



The spring of 2014 at “Youth Initiative Centre”
was full of new and interesting initiatives
we had the screening of the film - “The wave”,
new English and TOEFL clubs were opened,
we celebrated the “Easter” in the frameworks of the Friday’s Cafe
and so on.
Spring in YIC was colourful and sunny.

Make Steps-Get Results

March 18-25, Pambak, Armenia

"Youth Initiative Centre" NGO hosted a 8-day international youth exchange (YE) on employability and active citizenship within the frameworks of the "Youth in Action" programme, from March 18th to 25th. The YE brought together 28 youngsters from Lithuania, Germany, Czech Republic, Georgia and Armenia.

The youth exchange aimed at increasing the youth employability and active citizenship of the youngsters. The project enhanced the employability of the youth coming from different countries through providing job and communication skills and preparing them for job market. The YE encouraged the participants' active citizenship through corresponding workshops and activities and of course gave opportunity to share the best practices and tools of employability.

To see the photo review of the project follow the link:

[https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.738279782872127.1073741845.137970669569711&type=3)

[set=a.738279782872127.1073741845.137970669569711&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.738279782872127.1073741845.137970669569711&type=3)

Karen Harutyunyan



Employ Your Ability

May 24-31, Aghveran, Armenia

Gyumri "Youth Initiative Centre" NGO hosted a 8-day international training course in the frameworks of the "Youth in Action" programme from May 24th to May 31st, 2014. The TC had elements of study visit aimed at empowering 24 youth workers and leaders from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Germany, Italy and Croatia to support the employability of young people they work with, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds. The training course provided participants with skills and knowledge on assisting the unemployed young people to connect to the job market through investigating various tools for providing young people with relevant information and learning opportunities.

The participants of the project also had space and time for discovering different realities regarding unemployment situation and shared opportunities for youth employment.

The participants of the training course also had opportunity to visit various state and public institutions in Armenia to get a closer look on cross-sectoral cooperation opportunities, get to know different state programmes and organisational models of youth employment.

To see the photo review of the project follow the link:

[https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.772837982749640.1073741847.137970669569711&type=3)

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Tamara Khlgatyan



I am international-activist movements

April 22-29, Famalisao, Portugal

"I was never interested what are girls collecting in their luggage that much, for me it takes seconds to get prepared. Just saying...One, two, three... We're going to Portugal. Sorry I didn't introduce myself. I'm Shirak's Falcon and I will try to tell this story from my point of view.

Esmarida, Tamara, Gedeon, Ani, Siranush. You can always go somewhere with them. Whatever happens they'll stay positive and will keep smiling. The only grumpy character of this story was me. There always have to be someone like that, right?

Before getting some benefits of any European project I mostly think about travelling version of non-formal learning. It may sound funny but every time passing the border of different countries one of us was being a suspicious character for the guards. In Armenia that was me, in Georgia, Gedeon, in Turkey, Siranush, in the end to solve those problems they were always inviting our group leader: Esmarida..



Honestly we've never done anything bad and it was illogical and at the same time funny to get in the same situation every time we were landing in some airport.

Portugal hosted us with kindness. I don't know why but I only noticed kind things in Portugal. People who give you metro tickets. People who return back the money you've lost. Except all I would like to talk about oranges. Yes, yes I would like to mention the fruit. I always avoided to use citrus fruits, but Portugal changed me. And now I love oranges. The most interesting part of the project was the presentation of success stories of civic activism in the centre of the city. I was feeling like a special guest on that event when I found out our presentation is going to be on the same day as one of Portuguese revolution's was. I meet the major of Famalicao city...and what a shame...he doesn't have bodyguards. This one as a kind joke. I was nicely impressed.

I could see the humanitarian approach during the whole project. The participants had many opportunities to communicate with each other. Kitchen, pastime and interesting events were organized really well."

Arsen Vardanyan

Dance for Peace

March 10-18, Murcia, Spain

From 10th till 18th of March people from Macedonia, Armenia, Romania, Poland, Italy and Spain team participated at youth exchange in Puntas de Calnegre (Murcia) Spain, organised by Cazalla Intercultural. Recently 5 guys from Gyumri, Yerevan were given an amazing opportunity to be participants of a very nice training course. There are 5 individuals from Armenian delegation Davit Simonyan, Marieta Gevorgyan, Yana Hovhannisyan, Arman Avetisyan, Siranush Araqelyan. It was part of Youth in action program supported by European Commission. Main topic of this exchange was peace education,



non-violent communication, conflict transformation and dance. Through dance participants showed how important is peace and happiness for all people in this world. The final result of the exchange was a wonderful dance performance. During the event young people had the opportunity to discuss social issues. Dance performance in the frame of YE "Dance for Peace" in Lorca, Spain in order to see our performance go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsbDUuTuW4s>. We are really glad that we were part of this exchange and that we met a lot of new friends from other countries. This was nice experience, we learnt a lot. This experience changed me in positive and optimistic way. A huge gratitude to YIC. Thank you for giving us a chance to be a part of this.

Marieta Gevorgyan



EVS hosting

My activity at 25th school

On 18th October 2013, I started working at the 25th School in Gyumri with a group of students between 12 and 14 years old. The school specializes in the German language and the students usually start learning it in 1st grade. Many of them have even been to Germany already for exchanges.

When I first started, my co-volunteer Judith and I worked together with the students but as we also did sessions at the pedagogical institute, we decided to divide up the tasks. She did the sessions at the university and I did the ones at the school. Every so often though I join her for university or she joins me for an afternoon at the school. Sometimes the kids even ask where she is and if she is coming again.

Every Friday at 14:30 I go to the school. Just before turning the corner and entering the building I already encounter several of my participants who greet me enthusiastically asking me what we will do today. We then go downstairs to our classroom where some of them are already waiting, others are not there yet or do not come at all. Usually I have eight participants but there is no real consistency: sometimes I have six, other times five and once I had just three. On the other hand I have also had an extra student or two come to have a look at what we are doing. Every week I prepare something different for them. Since they love playing games, I usually prepare one or two for them. Of course they are supposed to practice their German skills, so I try and pick or invent games that will force them to speak, like describing a word via paraphrasing or using twenty questions to guess who one student is impersonating or even playing "Broken Telephone". One time, actually the first time I was there with Judith, we even sang and danced to "Das Fliegerlied" (a German cult song by Tim Toupet).

In the past I have often asked them if they had any suggestions or wishes and have also made many proposals as for example performing a play, making a video or writing a story together.

The idea, my goal, was to let them practice the language and improve it. They only really know German from the classroom, so I wanted to give them the opportunity to apply their knowledge practically.



However this did not always work. Mostly they reverted to speaking Armenian after maybe one minute of German. On top of that the format of only using games as a tool gave off the impression that they can be loud and chaotic and do not have to listen. I have tried small consequences for them which have not really worked. For example I have made them read out a short text when they were loud or spoke Armenian but that just results in more chaos.

Another example: I introduced a credit point system where if they broke a rule they lose one of their initial points and if they behave well and participate they could gain a point. Gaining points meant a reward at the end of the month and losing all of the points meant a conversation with their teacher about their behavior.

Over time this disciplinary system did not work but to be honest it was probably mostly my fault. I often forgot about the points or I was not consistent when giving and taking them which made the students not really take it seriously.

Eventually I decided to minimize the usage of games and try doing one learning part and one fun part. After all I wanted them to learn something and if they did not take me seriously and did not actually speak German, I felt like I was not succeeding. This idea of adding a learning element backfired; they were resistant to doing anything besides playing games. Some things I tried included

reading out loud, practising pronunciation, refreshing vocabulary or even having a conversation round, just to practice speaking. They complained that it was boring, did not really participate and most importantly they did not speak German.



Finally I asked them what they wanted to do. I had done so before but always accompanied with suggestions which might have limited their ideas. Unfortunately the response I got was less than satisfying. They claimed they wanted to learn more about German culture which I thought was of course a possibility. When I asked them though what exactly they wanted to know, they stated that they wanted to know about supermarkets. I asked them what I should tell them about supermarkets in Germany and what exactly they wanted to know. This is when they started listing their favourite foods.

"Pizza."

"Yes, yes, oh and chips, I love chips."

"And Cola. Do you know Coca-Cola, Alex?"

I sarcastically asked them if they wanted me to come next week, stand in front of the classroom and tell them how pizza was made and that it was possible to buy Coca-Cola in Germany, too. They did not really have an answer for me. Seeing as I was not getting constructive suggestions from them, I figured I had to take matters into my own hands. The idea came to me to make a video in which they introduce their school and their city in German. I thought that being on camera, talking about something they knew and liked and combining that with going outside, moving a little, seeing something different than the school they have already been in all day, would be fun for them – and exactly that was the case.

On Thursday, 3rd April, we started filming without any concrete order or plan. I did not think it was necessary and it honestly probably would not have worked as expected anyway, so I decided that we would just do it without any real expectations. First they showed me and Judith, who had joined us again, their school: the classrooms, the things on the walls, the gym.

Next we went outside where they showed us the city: the Vanatur Hotel, the Ashot Matirosyan Monument, the city hall and the central square. The process was very chaotic and seeing as I am not a professional cameraman the quality of the video was also not the best.

It was not really about making a perfect documentary though. The fact is that during the filming of the video, they had fun. Actually we all had fun.

And they even spoke a little German.

All in all I realized that I did not really have to accomplish some big learning achievement, I did not have to make them fluent German speakers. They wanted to have fun and if they spoke even a little German in the process, that was already some progress, however small. Once I realized this and gave up the urge to make them learn something concrete to make me feel useful, I felt less pressure and so did they.

Now the kids have their summer holidays and will not be back in school until shortly before my project here in Gyumri ends, meaning I will not have any more sessions with them. Altogether I enjoyed my time with them, even though it was stressful at times. I wish them all the best for their futures and that they have the chance to travel to Germany and truly master the German language.

Alex Foss

EVS Sending

Cześć everyone. I am EVS volunteer here from April. Not long time passed but I feel myself all in society. I am working with 5 other volunteers from different countries. Generally we have 5 working places and each of them means something for us.

When we came here first day it was kind of shock for me. Everything was going to be new and it will be like this a year. We tried to find our way and surprisingly for me people were helping us with great pleasure. Following 4 hours on the way and we were at home already. Everything was organized for us in a perfect way, even food. And it was funny for me, that we had welcome party after 7 hours we were in Poland.

About people in Poland I can say only and only good things. They are very hospitable like in Armenia. First days, of course, we needed help a lot and they were helping us. Now I have a lot of local friends and my leisure time I spend with them mainly. Food is the same as in Armenia. I didn't feel big difference. And I learnt to make some polish traditional dishes like strawberry soup ;).

Our EVS gives us also chance to travel. Most of us traveled a lot and actually we do the same during the weekend. Exploring Poland and polish culture is one of the most important aims of mine.

I live with 2 guys from Turkey and Moldova. First days it was a bit



tough to adopt each other, different characters, way of thinking, culture...but now due to tolerance and respect we get very well with each other.

Sepolno- Krajenskie is the city where I live. City, which I love a lot and I miss when I am out. It is small city but with great people and beautiful places. We have beautiful lake where we can swim and admire sunset every evening, where we can meet with a lot of people who live in the city and make new friends. Near it we have molo which is the place to entertain after work and during weekend, meet all the youth of city, sing karaoke and dance.

About my working places I can speak a lot but I'd like to write about kindergarden, which I love a lot. Working with small kids is another pleasure for me and I am learning there a lot. WTZ is also nice place to work and to feel helpful to those people who need your help.

Concluding everything I want to say that I appreciate what I do here, friends and coordinator I have here.

Ani Hovhannisyan

YIC staff development trainings

On April 12 YIC had a staff development training on "Fundraising mechanisms" by Anahit Mkhoyan director of Homeland Development Initiative Foundation - HDIF.



On May 20 YIC staff development training on "HR management" by YIC local advisory board member Karen Sargsyan.

Rafayel Begoyan



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