I was going by fishermen, breating in bird songs and feeling the sun kissing my face. Just for a second i completely surrendered and that was all it took for me to end up in the freezing lake!

The next thing I know is a guy is with me in the water and he is puling me out of that hell. Soked and shivering, we ran to his car where he had some extra clothes and some tea. Between sitting with him in the car, thanking him over and over again and drinking his sweet herbal tea he noticed me looking at his strange symbols of moons and stars. He smiled and said: "Yes, I am muslim". We spent next 2hours talking about Qur'an, Mohamed and 1001 nights, about ottoman empire, Persia and galatasaray.

Samir is now part of my family, my university mentor and my strongest support in life. I even consult him with buying t-shirts and dating girls. All my life i will think about humanity as One but not all of us were that lucky to fall in the lake on a winter day and some of us will forever stay 8year old's.

Marko Vujić

For a long time, I've been looking for a change that would lead me to meet people's values. People are often not solidary, there is a big gap between the rich and the poor, and also women and men are still in an unequal position.

Projects supported by Erasmus were, for the first time, unknown to me, which gave me the idea to participate in them. For a long time, I live in the European Union where I had the opportunity to learn something about European values at school, but not to use it in practice. Training in Berlin was my first project I participated under Erasmus+. During the project we explored the topics of EU values, active citizenship, migrations and migration crisis which helped me to understand what it means to be an active citizen, what are common European values, and how to work with young people and educate them about migrations. At workshops, I realized that migrants are in a very inferior position and that people should help them. I did not expect them to follow such stereotypes. At one workshop we watched a documentary film about how people from smaller communities in Hungary treat migrants and that led me to think deeply.

Workshops were attended by two Palestinian girls who understood the English language but weren't speaking it. Since they live in Germany, and I speak German, I helped them with translation, so they wouldn't feel excluded from the group and could show us how it is to be a refuge. I felt very useful in these situations - the very idea that someone depends on me in a way helped me to understand how refugees are around the world.

They depend on the will of the state leadership, of its citizens who are or are not willing to accept and provide help. Unfortunately, they are more commonly excommunicated, subject to negative comments with clear indications that they are not desirable. But I was thrilled that the two of them, regardless of the war and the fears they had, did not give up fighting and pursuing their lives the way they had always imagined it. The thought that someone went through war for me is very unknown, but I am glad that I could feel empathy for them and their situation.

These, and many other life stories inspired me to see what life really is about. Our fears are a great turning point to actually take the responsibility and live life the way we want. A man should be an individual, but he should not be separated from society. On the contrary, he should be involved in all aspects of life, should understand others, feel empathy and live in such a conviction that we should be equal to everyone, regardless of racial, social, economic and political differences.

Marko Jurin

Thoughts about right and wrong, good and bad, justice and injustice, freedom and slavery, peace and war always bugged me. In that thoughts often I am lost and I can't see a way how to fix that. I'm sure that lot of people in this world share my thoughts and bad feeling about it as well. We think about planet Earth as a rotten dot, full of sins, in the infinite, peaceful, pure universe. And hope for clearing that rottenness is close to zero. But you all sensed that great feeling of love and optimism when you become producer of positivity. That is exactly what has to be our fuel to reach improvement.

How many times you felt bad, disappointed thinking that world is not fair to you and let's say you are average lucky person. Now imagine feeling of people who didn't have almost none of your privileges. Things you don't even consider as a privileges. Also I know that you are familiar to good feeling of solving something or helping to somebody.

In our gathering, here in Berlin, we talked about values every human being should obey. The goal is that every person has that values as a human dignity and his rights, freedom and equality to the others. How can we reach that goal? The answer is to be active citizen of planet Earth. That means every time you see some problem, about yourself or others, you shouldn't be quiet about it. First we have to talk about it and then it is time to get to work to solve that problem. After that we can just jump to next issue because the world is plenty of them. Don't think like if others don't do it neither do I. Those thoughts are what slows us down to become better place to live. More people doing it right is automatically more fixed things and that is exactly what makes our planet more beautiful every time.

This dot in the universe where we live is an amazing place, full of beauties and excitements. I am sure that every human being can find his happiness here. Of course it is a long way road to make this place a little bit better. But if we think about ourselves and others equally and don't do harm to anyone I am sure there is a time when humans will live here with big aura of love, peace and happiness all around the world.

Milan Karabanov

Active citizenship is philosophy that has to be more discussed nowadays. The problem with active citizenship is that many people doesn't even know what that means, and that is the main cause why they don't involve themselves more. One of the best example is lack of awareness how important is to go and vote on regular basis. People aren't aware how much power their right to vote has, because it can define their future. The similar thing is with protesting too. There are too many examples of people who are not satisfied with certain things, but still they are not even trying to do some changes. The right on freedom, free speech can't be denied to none. And its people obligatory do something because of it. It's not all about them, it's also a matter of future of their children. To make this world as best as it can be, so they can grow in healthy system.

Caring about our environment is also an issue. We live in the time when our planet is in big danger of the pollution. It's on us, on humans to step up and start caring. It's on us, today, our biggest mission, to make this world a perfect place for living. There is one expression on Latin which says: What man is a man if he doesn't make this world a better place. Humans needs to understand; this planet is our home. We don't have another one, and stop throwing garbage all over it, would be the perfect way of keeping it clean. Helping our world is not represented only through taking care of environment, but also of its inhabitants too, humans. Taking care of loved ones at the first place, but also of everyone else, especially those who needs help the most. Homeless, old ones, migrants...

On my studies, I had a chance to meet one Somalian guy and to hear his story. He was telling me one very traumatic story from his life. It was period of civil war in his country. That day he woke up early, had his breakfast, met with his friends and went to school. But suddenly bombarding started. The alarm was on. All kids got out of the school straight into the bus, but he was late and the bus went. He was all alone in front of the school, watching the only potential mean to save his life going away, while bombs were falling. But then, even a bigger shock! After getting away 50-100m, the bomb hit the bus. He saw in front of his eyes all friends from school, class, village, kids he grew up with, dead. People often don't, can't or won't understand that there are simply some areas which are very dangerous to live, and that those who migrate from there have to be accepted. One of the main value in our society is right to live. Those people have right to live. If not in their country, their homes, then somewhere else. If we are not going to accept them, we may potentially kill them. Is this kind of society we would like to live in? Lack for understanding all these things I wrote, in my opinion are coming from the lack of information and education about values and active citizenship. We need to inform people about this, especially younger ones. And this kind of projects are the best example to do it. In my case, it helped me a lot to learn, understand and see things differently than I used to.

Milica Mičić

In a usual coffee meeting with my friend, she told me that she had participated in one project with 30 young people. In that time, she learned a lot of new things about how young people live in other countries, what kind of problems they facing with. The methodology was non-formal education throw workshops. All that looked so interesting and inspiring to me, so I wanted to be part of something like that. I did some research on that topic and I found out that next project is going to be close to Berlin, in Wannsee. The organization is Central Council of Serbs in Germany in cooperation with Omladinski savez Srbije the organized ERASMUS+ programme called "EU values and active citizenship". The programme lasts from 1st till 9th March 2018. Participants were coming from Serbia, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Romania, and Croatia. We wanted to share our experience with each other.

I'm coming from the country where European values (solidarity, equality, democracy, minority rights, freedom of speech...) are not established completely and there is a lot of space for work on it.

The main goal of ERASMUS+ is to work with young people and encourage them to have an open mind and to accept the differences. We have been working on that in our project. Throw the debate we were talking how the European values are applied in our countries and also what kind of a problem each country has in this field.

Before coming to these project I was the sceptic: I wasn't really sure that this kind of a project is available to everybody. Even my parents were the sceptic as the most of the people who are not informed about projects like this. Young people from Serbia who wants to participate in the programme like this most of the time they don't believe that that is possible, so they are not trying to get more information about it. They are passive in finding the ways to solve the problems they are dealing with in their community.

Knowledge which gain here is for me, as a participant who is the first time in this kind of a project, invaluable. These project helped me to look at myself from another perspective and made me think about what is the way I could help my community. When I come home, to Serbia, I'll talk about this experience to my family and friends, and I hope that I will inspire someone.

Nikola Ivanov

Speaking of active citizenship and EU values, I will try to briefly analyse the importance of being an active citizenship on a micro scale, in everyday life.

I was lucky to be a member of a local community of youth where my awareness and care for the world around us was brought to a much bigger level then it would've been without that factor.

I would say that none of that would've happened if it weren't for this enthusiast guy, the coordinator of Office of Youth in my hometown. He was payed about 50 euros per month, but the legacy he had left behind was priceless. So when he got a son and was in need of more money, he had to quit the Office of Youth coordinator job. This was in 2014. To this day, that kind of positive energy and teamwork was not established, the Office of Youth remains inactive (even though it exists on paper).

This shows how in Serbian democracy that is still, from historical and sociological point of view, practically a new-born, youth work is not appreciated enough and is minimally supported with state budget funds.

Anyhow, actions of this enthusiast had an impact on my life so I've continued to be curious about the world around us, including being an active citizen in accordance with EU values. I became interested in YouTube educational videos and slowly became a member of a worldwide community of learners, people that tend to break the boundaries of conservative way of thinking and aspire to see themselves as part of a bigger picture, as part of the World.

I will name a few good example of environmental protection that were planted in my brain after watching some of these videos:

- Microbeads or micro plastic is used in toothpastes just for cool look, they have no practical use, jet, they all end up in sewage system and since they're so small in dimensions and buoyant, they pass through the filtering system and end up in seas and oceans, making animals confuse those tiny bits of plastic with small animals and endangering their life and environment. After watching a video explaining this problem, I will never again buy and use toothpaste (or a soap) that contains microbeads of plastic.

- 6 billion kilograms of paper towel are used in USA per year. People mostly tear 3-5 paper towels per one hand-wash. There is a video explaining this and showing how to properly dry your hands with the use of only one paper towel which had learnt me not to waste paper when drying my hands. If we could somehow spread the word about this, it could possibly save 2/3 of forest being cut to make paper towels.

- A video on my favourite channel – Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell had explained to me why refugee crisis happened, who are those desperate people seeking asylum in EU. It allowed me to feel empathy for those people and to start advocating in their favour at every place that subject was mentioned. For that, I am grateful to Kurzgesagt.

There are many more examples of this kind of possibility for being an active citizenship on a micro scale. I find it hard to describe how much this group of people (or YouTube channels) inspired me and how big of an impact they had on my life. I you, dear reader, have got to this point of this article, I am mentioning some of those channels for you: Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell; TED-ed; It's OK To Be Smart; Veritasium; Vsauce; Smarter Every Day; minuteearth; SciShow; CrashCourse (John and Hank Green).

It will be great if this kind of videos and this way of thinking could be spread to bigger percentage of people all around the world so that awareness of the problems surrounding us rises significantly and simple micro-scale solutions start to be implemented and used on everyday basis by much more people.

More on how to achieve this on some future project. Spread the word: science is coming!

Oana-Marcela Hoidrag

What active citizenship means? As it can be understood from the name, citizens are active in the society that they live. Active citizenship is an important and valuable step leading to a healthy society in democratic countries in development like Romania. How can you be active in the society? You can start by participating and getting involved in the local communities and if you want to make bigger changes try to go to the next level.

Since I was in high school I got involved in different activities, especially to participate in events for cleaning the natural environments like parks and forests, also sometimes me and my class mates were going to foster homes trying to bring the orphans a little bit of joy by offering them gifts and spending time playing with them. But is important for institutions like the school to teach students from a young age how they can change something, even small things. This made me understood that the change can be done if you start now and not later and also is very important if people really wants to do something and if there is will.

Romania being a country that is still not fully capable to help all the people in need, the citizens need to step out and try to do it as much as they can.

One good example of being a good active citizen that I always like to share with everyone when I have the opportunity is about two journalist students; one of them was in the same school with me, which created "Art for school", a small program that started with helping poor and orphan children that cannot afford to buy school supplies at the beginning of the school year. What they did is trying to find kids in need, as many as possible, and then shared with people their idea in order for them to choose one kid and buy him all the supplies they need. But the big surprise was that the citizens not only bought more then was on the lists but also the demand was bigger so from 10 kids, the projects ended up helping 300 kids.

Maybe you, the one who reads this will ask yourself what I am trying to prove with this. Well, one big reason why lots of children drop out of school is lack of money to buy everything is required and also to have proper clothes for school, because they live in a society where kids that have everything will shame or bully the ones who doesn't. These two students knew that they can't change the mentality of so many people so they tried to bring a little joy in their life and offering them a better school experience. The projects started three years ago and now it expanded not only for beginning of school but Christmas, Easter and even building houses for orphan kids.

The message of this little story is that if you really want to do something in the society you live in, you always can find by looking around you and without trying to find a reason why you can't do it.

Simona Ioana

Throughout this workshop we had different discussions and presentations about what are the EU values and how we can engage in being more active in our society. Because participants were so diverse, both regarding the country the came from and their educational backgrounds, we had the opportunity to discuss and debate different points of view and expand our perception and understanding of what it means to be a European citizen and how can we be more active within our society. Concerning the European values of promoting tolerance, respect, solidarity, multiculturalism, equality we pointed out how important it is to spread awareness and communicate these ideas in our everyday life and ad-hoc conversations. An important role is played by our understanding of the "other" and how do we address to someone that might have discriminative and racist ideas and attitudes. We also had the chance to see how what we discussed about migration and refugee crisis apply in real life while sight-seeing Berlin, observing and interacting with people. Thus, we discovered how multicultural Berlin is when asking for directions and we noticed that there were more people that were speaking English even though we addressed in German at the beginning. Furthermore, we discovered the stories of some multicultural people, like for example a Vietnamese woman, who is living in Dubai because she wanted to run from her culture which didn't allow her to be herself, or a 71 years old African men who moved to Germany at the age of 9 and the moment of our interaction he was opening the door for people at a supermarket to make some money.

Regarding active citizenship, I would like to make a distinction between different ways in which people can be active citizens depending on the country the live in and the local issues the meet in the everyday live. As I was representing Denmark because I am studying there, but I lived in Romania until last year, I could notice the difference of being an active citizen between these 2 countries. As we know that being an active citizen means getting involved in the society we live in, in order to make it better, an interesting aspect of this could be the reasons that motivate people to be active and the ways in which they are active. Denmark is known as a culture with high participatory culture, and I think one reason for this could be its strong democratic values. Citizens, besides the fact that they are voting in a large number, are interested and informed about the political parties, they trust their system and are happy to get involved in different volunteering activities in order to help their community grow. In Romania there is another situation. Citizens became really active in the last 2 years, because they want to fight against the system and to combat corruption. Last year, there was the biggest protest after the one from the revolution in '89 and the people made politicians not to implement a law which basically would have saved the corrupt people to be imprisoned. The interesting point we can see in these two examples is how people engage in their communities having different motivations.

In the globalized world we live today, we are more interconnected than ever with the help of technology and social media. Also, we have access to a lot of information concerning what is happening around us, so we can use that in order to get involved in our community to improve it. Thus, values like tolerance, respect, solidarity are of a great importance when living together in a society which becomes more and more diverse.

European values in Denmark; article by Botond Takács

Denmark in the past 100 years have experienced a transform from a monarchy and a closely controlled economic system to a constitutional monarchy with representative monarchy. This transformation has enabled Denmark to form what will later consist the main parts of a free-market capitalistic representative democracy. Without going into too much detail the how and why I will be mainly focusing on the five core elements, that have let Denmark to become one of the most prosperous, righteous bastion of western culture and western-style democracy.

Respect for human dignity has been part for most part of Danish history, even at the times of the monarchy most Danish kings and queens have emphasized the importance of the happiness of the people they were ruling over, not just a selected few for the upper-mid classes. When talking about dignity the best way to describe is this: Respect is not the same as dignity. Respect among our fellow human beings boils down to shared values, excelling in a skill or just simple impression. Respect has to be earned. However, human dignity is something every person is born with – this is that core value that cannot be disconnected from us as individuals. Recognizing, that even though we might share different ideas, when it comes to politics, religion or economic structure, we value each other for having these thoughts, and most importantly we value each other for being humans. Human dignity is the invisible glue, that holds together a society both on national and international level, it is the satisfactory of all human beings desire to be heard, treated with respect and with freedom.

When talking about Denmark one of the most prominent values people often bring up is Freedom. The freedom that has enabled Denmark to become this inherently prosperous nation. But what does it actually mean in real life? Well it boils down to many factors, such as: Freedom from the tyrannical government; the notion of checks and balances are something that resonates with all Danish people. To keep a free society going we have to keep those who were democratically elected in check, to reduce overreach, that in result could reduce the freedom of those people who has elected them in the first place. Freedom of expression is the other value; some of you may have heard that my hometown of Aarhus has been where the infamous Mohammed picture was painted, that have sparked both national and international outrage in the Muslim community. The Danes who understand the importance of freedom of speech (The notion that you have a right to discuss ideas about any given topic freely, without losing your job, or put into prison) stood behind the painter as one man, since in Denmark it is perfectly fine to mock or satirize other religions. Freedom of sexual expression: The small country of Denmark was one of the first to recognize the rights of the LGBTQ community in the 1980s, giving the first the right to be recognized as couples. Later the right to get married legally in the eyes of the law, and then a few years later in church as well. Today the Danish LGBTQ community enjoys to be one of the freest community in the world, who are able to adopt children, protected from attacks and enjoy the love and acceptance of Danes throughout Denmark. Free market capitalism: when talking about Denmark it is also important to recognize that without the free market capitalism this level of prosperity could not have happened. The notion that with little governmental control, the public sector was able to operate freely, has resulted in the creation of one of the richest nations in the world. Freedom between sexes: in recent years Denmark became the nation, that has achieved the highest level of equality between men and women, both when it comes to social or economic issues. Danish women has been rated as the freest in the whole world, with the Danish society granting them incredible freedoms, that would be unbelievable in other countries. In addition to that, the so-called gender pay gap has been completely reduced to 0, when accounted for every different

variable, such as education, length of employment, children etc.

When someone goes to Denmark one of the things that people notice immediately, is the high level of equality of the Danish people. When it comes to equality, it both means the equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. Equality, when it comes to opportunity, can be mostly seen for example in the Danish educational system, where the more remote or poorer areas have access to high-quality, free education, that will result in the equality of outcome. In addition to that, the Danish system has a high emphasis, when it comes to taxes, in order to reduce economic inequality, with the reshuffling of money from the people more well-off.

It is also important to understand, when talking about the Danish culture, the equality under the rule of law, has deep roots, originating from the 19th century, called the Law of Jante (Janteloven), a set of rules, that boils down to the ten commandments from the bible, as well as reducing the importance of individuality and increasing the importance of the success of the collective – commonly referred to as the notion of “You are not better than me”. With these set of rules, and social contract, this idea resonates with the people of Denmark (and generally with the people of Nordic countries). It can be stated, that equality under the law has been also a success for the Danish society, since the separation of powers have been successfully integrated.

Lastly, when it comes to European values, the combination of all these ideas, have resulted in the creation of one of the best working representative democracies in the world. With the workings of the checks and balances, as well as a huge middle-class, and different NGOs and public initiatives the Danish people and society is probably one of the best examples for what encases being a European, and what the true European values are. It is however important to keep in mind, that in order to preserve a well working and healthy society, it is the work of all the citizens, that keep the different publicly elected servants in power, and also the elected officials to truly represent all those people who have elected them, not just a selected few.



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