

CLIMATE FOR CHANGE!

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING PROJECT
WITH
FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

WROCŁAW (POLAND) 2019



EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Project number: 2018-2-PL01-KA125-051727



EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

WE ACT FOR HUMANS AND NATURE

Fundacja EkoRozwoju (The Foundation for Sustainable Development, acronym FER) was established in 1991 and since then it has been active in environmental protection, promoting sustainable development, open society and social justice.

We believe that caring for our fragile and limited earth resources calls for a systematic interaction between people, various scientific disciplines, and different areas of social activity. The challenges facing our world because of climate change are the biggest for the mankind in the present century. We can still stop the most dramatic effects of the currently distorted climate, and we work towards this common goal in all branches of FER. Main fields of our activities are: **Climate Crisis, Education, Food Sovereignty, Trees & Biodiversity, Smog and Development Cooperation.**

In 2013, we opened **EkoCentrum Wrocław**, which is our headquarters and the place where we run educational classes, meetings, workshops, and a variety of other activities. Everyone is welcome here. We cooperate with schools, local NGOs, city institutions, activists and our neighbours.

One of the important actions to take in our approach is to involve young people in the process of social change towards mindful citizenship and sustainability. Since 2014, we have been coordinating long-term volunteering under the umbrella of **European Commission** programs like Youth in Action and **European Voluntary Service**. In 2020, we will run the first project under the **European Solidarity Corps**.



CLIMATE FOR CHANGE!

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING PROJECT

In 2019 we ran our one-year project "Climate for change!". In this project, we were searching for motivated young individuals, who cared about the topics of environment, climate change, human rights and discrimination. We were looking forward to meeting people who were eager to try themselves in non-formal education, art and ecology, and who were ready to make some changes. As a result, we selected and hosted **10 volunteers from Albania, France, Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine.**

In the course of 12 months, our volunteers were taking part in FER's educational, social and cultural activities (creating and supporting open classes, meetings, workshops, events, etc.). They were assisting in daily office work at the Foundation, as well as supporting our partners to run their programs (environmental, cultural and educational projects, integrative tolerance workshops, environmental campaigns, and many others).



CLIMATE FOR CHANGE!

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING PROJECT

Three main fields of the volunteers' activities were:

- **Education & Social Activity** - ecological education, promotion of intercultural dialogue, social integration.
- **Culture & Animation** - activities to support the artistic expression of children and youth, providing an opportunity to integrate into society and to spend free time in an attractive way, to promote culture diversity and to combat stereotypes.
- **Nature & Infrastructure** - promotion of sustainable development, environmental monitoring, activities aimed to increase the ecological awareness of children and youth.

The methods of the above-mentioned activities were based mostly on non-formal education and were divided into:

- **Group projects**
- **Individual projects**
- **Social Actions**

It was exciting to observe the development of young people during their volunteering experience with FER. Each year the organisation grows thanks to their commitment. It allows the Foundation to provide more opportunities to young people, and to help youth strengthen their connection with the social and environmental issues.



GROUP PROJECTS

MAIN GOALS OF GROUP PROJECTS:

- raising awareness of important social topics, making meaningful connections between various fields (ecology, art, education and antidiscrimination)
- bringing together people of different ages and backgrounds.

OUR MISSION was to create a platform for cultural and social exchange, which would deliver an important message: despite our social-cultural differences, there are many more things to unite, rather than divide us! This collaboration and teamwork are essential means to improve our lives, and make the world a better place.

THE PARTICIPANTS AND CREATORS:

EVS volunteers, kids and youth living in Wrocław, and also Polish and foreign students and adults.

The framework and concept of the group projects were hinged on the collaboration with Ladder Team Foundation.

DURATION:

The group projects were based on regular meetings (from few weeks to few months).

Group projects strengthen **the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning**, with particular attention to:

- **Literacy competence**
- **Multilingual competence**
- **Personal, social and learning to learn competence**
- **Citizenship competence**
- **Cultural awareness and expression competence**

In 2019, we had two group projects:



GROUP PROJECT: RHYTHM OF WATER!

What can and should we do to save water?

Water is essential for life. It occupies about 70% of the world and 69% of human body. It gives life to literally everything on Earth. However, the situation of water became a serious problem: 18% of the world's population does not have access to drinking water. Because of this considerable shortage, about two million children die each year. It is estimated that in the upcoming year, the problem of water supply will be worse due to climate change and global population growth.

We wanted to spread awareness about this issue among others by using a powerful tool - the art!

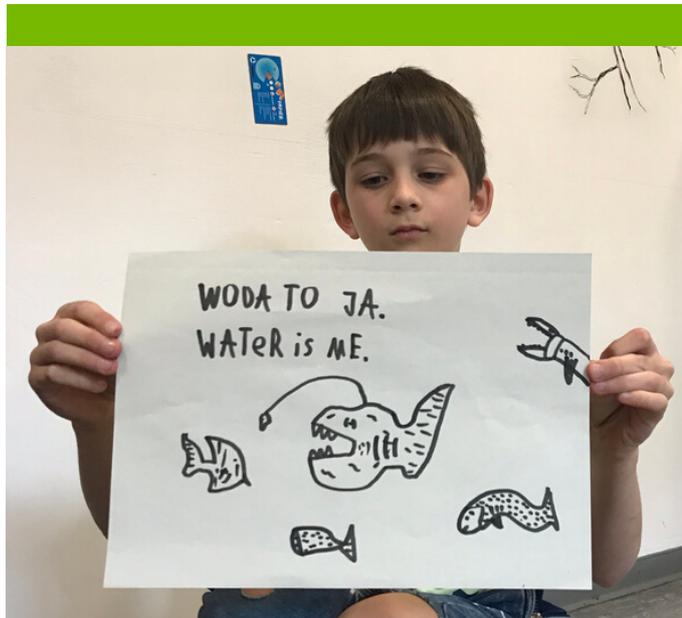
We decided to create a concept of artistic and educational event, which would make us able to draw other people's attention to the value of water and dangers of its decreasing resources. To reach this point we were practicing different forms of art: theatre, film, music, dance, photography etc.

The group was meeting for months, sharing ideas and different information, playing games to enhance their imagination and social skills. As a result, the participants became closer to each other.

They could understand the value of water and its importance in making the world better.

All the elements of the meetings, including dancing, playing instruments, singing, acting, and what was deemed the most valuable, discussions and teamwork, led to the final event!

The result of the project was based on the creation of the team. Our group decided to create **musical performance about water.**



GROUP PROJECT: RHYTHM OF WATER!

The project was supported by **Ladder Team Foundation** and **Kaleidoscope of Cultures Foundation**.

Music workshops & music arrangement: Sam Alty, Emrecan Alptekin

Artistic&youth leader: Roxana Mehrafzoun, Agata Mazurkiewicz

Participants & creators: Agnieszka Bińkowska, Bruno Bińkowski, Tomek Borkowicz, Radogost Borowski, Żytomir Borowski, Klea Bregu, Svetlana Demurchev, Maciej Dziwer, Azad Heydarow, Emin Koyuncuoglu, Małgorzata Mazurkiewicz, Serafina Milushi, Amir Naghavi, Mateusz Ostajewski, Magdalena Ostajewska, Marharyta Pankiv, Kasper Pawlik, Marta Piekarska, Maciej Roszak, Hazal Sari, Bruno Warchałowski, Kamil Wasiela



GROUP PROJECT: RHYTHM OF WATER!

The final show of "Rhythm of Water" was performed during:

- **"Kaleidoscope of Cultures" festival** - one of the largest and the most important multicultural in Wrocław (more than 1500 spectators every year) in June 2019.
- **"Multicultural Summer"** organized by **Foundation Go'n'Act** in July 2019.



photo by Jerzy Wypych

GROUP PROJECT: WE ARE: HOMO NARRANS

Building a community is a never-ending story, and its first chapter is the journey to the depth of self-identity

WeAre: Homo Narrans was an interdisciplinary project, which resulted in a **theatrical performance**.

The project created a possibility for young people to meet and discuss important topics related to **identity, tolerance, alienation and the mechanisms of stereotypes, prejudices and discriminations**.

For several weeks, kids, teenagers and adults from 10 different countries (Albania, Georgia, Iran, Colombia, Mexico, Germany, Poland, Turkey, Ukraine, Italy) were holding meetings in EkoCentrum to share their experiences, insights, ideas and stories. Together they were discussing the idea of strengthening tolerance and respect for themselves and others through art.

THE MAIN GOALS OF THE PROJECT:

- to embrace the idea of anti-discrimination and tolerance
- to emphasize that we should treat differences between people with respect, understanding, empathy, and support.

The first step towards that is an understanding of our own identities. As the participants were from different countries and cultures, it was crucial to find a common language - not only the spoken one, but also the language of movements, gestures, and images. It was important for us to encourage participants to understand and experience intercultural interactions. Thanks to that, they started to develop critical reflexivity with which they could challenge stereotypes and prejudices, as well as develop more grounded appreciation of their own identities and also those of others.



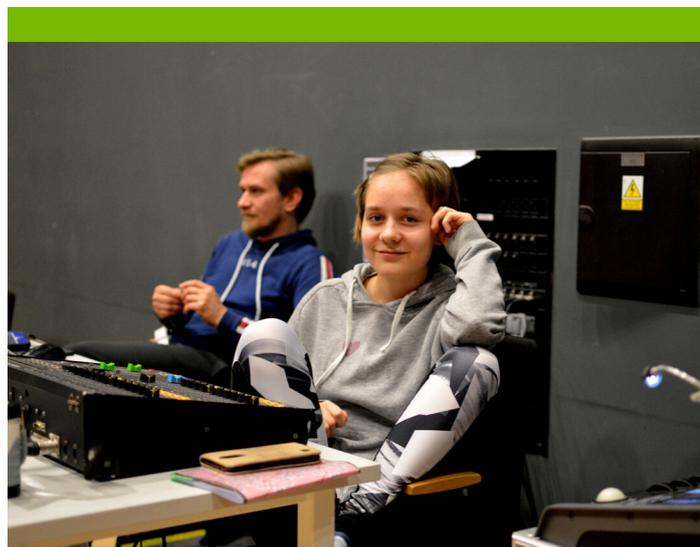
GROUP PROJECT: WE ARE: HOMO NARRANS

Result of the project was a theatrical performance that told a story of a town and its citizens. A town, which is one of a kind, but at the same time it's just like thousands of other towns. Inhabited by people, who represent any of us- people with their routine life, struggles, complexities, happy and sad moments, ups and downs, empathy and indifference...

Thanks to the support of **the Municipality of Wrocław** and partners of the project, the group could create scenography, professional lighting design, music, and videos.

The performance was presented five times in public institutions of the city of Wrocław. The first two performances were held in **FAMA - library and cultural centre**. The public audience consisted of 200 people, mostly school teenagers and teachers. After the show, we held open discussion about stereotypes, discrimination and its relation to climate change. The next three performances took place in **Grotowski Institute**, where more than 170 spectators watched the play.

Along with the spectacle, there was **an exhibition** about personal identity and stereotypes. As a part of the project, participants came together to express their opinions through the art of collage.



GROUP PROJECT: WE ARE: HOMO NARRANS

The project was co-financed by the Municipality of Wrocław www.wroclaw.pl

Partners: Ladder Team Foundation, Wrocław Centre for Social Development, Grotowski Institute, FAMA - Library and Culture Center, Wielokultury Wrocław.

Workshops runners: Roxana Mehrafzoun, Agata Mazurkiewicz, Aneta Osuch, Arkadiusz Wierzba

Participants & creators: Radogost Borowski, Klea Bregu, Samuel Daza Silva, Laura Sofia Daza Silva, Svetlana Demurchev, Romina Ghasemizadeh, Kacper Kruk, Julia Mielcarek, Zosia Mielcarek, Amir Naghavi, Parsa Nazeri, Mateusz Ostajewski, Marharyta Pankiv, Marta Piekarska, Linda Romy Hueetlin, Hazal Elif Sari, Joaquín Snefru, Agata Tarasewicz, Bruno Warchałowski, Kamil Wasiela, Żytomir Borowski, Emin Koyuncuoglu, Maciej Mądry, Serafina Milushi, Matin Nikookar, Artur Nitribitt, Sara Ramezani, Sofia Russo, Farshad Fozouni, Anousheh Salmanpour.



GROUP PROJECT: WE ARE: HOMO NARRANS

"I am very impressed with the discipline, team play and openness of the whole team. The performance touches on a whole set of important topics but in a non-aggressive, non-intrusive way, and at the same time very moving the audience. Words, sentences and images stay in the head. And they force you to think after show. I would love to see such theatre gain more and more fans, both, on stage and in the audience. This is an important and wise social, artistic and cultural tool. It is also an important meeting, integrating, full of good emotions and important topics. And at the same time, what can I say - a piece of good, beautiful and touching theatre."

Part of review written by theatre director Daniel Arbaczewski <http://www.danielarbaczewski.pl>



INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

In addition to the group projects, where our volunteers practiced teamwork and focused on important global issues, they also had a chance to create something on their own, something that would be connected to their personal area of interest, passion or hobby. Therefore, together we came out with some ideas for **volunteers' personal projects, which were related to their own cultures, traditions, ecology, nature, and so on.**

We strongly believe that creating a personal project strengthens one's **creativity, organizational, problem-solving and leadership skills.** Needless to say, it also helps the development of important EVS competences such as **personal, social and learning to learn competences,** as well as **entrepreneurship and citizenship competences.**



INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS :

Traditional Turkish Dance Classes

Traditional Turkish dance classes led by **Hazal Elif Sari (Turkey)** were held on a regular basis in EkoCentrum. The aim of these classes was not just introducing traditional steps and movements, but also getting to know Turkish culture itself. Hazal wasn't just teaching how to dance, she was also teaching about Turkish traditions, details about daily life in Turkey, its geography, as well as different Turkish words and expressions. The classes helped the participants personally experience complicity and richness of the Turkish culture.



EcoSteps: Green citizens in the making.

With her environmental workshops for youth, **Klea Bregu's (Albania)** mission was to talk about climate crisis. Participants and other volunteers, discussed topics related to climate change, its causes and effects (with an emphasis on humans' role in it). Using some non-formal education elements, like games and experiments, Klea showed the participants how important it is to act now. The participants talked about individual actions we can take to fight against climate change, as well as collaborative actions (e.g. joining social youth movements). The workshops increased the awareness of the participants about natural environment and our responsibility for the condition of our mother-Earth.



INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

PROMOTING ECOTOURISM IN MACHAKHELA REGION

One of our Foundation's projects was held in collaboration with our Georgian partners from Machakhela Valley. The mission was to develop ecotourism in this area, by financing pro-touristic projects of local people.

Our volunteer **Svetlana Demurchev (Georgia)** was translating in written and verbal form the dialogues, interviews, speeches and simple conversations between the Foundation and the partners from Machakhela region. Apart from translating, she was trying to help the representatives of Georgian and Polish cultures to better understand each other's traditions and ways of life. Such connections were very important for people to feel closer to each other, and as Svetlana believes, to have better results in the future!

COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

Our volunteers had a chance to prepare workshops about their homelands, and share it with citizens. The whole idea was to involve the audience in the stories and experiences shared by volunteers. The workshops allowed the audience (mostly, children and youth) to personally meet representatives of other cultures, know more about their traditions and customs, understand the differences and similarities, and learn to accept and respect them. The aim was to strengthen the appreciation of diversity and to build an open society, ready to participate in the integration process.



SOCIAL ACTIONS

Apart from the group and personal projects, our volunteers also were taking part in social actions - events in the form of social activism that highlight the need for social movement participation.

Social actions were aimed to promote solidarity and social responsibility, which act as shared values that have the power to change reality as we comprehend it, to show that the activity of young people helps to face challenges and to combat the crisis. Social actions create an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the community and to express solidarity with others. It strengthens social and civic engagement, and creates a sense of personal and collective responsibility to help protect the air purity and create a stable climate.

One of the most important goals of the EVS project "Climate for Change!" was to help our volunteers understand the underlying reasons of climate change, and to give them the tools to prevent accelerating those changes.



SOCIAL ACTIONS

EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL ACTIONS:

STOP SMOG!

The word smog represents a mixture of smoke and fog in the air. It is needless to say how serious the risks it causes to public health and environment are. The foundation, with the help of our volunteers, was actively working on solutions to improve air quality and counteract the climate crisis. Together with the Lower Silesian Smog Alert (Dolnośląski Alarm Smogowy), they were co-creating and supporting activities which aimed to encourage people to take the actions that would lead to the improvement of air quality, for example by distributing materials informing citizens about smog, installing banners in different parts of the city, etc.

TRASH CHALLENGE

FER volunteers were all passionate about environment and they believed that there are no borders when it comes to preserving nature. Thus, the volunteers took the initiative to contribute and raise awareness about nature-protection in the city which they lived in. Unfortunately, there are many public parks and other places in Wrocław, which are polluted with trash. Therefore, we decided to take part in a global action- Trash Challenge. We invited people to join us via social media and help clean some of those polluted places, with the support of local people.



SOCIAL ACTIONS

TREE FRIENDS

Since the beginning, the topic of trees has been very important to our organization. They are one of the most significant and yet underrated infrastructural elements. In addition to planting new trees, we should also care about the existing ones. **Our volunteers were assisting the Foundation's projects related to trees, by creating events, monitoring activities and providing a help desk.**

In October 2019, the FER Foundation and the Institute of Tree organized the **"Friends of Trees" Forum** - the biggest event dedicated to trees in Poland. The event lasted for several days and had guests from different countries. Our volunteers took part in the event by assisting the Foundation, as well as creating their own **happening based on the idea of storytelling.** They shared stories from their own countries about how nature and environment are sometimes mistreated, and how much damage it brings not only to the country, but to the whole world.



f o r u m
klimat dla drzew
drzewa dla klimatu

SOCIAL ACTIONS

TREE FRIENDS

The inspiration for performative happening during "Friends of Trees" Forum was taken from the renowned author of the book "Hidden Life of Trees"- **Peter Wohlleben**.

It was spearheaded by cultural activist and play writer **Dan Baron Cohen**, who came to Poland with his group "**Rios de Encontro**" which consists of dancers, musicians, activists and educators from the Amazonian community of Cabelo Seco.

Thanks to the collaboration with Brave Kids festival, young activists held several workshops with our volunteers. They shared their stories, connected to the reality of living in their community, which were extremely touching and made our volunteers think about their roles in their own communities.

During these workshops, they were showed how to advocate a sustainable future through art: powerful dance and percussion.

The workshops were filled with enormous amount of energy, which all participants shared together.



COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

Besides supporting the Foundation, our volunteers also succeeded to become an asset for our local partners. We believe that if we want to achieve more efficient results, we should seize the opportunity to form collaborations and partnerships with other organizations.

These collaborations give us an opportunity to develop in different ways, learn and experience something new, and contribute to different spheres.



photo by Piotr Spigiel

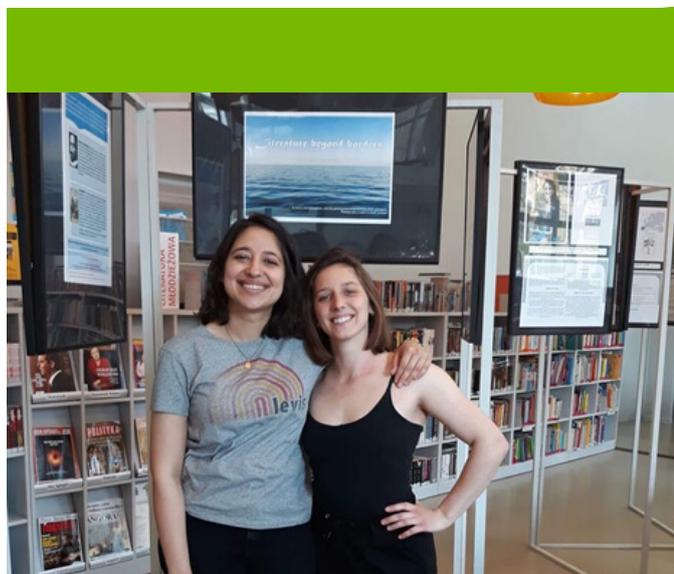
COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

MEDIATEKA

Our volunteers **Clementine Jamroz (France)** and **Deniz Akyel (Turkey)** were assisting our EVS hosting partner organization- Mediateka library. They were helping the library in everyday activities, as well as taking part in different events, such as the exhibition "Literature beyond borders" which was dedicated to the world book's day, travel festival "Równoleżnik Zero" and so on. Clementine also took an active part in Mediateka's project Language Café, where she was teaching French language classes. Clementine and Deniz shared their experiences about volunteering on Mediateka's website. They also published a few articles titled "Polish culture for beginners".

BWA WROCŁAW

Iren Nosova (Ukraine) was supporting our partner BWA Wrocław - a public contemporary art gallery that has started a project titled "Żyjnia" which promotes sustainable development. Ira's main task was to promote gallery among Ukrainian citizens and tourists. She also organized events for children to inform them about the condition of water in the world. She involved kids and youngsters to play interactive games about the usage of water and global problems related to the shrinking water supplies. The children became aware of the water and carbon footprints of the daily tasks such as water usage in regular activities.



COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

FAMA - LIBRARY AND CULTURE CENTRE

In 2019, our volunteers were helping the city institution FAMA to organize Circus Art Festivals. "CYRKOPOLE!" Festival was dedicated to the new-circus art of Central and Eastern Europe which is characterised by its high-quality performances, and is concentrated on social issues such as promoting veganism and preventing violence against animals. Assisting in this event taught our volunteers the skill of backstage management, as well as allowing them to try themselves in the role of a host since they were taking care of the foreign artists—assisting and supporting them, showing them around Wrocław, helping them with logistics, and so on.

BOARD GAME CLUB - LET'S PLAY!

The volunteers supported our partner Centre of the World by participating in their Board Game Club. The meetings took place in a small town near Wrocław. The aim was to interact with youngsters from the local community, and help them become more open to new friendships and more confident in using English. All of these were happening during playing board games! All kinds of fun and interesting games were accompanied by talking and getting to know each other's cultures from a closer perspective.

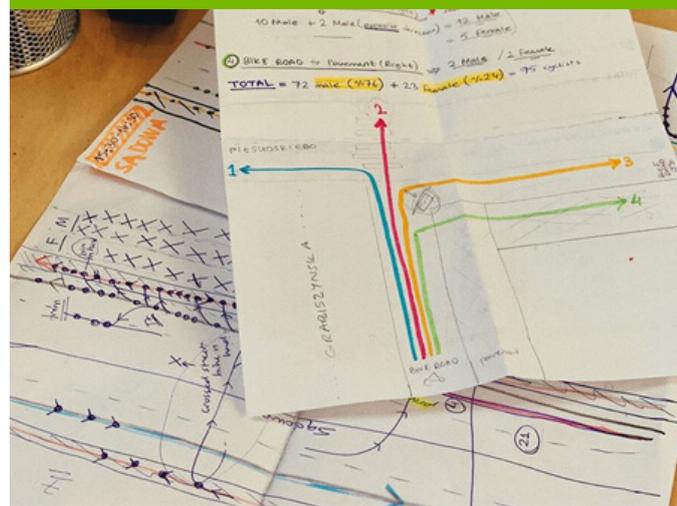


COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

The Wrocław Cycling Initiative

Our organization is actively collaborating with Wrocławska Inicjatywa Rowerowa (The Wrocław Cycling Initiative), a non-profit cycling advocacy group. Our volunteers were helping them to **raise the knowledge about cycling in the city and make the infrastructure of the region more bicycle-friendly.**

Mostly, the volunteers took care of the research part. They were observing behaviours of the cyclists in Wrocław and making statistics out of it, which would be further used in the improvement of the city for the cyclists. All this data would be presented in Wrocław Municipality, where the Initiative would discuss the ways to make Wrocław a better and safer city in terms of bicycle usage.



COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

Besides all these projects, it is also important to mention our partnerships with other organizations like **Ladder Team Foundation, Go'n'Act Foundation, MiserArt, Semper Avanti, Cafe Równik and others.** Our group was also part of several open events like: **Football Against Racism, Open Space Culture or the Europe Day.** Our volunteers, together with volunteers and members of other organizations contributed to these events by creating workshops, games, performances and so on. For instance, on the Europe Day our volunteers were promoting the idea of European Volunteering Service and were running cultural and environmental workshops and games for children.



LIFE INSIDE THE FOUNDATION

Our volunteers certainly contributed a lot to us! Apart from all the above-mentioned projects, they were assisting us in daily office work, helping with translation and creation of various texts and visual materials.

Our group were also managing and creating PR in Social media (In Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/evsescekokocentrum>, and in Instagram: @evsescekokocentrum). The task of leading PR team was a personal project of **Emin Koyuncuoglu (Turkey)** who was also taking and editing photos of our events (most of published here were made by him) .

As a Foundation, we also tried to organize an interesting, meaningful and new environment for them to learn, improve and experience.

Polish Class

All of our volunteers were curious about Poland from the beginning- after all, they were about to spend a whole year here! An important step towards getting to know a new culture is its language. Thus, we organized Polish language classes for our volunteers, which were held twice a week. As a result, most of the volunteers made progress and were able to integrate more easily in the new environment.

Movie Screening

As a part of collaboration, with Semper Avant the volunteers of two organisations were holding a movie screening every week. These movies and documentaries were related to human rights, climate change and various meaningful topics. After each screening, they held a discussion about the movie, which always included interesting topics to talk and think about.



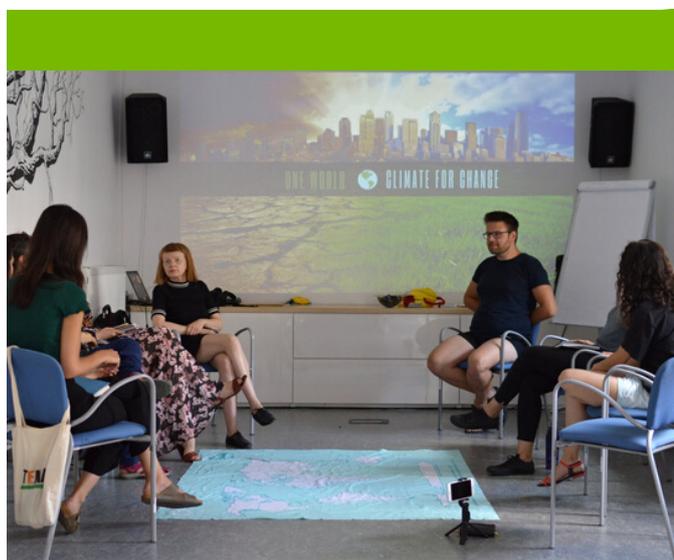
LIFE INSIDE THE FOUNDATION

Climate Change and Antidiscrimination Workshops

Aneta Osuch and Arkadiusz Wierzba are environmentalists and educators, who work in our Foundation. They run several workshops with our group, where they discussed serious environmental topics: **carbon emissions, demographics, agriculture, energy industry, renewable energies, transportation and the future of our planet.** The goal of these workshops was to impart this knowledge to the volunteers and make them thoroughly aware of what is negatively affecting the earth. Our group also had series of workshops about stereotypes and their impact on society. The workshops focused on the fact that often one's decision-making process is subconsciously influenced by stereotypes about a certain culture or race. During the workshops the volunteers were presented with different case studies, which involved them in thinking more deeply about themselves and their society. The workshops taught them how to be more aware and how to pass this awareness to others.

Project making workshops

Together with Ladder Team Foundation our volunteers had regular sessions and meetings concentrated on project management. They had the opportunity to learn how to change their ideas into actions, how to invent and conduct a social, cultural or educational project. The meetings with Ladder Team educators aimed to develop volunteers' skills for working with children. **The workshops, in the framework of project-based learning, put stress on creativity and the importance of art in non-formal education.**



THE KEY COMPETENCES

It was important for us to strengthen the **Key Competences** during our projects and activities. We believe it is necessary to focus on each competence, described in **Youthpass**, and together with our volunteers, we tried to do our best to accomplish this goal!

We believe that our volunteers will keep on using all the knowledge, skills and competences they gained and strengthened with us throughout their life. After all, these competences are important to use not only in one's professional, but also personal life.

- **Literacy and multilingual competence**

The language of every project was English, and our volunteers were helping each other to develop English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. During the project they were learning how to express their ideas and thoughts freely in written and verbal form, as well as using English in their critical thinking process. Besides, the volunteers also learned the basics of Polish language in our Polish classes, and were able to easily integrate into everyday life in Poland.



THE KEY COMPETENCES

- **Competence in Science, Technology and Engineering:**

Our volunteers were making statistical researches during the cooperation with the Wrocław Bike Initiative. During our group projects, a lot of discussions about science and technology in modern life took place. We were focusing on the pros and cons that science brings to environment, climate, the Earth, and even relationships between people, nations, and countries. Our volunteers were discussing and receiving this type of information in their climate change and antidiscrimination workshops.

- **Digital competence:**

The volunteers were supporting us in many activities where digital knowledge was needed. They were managing the projects' PR in Social media by making use of digital marketing tools, creating content, visual and audio materials, and writing and editing texts. They had to develop their skills in Microsoft Office in order to create their presentations and other activities.

- **Personal, social and learning to learn competences:**

One of our missions was to help our volunteers feel as a team, and also help them find their own individual ways to do different tasks and activities. We encouraged them to observe themselves and others, and find the ways that would make their personal work more efficient, as well as making the team stronger and more connected. In order to achieve this, they needed to develop their communication and team-working skills. Our volunteers believe that Arrival and Midterm trainings played a crucial role in their development, as well as holding various meetings with each other, the coordinators and the trainers.



THE KEY COMPETENCES

- **Citizenship competence:**

Our volunteers developed their citizenship competences mostly during our Social Actions. As we already mentioned, those were the events aiming to change something specific in the city or the society we live in. These events demanded the volunteers to understand the problem deeply, and sometimes conduct researches about the history of the problem, gain knowledge about its root causes and effects, and take the responsibility by making their best efforts to solve it.

- **Entrepreneurship Competence:**

It's needless to say that our volunteers' entrepreneurship competences were strengthened significantly during their personal projects. These projects enabled them to take the initiative to create something on their own, to make it work and to involve others in it. These projects started merely from their ideas, and culminated in a creative event/workshop, where they could share their knowledge, skills or passions with others.

- **Competence in Cultural Awareness and Expression:**

Basically, all of our projects included strengthening this competence, as throughout each of them we were learning how to transform our ideas and thoughts in a creative way through art and other cultural forms. We were motivating our volunteers to observe their sense of place and time and their roles and missions in the society in different ways and contexts. Mostly, we focused on a way of art, and how it can transform into important messages.



Here is what our volunteers shared about their volunteering experience at FER:

Clémentine Jamroz / FRANCE



"This time away from family and friends allowed me to reflect a lot about what I want in my life: both from a personal and professional point of view. My questions still haven't been answered but I feel much better with myself now and I know that I really want to work in an environment corresponding to my values. So many steps ahead have been made. I am also very happy that I have started discovering Polish culture and more generally the country: it was really important to me and even though I was struggling very hard with the language, I was willing to keep trying."

Deniz Akyel / TURKEY



"I have always been interested in understanding social, economic, legal and political concepts as well as global developments and sustainability. During EVS, I found out intensive political happenings of my home country were limiting me before of thinking and acting more on a global scale such as the climate crisis. My vision has evolved by making comparisons between practices, problems, and needs in different realities in the world, especially in Europe."

Emin Yiğit Koyuncuoğlu / TURKEY



"I worked for one of the biggest NGOs of Turkey before and I wanted to see how NGOs in different countries work. I also aim to work for an international organization and I thought volunteering in Poland for a year can be an asset for me to get what I seek later. That's why I decided to come for a year to Poland. EVS can be challenging for different reasons, but on the other hand, you discover more about yourself in these situations and grow a mechanism to handle it. This is what makes this experience precious for you. So I recommend to all youngsters to take a voluntary year."

Klea Bregu / ALBANIA



" Throughout this whole year, I have learned how to express myself freely in an artistic way, mostly through dance and visual arts. I took part as a performer of 'Rhythm of Water' . I helped choreograph a scene in 'We Are: Homo Narrans' - a multidisciplinary intercultural and anti-discrimination performance. I really appreciated group work because of all the brainstorming we did during each event we organized. I enjoyed being part of a multicultural team."

Serafina Milushi / ALBANIA



"**I think the main goal of EVS is to put** different cultures together so they can share, exchange and learn from each other. Before coming here I thought that I had a lot of information, I knew a lot of stuff about different cultures. But when you live and work with them it's different. It's one of the most amazing things- you discover yourself and others at the same time. Before volunteering in Fundacja EkoRozwoju I was thinking that in the future, I will work in business. But now I think that a good area for me will be social work. So after this year I will try to combine business and social work. My next destination will be Germany."

Svetlana Demurchev / GEORGIA



"It's hard to summarize all the knowledge, skills and experiences I acquired during this year. Being a volunteer in Fundacja EkoRozwoju helped me to change some of my attitudes and become more serious about topics of environment, climate crises and discrimination. Actually, I am proud to say that I managed to also change my family and friends' attitudes! After I came back to Georgia, I tried to implement all my theoretical and practical knowledge with them, teach and show them how many things we are doing wrong, and what can be the results of our actions for the whole world. I am sure they will also try to pass this knowledge to their friends, and they- to theirs. This is the kind of a chain, which, I hope will change Georgia, and make the world better!"

Hazal Elif Sari / TURKEY



“During one year I was leading “Traditional Turkish Dance and Oriental Dance Classes”. I’m calling it a journey because it was a challenge at the beginning, especially the fact of leading a dance class in English and having participants from different countries and cultures. After finishing my project I feel that this experience made me more confident in my communication skills, because even without having advanced level of English I managed to communicate and explain Turkish culture and dance movements. Of course I can’t ignore the importance of smiling and being positive. My workshops were my way of doing something good for the society. I believe that peace comes when we respect each other’s culture, and I feel that I was trying to practice this together with participants of my dance classes.”

Ira Nosova / UKRAINE



“My EVS experience was good in general. I understood more clearly who I want to be and what I want to do. I met many new people and got to know new NGOs in Wroclaw and worked for them. I improved my skills a lot, especially language and translation skills. I think it was a good year also for relaxing. EVS and voluntary work is not as difficult as normal work, so I think it's a good time for self-reflection, to understand what is next and prepare yourself maybe for important steps in your life.”

Valeriia Yurchenko / UKRAINE



“During the project, I developed my passion and interest in ecological theme through participation in different tasks and activities. I learned how to turn my ideas into action. My individual work was good for making independent decisions, creativity, imagination, problem solving, critical and constructive reflection.”

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