

EVS Hosting

The Bremer Town Musicians in Gyumri

A long, long time ago, in a small village in the shadow of Mount Aragats, there lived 11 Armenian children. But you can't imagine that these were just random children, no! These children were from the German school #25 and- if you will allow me to pass judgement- excellent German speakers.

These eleven children had the idea to rehearse together, with their two German volunteers Johanna and Anna, to perform a play in German. The decision to organize a play was made quickly, and so it was that from the beginning of March both the children and the volunteers were totally focused on preparing a play based on the folktale "The Bremen Town Musicians."

If you had walked through the German school #25 during the past 3 months on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon, it would have been quite possible for you to hear these children tinkering with the scenery and costume designs, learning the German script, and imitating animal sounds as they practiced their roles.

After a few weeks of these preparations, the final day arrived: Friday, the 24th of May, at 2.00 in the afternoon. From early in the morning, the children started to rehearse and prepare themselves for the performance. Then, in the afternoon, more and more friends and family members began to arrive and the play could begin...

For me personally, it was a really nice experience to work together with these schoolchildren to put on a play.



Upcoming Clubs

Mondays:

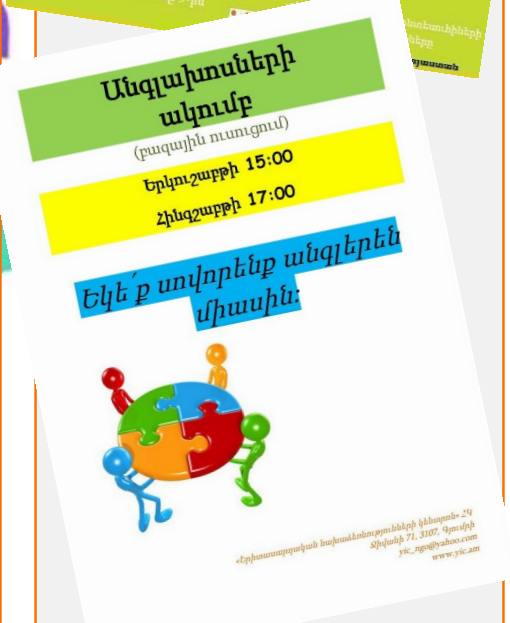
15:00 – English for Beginners
(Syuzanna Sahakyan)

Wednesdays:

15:00 – German Culture Club
(Anna Schott)

Thursdays:

17:00 – English for Beginners
(Syuzanna Sahakyan)



More info on Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/
www.yic.am](https://www.facebook.com/www.yic.am)

Colour the City!

All of the locals ask us volunteers the same question: “How do you like Gyumri?” Hmm... what to say? “It’s a nice city, but... a little bit grey,” or, “The colors are missing.” Really, the architecture of Gyumri is very beautiful and the old, historic houses always find new ways to impress me when I walk through the town. Yerevan doesn’t have this old part, so it is special here. But the old houses are still grey.

We, the EVS volunteers at YIC, were thinking about what we could do. We were not capable of painting houses, but we could paint something else.

Our first idea was to paint the lamp posts. But we discovered that the logistical aspects would be too difficult. After a while, Victoria had another idea: “During winter, we were knitting scarves, socks, and caps... why couldn’t we also knit in the summer, to wrap around the trees and make the streets of Gyumri more colourful?” Yes, why not? Urban knitting is a type of street art that started in the United States and has gained popularity throughout Europe and the western countries, as well.

We started to search for partners who would join us and support the project because we wanted to involve a lot of local people and work together to demonstrate how easy

it can be to do something to change the city. Caritas was a great project partner, and we worked with the Little Prince Center in 58 District since they have a handicrafts club and lots of children who were knitting endlessly for our project.

We started going weekly to the Little Prince Center to prepare knitted pieces for the trees. There was excitement in the air leading up to the event on June 1st, when we would put the pieces on the trees. Nobody knew: would we have enough knitted pieces? How would local people react to our project? How long would the knitted pieces stay on the trees?

On the day of the event, a sunny Saturday morning, Victoria and I went to Sayat-Nova street, where we would use the wool pieces to cover the trees. Nobody was there. But suddenly the children from Little Prince appeared around the corner. Together with other members of YIC, everybody helped put the knitted squares around the trees. The process seemed a bit chaotic, but in the end we had a beautiful, colourful Sayat-Nova street. And local people passing along the street also liked it! Thanks to all the people who joined our project and helped make it possible.

The goal was reached: we colored the city!



Training Course

International Training Course in Estonia

Once again, the Estonian NGO “Loesje” happily welcomed young adults from across Europe for a new training course focusing on effective methods of communication. This time, the training was held in a beautiful village on the shore of Lake Peipsi.

Twenty participants gathered for the training from the following countries: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia, and Austria.

The aim of the project was to share experience and knowledge about communication methods, as well as how to use social and print media as promotional tools to increase the effectiveness of your project or organization.

The reason I applied to this project was to develop my knowledge and experience in print media, social media, and communication methods, in order to use this new skill set back at YIC and later in my future. Also, I wanted to understand how other NGOs use social and print media as part of their communications strategy.

Before the training started, participants got to know each other through icebreaker activities, and later on learned about each others' countries. During the training there were such sessions as:

- exploring common problems related to NGOs and specific projects;



- sharing best experiences regarding the use of social or print media in specific projects or for organizations;

- Learning about concrete media tools;

- Designing projects for future cooperation.

As usual, the project had its own blog so participants were updating it daily with pictures, stories, etc.

Also, the participants insisted on having a separate workshop to discover more about Loesje NGO- the history of the organization and how it works.

Close to the end of the training the project participants, together with the trainers, discussed the competences of the Youth Pass, and participants filled in the form to reflect our newly acquired skills and knowledge.

On the last day of the project, participants were taken to

Tartu where we visited the Printing and Paper museums. In the Printing Museum, we had a chance to actually participate in the printing process. In the Paper Museum we attended some paper-folding workshops, where we learned how to create envelopes and hats, and also learned some simple techniques of paper folding so that later on we could make any figures.

By Training Course Participant

Gagik Grigoryan



“Unfortunately, I was the only

An interview with Tigran Petrosyan about

How did you come to participate in this project?

I received the invitation to participate from YIC colleagues, Nelli Minasyan and Artur Najaryan. Marius Walozas and Nerijus Miginisy, from the Institute of Political Research and Study, had asked them to find a specialist in the field of youth policy in Armenia.

Thirteen representatives from the EU Eastern Partnership and Black Sea region countries were to participate in the project; each country was supposed to have three representatives: one from the Ministry of Youth, one from national youth councils, and one from regional youth organizations.

Unfortunately, I was the only representative from Armenia; as the organizers stated it was impossible to contact the Armenian National Youth Council. As to why there was no representative from the Ministry of Youth and Sport I cannot say, though the project was implemented within the framework of Youth in Action, which covers 70% of travel costs and accommodation. I do not want to present this problem as a strategic issue and will only state the facts, that the topic of the seminar was “Youth Policy in the Framework of Local Self-governing Bodies” and took place in Lithuania. The project included meetings

with representatives from the youth sectors in Lithuania. It is also worth mentioning that Lithuania is the EU presiding country and so will implement large-scale activities within the framework of the Eastern partnership window. Also, youth policy in the Republic of Lithuania is considered a model for the EU region in terms of state approaches for solving issues within the youth field.

What was the topic and purpose of the project?

The seminar brought together 13 partners from the EU Eastern Partnership and Black Sea region countries (Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland) to discuss regional youth participation issues, and analyse opportunities for regional youth policy and youth work development.

The purpose of the **seminar** was to gather different stakeholders from EaP countries to discuss regional youth policy development, co-management of the implementation, and a vision of future youth policy in the EaP region. The aim of the **project** was to empower national youth councils (NYC) and NGOs in the EaP to cooperate and develop a common vision on youth issues in the region. The **project** also aimed to develop ideas and tools on how studies on young people’s participation in society can be further developed and implemented.

The seminar served as a preparatory phase for the EaP Youth Forum, which will be held in October 2013 in Lithuania. Results from the seminar will feed into conference content, and cooperation between policy makers and youth representatives will be encouraged. The forum will also be a space to share best practices, visit interesting examples of co-management, and study cases of regional youth policy implementation and local



one to represent our youth field..."

the "State Youth Policy" seminar in Lithuania

youth work in Lithuania. Overall, the forum aims to support stakeholders from the EaP and Black Sea region to shape a future vision of youth policy in the region, creating a common ground and future direction.

What did you get out of the project?

First of all, I would mention the new approaches to solve and manage youth issues at a local level, practical and theoretical knowledge, and information about existing youth policies in participant countries, including the problems that occur during implementation and the work to overcome them. I also want to mention lots of friends, some preliminary agreements on international cooperation, and a signed contract between the Youth Forum of Ukraine and Kiteboarding Development Centre, which I am now running.

I'd also like to mention some feelings of regret and bitterness which were caused by the passivity of our youth organizations, which couldn't remain unnoticed against the backdrop of the activeness of the representatives from other countries...

As the only representative from Armenia, what new things did you bring back to Armenia?

During a meeting with the Chief of the Youth Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs (which is responsible for youth issues) in Vilnius, other participants spoke about problems that

bothered them, basically doing coordinated lobbying for their youth fields. I raised a question about the barriers connected with the visa procedure and technical problems which pose a significant obstacle to Armenian youth. With Lithuania holding the EU presidency, I asked them to concentrate on this problem, and the Ministry representative promised to make a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania and be cognizant of this issue during the years of their presidency.

What further plans do you have after the project? Do you intend to take part in any other similar projects?

First of all, I want to organise a meeting with local youth organisations and active young people in the near future in order to share the information, experience, and contacts I gained from this project. The experience of the organisers, the queries they made to our neighbouring countries, and the resulting extensive and innovative work they did to expand youth policies on a local level makes me of course think about doing similar things in the region, which could be implemented with the help of local organisations.



Tamara Volunteering in Greece

“ELLA,” (Hey) everyone! I am Tamara and I am doing my European Voluntary Service (EVS) in Lefkada, one of the most beautiful islands in Greece.

The focus of my project is EVS promotion, so most of the time I work in the office. I update promotional flyers, create posters, write articles, give presentations, organize workshops, and do other things as needed.

Lefkada is a really amazing place full of beaches, sunshine, and nice people. It is a place where everything moves along very “sigha sigha” (slowly, slowly); people really live and enjoy every moment of their lives. One funny thing that I have noticed about people here is that they prefer to sing in the clubs rather than dance!

I have only been living in Lefkada for four months, but

I’ve already managed to meet many interesting people and visit many beautiful beaches and small, cute cities. I live in a big house where 12 volunteers all live together, and each of my housemates are unique and interesting individuals with whom I really enjoy spending time. These people inspire me to do things that I have never done before- maybe it is the space, or the time, that allows me to try these new things.

During these past four months I have had an amazing opportunity to travel around the Ionian Islands and discover heaven for myself. I have managed to prove to myself and my friends that me and cooking is actually something POSSIBLE! I have learned how to swim, how to ride a bike, and- the most important thing- how to

bake a birthday cake! WOOHOO! I am understanding the value of time and have started to organize my time in a better way.

Though it’s been only four months since I arrived, it’s already hard to imagine my life without some of the little things that have become part of my daily routine and life. Doing EVS is not just about being a volunteer outside of Armenia; for me, it is a lifelong experience. It is a time during which I can discover many things about myself and see myself growing and becoming a more open, tolerant, and responsible person. And of course I am super excited and very thankful for getting this opportunity to experience a bit of heaven!

By EVS Volunteer Tamara Khlgatyan



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