

VOLUNTARY SERVICE WITHOUT BORDERS



wolontariat bez granic



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European Voluntary Service ■

European voluntary service is one of the actions of ERASMUS PLUS financed by European Union. EVS gives young people the opportunity to express their personal commitment through full-time voluntary work in a foreign country within or outside the EU.

This publication has been made by 6 volunteers who came to Czestochowa in 2015. We are working on various projects, including EVS presentations in high schools and universities, variety of workshops for children in primary and secondary schools (recycling workshops, presentations about our cultures, school gardening, aerobics and many others), Tandem (teaching and learning foreign languages), Swap-Shop (exchange of things and services), City game, Quiz night and English, Spanish and Turkish courses for people from Czestochowa.

We would like to share our experience with you. Read about our projects, we hope they will inspire you!

- Aysenaz, Ana, Bea, Irene, Berkay, Semih

■ The Roller Coaster of Feelings



«When you first arrive in a new city, nothing makes sense. Everything is unknown, virgin... After you have lived here, walked these streets, you will know them inside out. You will know these people. Once you have lived here, crossed this street 10, 20, 1000 times... it will belong to you because you have lived there. That was about to happen to me, but I did not know it yet». This is what happened to Xavier in L'Auberge Espagnole and this is what happened to me as a European volunteer in Czestochowa.

When I landed in Poland for the first time, I felt like a dog into the jungle, Barney Stinson in a marriage or Joey Tribbiani on a diet, totally disoriented. Then I met other volunteers who were in the same situation as me, so I understood that if others can face the cultural shock, why not me as well? As the saying goes: “evil of many, consolation of fools”.

I am a travel lover who has lived in five different countries so far, interested in learning from other people and their cultures. During my entire life, I have always been a dynamic person, collaborating in the struggle for a decent education for everybody as well as the social integration, especially for foreign people. I have also taken part in some activities which aims to raise awareness of everyone to help in change some behaviors to be more clean, efficient and environmentally friendly.

I was the first volunteer of the project for a sustainable development with another one arriving to the city. We had to wait one or two more weeks for the rest to start the activities, so first weeks were dedicated to discover and settle in the place. Once we were a bigger volunteers' group we started developing our ideas. I was so excited! We made a group of six volunteers and one coordinator who over time create a team to finally become a family.



Now it is the end of the project and our paths split into individual ways in different places of the world, but I hope we will meet again somewhere in this globe.

The project lasted ten long months running too fast. During this experience my heart went across the sine function multiplied by the feeling variant: a rational function altered by totally irrational feelings, up and down in different levels.

There were some days when I was cornered by sadness or stressed and some other days when I was overflowing with happiness. This emotional instability usually occurs when you go out from your comfort zone. But do not panic! At the end it is really worthy because you get a lot of skills that make you smarter and stronger and give you experience that you will always remember as good memories.

Progress can only be enhanced with continuous motion. Let's move forward!

- *Beatriz Caballero Aguilar*

■ Tandem Language Learning

To get a better job, access to more and better information or to travel safely and avoid communication barrier, nowadays learning languages is almost essential.

The grammar can be studied with books, writing skills can be developed by reading, listening songs or watching movies in original version help to prick up one's ears. But how could you improve your speaking skills? The Cz-Art Association in Czestochowa helps along to shoot the breeze through the Tandem Programme.



Tandem is a language exchange programme which offers native speakers of two different languages the opportunity to work together in order to learn each other's language and develop a knowledge of different cultures.

That's the goal, but how is it carried out? Once a month we organize a meeting with everyone who wants to take advantage of the project, wherein some activities take place in order to know one each other a little bit. After that, there is a time to talk and freely choose the partners. It's up to you to decide who you would like as a Tandem mate!

Those who cannot attend the meeting are awarded a partner paying attention to the offered and asked languages filled out in the application, which you can find on the following link:

<http://goo.gl/forms/n8GAt0gN7U>

The following step consists of meet your partner face-to-face once a week in your own time and place in order to friendly talk half of the time in one language and half of the time in one other language, helping each other with corrections and advice related to the languages.

Does it really work? My own experience confirms the success of the Tandem programme, through which I have been able to learn English, Italian, Portuguese and even Finnish!

Therefore, I encourage you to take advance of this free opportunity by applying for participation in the aforementioned link or sending an e-mail to czevs.czart@gmail.com with the following info: name, e-mail, languages to offer and languages to learn.

Spread the word!

- *Beatriz Caballero Aguilar*

■ The City Game

“City Game” is an activity designed especially for those who have just arrived to Częstochowa and still need to familiarize with the city, although it is open to all people.

The game lies in visiting the main places of Częstochowa through a walking tour doing some tasks which could help to get used to the city as well as meeting new people since it is played in groups.

There are two different tours: one tour on the direction to Galeria Jurajska (especially to have fun with funny tasks) and the other one going to Jasna Góra (mostly to get useful information while visiting the main places).

Each group is provided with a city map and a file that includes the steps to do during the game. On the first lines of the file there is an introduction giving some geographical information about Częstochowa and a map of the corresponding route.

After this introduction there are the steps to follow one by one. Each of them are titled with the name of the place to find and its address, then there is an explanation of the landmark, standing out a photo which represents it. Having reached this point, the corresponding written task should be developed by the participants in order to go to the next step.

Example task:

Get the recipe of a traditional Polish dish or make a list with at least 5 traditional Polish dishes.

At the end of this game, participants will know better the city of Częstochowa and will have met more people either from Poland or from different countries.

PS. The activity is for free!

– Beatriz Caballero Aguilar

City Game example

🚩 Dworzec PKP Częstochowa Główna, Plac Rady Europy

In Częstochowa there are two rail stations: Stacja PKP Częstochowa Stradom and Dworzec PKP Częstochowa Główna. Dworzec PKP Częstochowa Główna is the largest train station in Częstochowa, located in downtown. It is one of the most modern railway stations in Poland.

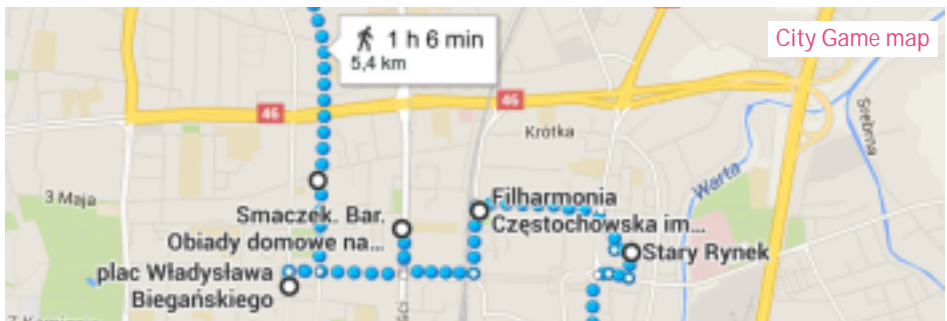


TASK 5:

Where would you like to go in Poland? How long does it take by train from Częstochowa? How much does it cost by train? Find the answers.

Advice:

If you want to travel in Poland, it could help you to check the webpage <http://www.e-podroznik.pl/> where you can find schedule either by bus, train or blablacar (the world's leading long distance ridesharing service, connecting drivers with empty seats to people travelling the same way).



Something Different ■



Hello everyone!

My name is Irene, I am from Spain, and if I had waited a bit more I couldn't tell you this right now! Due to I started my EVS experience the last 17-Feb-2015 and I was already 29 years old!

I am physical education teacher, personal trainer, teacher of Spanish... but in Spain there weren't good opportunities... So, one day I decided to do something different with my life.

I love discovering new places, new cultures and new people, and that's why I decided to do an EVS! This is the greatest way to travelling and learning at the same time!



It has been a great experience for me: 10 month full of unforgettable moments. Before coming I thought It was going to be something more professional than personal, but now that I am about to finish I am realizing that it has been the opposite.

I have met Polish people, other volunteer from other Associations, and also Erasmus Students, and I have travelled around Poland and other Countries!

Of Course I have worked and learnt from my projects: I've taught Spanish, helped with English, promoted EVS and Erasmus+ in High Schools and Universities, played and done environmental workshops and presentations in schools, done aerobics in kindergarten, helped with Swap-shop, organized events, and some other things!

But as I was telling you, my personal life has been changed a lot, because of all the things I've seen and I've lived here in contact with other cultures hasn't price. It has been so amazing learning from people from many other countries and become more open mind, learning other ways to work, and also learning more about myself and my culture.

Definitely, it is a life experience I would like to repeat a million of times, but it's not possible... so, I really recommend it to you!!!

- Irene Prieto Muñoz



Helping in dog shelter



■ Spanish Club and Classes

This was an activity for every single person who wants to improve his/her Spanish conversation skills. As it was a conversation meeting where the participants have to be at least in a B1 level. Sometimes people just came to listen because they couldn't speak well enough.

We were just talking about any topic we want, and also I prepared some games to break the ice at the beginning of the class, or to motivate the people to talk during the activity itself. Those are very useful if they don't know each other very well and there is not a fluent conversation.

We normally met once per week, a minimum that 1h and 30', but usually we stayed longer because we liked it so much! We were doing it in "Duquesa", a nice place where you can have a drink or some food.

We are a native Spanish speakers, we were not only leading but also correcting some important or usual mistakes.

We also had classes of Spanish for beginners: children in school, and youth and adults. Here, they study the basic vocabulary, how to talk about themselves and how to manage in the basic context of the life. Of course, for the children we did a lot of games! The classes are similar to workshops, very practical, so, they weren't focus on grammar.

Definitely, it is something necessary in Czestochowa!

- Irene Prieto Muñoz & Beatriz Caballero Aguilar



■ Wonderful Experience



This is me, Ana, I'm 27 years old and I'm from Oviedo, a small city in Asturias (north of Spain). I'm a social pedagogue and I believe that my work is the engine for change, for opportunities to everyone and a way towards a more equal and cooperative society to live in. Maybe I'm living a little bit in my own utopia, but that's how I am, call me a dreamer.

I'm a nature lover; I practice yoga and that's why my EVS mates called me yogi bear. Also, my personality is quite alike this animal. In addition to this, I'm vegetarian, what sometimes it's not easy, especially in Poland, people think I'm more like a UFO.

Travelling – it's my way of life. I spend my time discovering new places and going on new adventures. I think this is also the reason why I'm in Poland now, because I was looking for an opportunity to do something different abroad and EVS came to my life.

At the beginning of 2015 I started seeking for projects and after one month sending CVs and motivation letters to different organizations, Cz-Art knocked on my door!

With EVS I got a very intense intercultural experience with a non-formal learning background. Maybe you may think this is not important for you but it is, believe me, because I learned so much about myself, got new skills and developed very interesting ideas and projects with others. There are also many other things

I simply cannot describe but I wouldn't have lived them if I wasn't here. You will realize at the end of the project how much you learnt from the people around you and the others also learnt from you. This is not only giving or receiving, this is a whole feedback of experiences and learning.

I go back to Spain happy and fulfilled to have done such interesting projects and met such wonderful people, especially the team of volunteers, big friends and supporters who became my family during these months. I cannot say more than thanks to every person that shared something with me and made my EVS an unforgettable experience.

- Ana Álvarez



■ Swap Shop

Everything is already produced on this earth; there is enough food, enough houses, enough clothes for everyone. But not everyone has enough money to buy it! However, we all do have time and knowledge. Swap Shop is a marketplace where no money is accepted. Visitors can exchange their own items, time or knowledge in order to get other items, people's time or knowledge. There are no prices; customers estimate the value of their desired items themselves. Swap shop is just another shop, but it doesn't invite you to run inside and grab unnecessary things just because it's fun. It offers you the experience of alternative shopping and invites you to estimate the value of things you share. So, it is an exchange service that can be made anywhere, anytime. What is special about it is the opportunity to estimate the value of any item yourself.

To find out we just need:

- A zone of ITEMS: visitors as well as organizers are invited to bring things they don't need anymore. It can be books, shoes, clothes, cups... basically anything. Shelves, boxes and clothes hangers are also needed to display the items. Shelves can be built from wood from the street or old pallets. Borrowing shelves from friends is also an option.
- A TIME workshop zone in the shop with materials and people with how-to knowledge. A visitor can buy time and get somebody to teach him/her how to make, for instance, a wallet from an empty tetra pack. The created items stay in the shop. But time might not be only used for a workshop, someone might want to make sandwiches for others or help cleaning the shop afterwards.
- A zone of KNOWLEDGE video booth with camera, an opportunity to record video messages where people share useful tips, academic theories, jokes and shocking facts, practical

demonstrations of cool dance steps or how to tie a tie. Paying with knowledge means recording a message. If a visitor buys knowledge he/she can choose the videos he/she is paying for. A cabin or separated place is needed for visitors to record their messages, as well as equipment and software in order to shoot and play the clips.

– The SWAP REGISTER is a place where people can write their name, what they brought and what they took.

PREPARATION WORK: gather people (volunteers, young people, everyone who wants to join this), find a venue, build the shop (shelves, a workshop table and video booth will be needed), prepare the signs (so people understand the steps and actions without explanations) and spread the word!

– Ana, Bea, Aysenaz, Berkay



■ Sustainable Development at Schools

One of the fields during the European Voluntary Service was to promote sustainable development at kindergartens, primary and high schools. The task was developed weekly with different activities consisting of handicrafts, games and some presentations. For example, pupils learnt the Cup Song by making music using recycling glasses. Another activity we did in the Primary School was The Restaurant Of The World, School gardening or Recycling workshops where children could make for example a wallet from tetra pack.

– Semih, Berkay, Beatriz, Ana, Irene, Aysenaz



Wallets from tetra pack

Quiz Night ■

During Quiz Night, several cultural questions are shown on a screen. The questions are then answered by different groups of people or teams on a template given before starting.

At the end of the round, a representative from each team gives the template with its answers to the judges, who then calculate the scores for each team. The teams compete against one another with the top two or three teams receiving prizes.

Here are the rules:

1. You can play in groups or individually. The winner's prize does not depend on the number of members. It is fixed.
2. There will be 30 questions in total.
3. 90 seconds per question.
4. In every 15 questions, there will be a 10 minute break.
5. In the end, we will show each question again very quickly.
6. In case of tie, there will be one more question. The first team to give the correct answer (written on a paper) to the organiser will be the winner.
7. Try not to look other people's answers, there will be only one winner.
8. Answer in English (except personal names).
9. Be grammatically correct.
10. Mobile phones are allowed.

■ Out of Routine



Doing EVS was one of my life goals. I have been volunteering before in organisations related to children and youth, but volunteering abroad was something I really wanted to experience.

Dynamics of other cultures and countries has always fascinated me. Wondering about life styles in other than my own country and culture was the main reason that I studied Sociology, and also for my enthusiasm for EVS.

Between university and working, it was not easy to create time for an EVS project, so I decided to take a year off on my master studies in order to join this project. This was one of the best decisions I made.

Before coming to Czestochowa, I was studying and volunteering in a children's education organisation in Turkey. All I knew about Czestochowa was from google, and there was not much information. It was hard to decide if I was ready to postpone my masters and leave my very orderly life for a year.

When I was thinking over this decision, I just realised that if I did not do this right now, I might never have the chance. I was already buried so much inside the routine of my life and got so comfortable that I had to leave right then or stay there for much longer and miss out on one of my life goals.

After arriving to Czestochowa, I met some of the best people I have ever met. I have become more active and considered about other people's opinions and feelings. I also become much more

sensible about the environment. We did not have any strict rules in our EVS project and that enabled me to choose how I wanted to spend my volunteering days.

I went to high schools and universities, in order to promote EVS and the activities our voluntary group was organising. I went to kindergarten to do physical activities with little children. I took part in workshops for young people, teaching them about environment and recycling. I got to organise cultural activities for anyone who was interested. Also, I volunteered in a Youth Exchange that Czar organized and got to know how this process works.

All in all, this experience has taught me a lot about myself and what I want to do with my life. I started out not sure of my decision to leave my life and my city, and now I cannot imagine never having done this.

– Aysenaz Unver

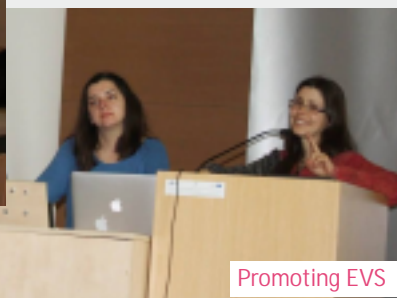


Polish lesson

■ EVS Promotion at Schools and Universities

European Voluntary Service (EVS) is the European Commission's project that allows a young person (18–30 years) to become a volunteer in another country for a specified period (maximum 12 months). An EVS project involves a triangular partnership: a volunteer, a sending organisation, and a host organisation. This European Commission's project is not as well known in youth as it should. That is why we, as EVS volunteers, tried to promote it to young people reaching them through doing some activities at high schools and universities with different methods as well as assembling suddenly in a public place and perform an unusual and seemingly pointless act for a brief time before quickly dispersing with the help of a big group of people, also known as flash mob.

One of the methodologies used at the university was based on a reflection of students tackling the topic of volunteering. Each person was given a different role on which they will work. After a role playing game, we presented the most important information about EVS. Then, we gave the examples of our activities during EVS project.



Unforgettable Moments ■

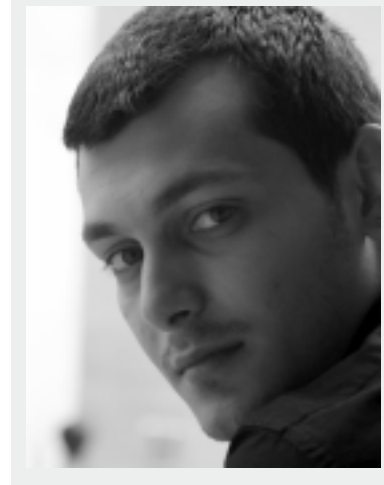
Before going to Czestochowa (my lovely EVS place), I was only thinking about improving my experience and decide what I want for my future. After EVS, I am carrying with me a lot of things, people and places.

When I arrived in Czestochowa for the first time, I thought it was a very small city for me. But a few months later, everything was changing on a daily basis.

I get use to living here and really like it here in Poland. Because what's important are the things that you feel and the friends that you make, not the place itself. We always found a lot of things to do with our EVS team. We try to become more active and I think we managed it very well.

After I came back my country, I am feeling really different. I am much more open minded, tolerant and patient as a person. I got these skills during my EVS. I feel like I had this unforgettable moments and memories when I was in Czestochowa. And if I get one more chance, I will be right back there.

– Berkay Saçkesen



■ English Corner

English corner is a space to talk in English in a relaxed atmosphere. Both locals and foreigners in Czestochowa meet once a week to improve their English language skills in an informal group setting.

Every Wednesday in Café Belg from 17:00 to 19:00 a group of people we are gathering to practice English. Sometimes we are talking about some interesting topics and other times we play games like Taboo or Who's on my face.

This conversation spot is also the perfect opportunity to participate in the local activities, to meet other people (some of them foreigners that are studying or volunteering abroad), to trust in our English skills, to learn, improve, share, enjoy and have fun.

English corner is free of charge, the only thing you pay is what you want to order to drink or eat during this time. In addition to this, it's a very flexible activity so you can come whenever you are available in this time, it doesn't matter if you are late or have to leave earlier, the most important is to come and try. Actually, we normally stay there longer than we say because we are having fun and enjoying the conversation.

Everybody is very welcome to participate, there is no requirements and no age limit.

– Semih, Berkay, Ana, Aysenaz, Irene, Bea

Great adventure ■

Hey, my name Semih. I am a volunteer from Turkey. In 2015 I participated in the project of European voluntary service which I could accomplish with the support of the European Union.

Certainly for me it was an unforgettable experience, thanks to my stay in Czestochowa I have many new friends, I could see a large part of Poland, I could also visit my friends in different parts of Europe.

To a large extent I improved my knowledge and skills in working with children, I realized that I really enjoy it. I made a lot of progress in communicating in English, this is my personal success. I would encourage every young person to participate in EVS.

It's a great adventure and a very good investment in the future.

- Semih Yaşar



Volunteers final meeting



■ Take the Initiative

Youth exchange 'Take the Initiative' was prepared by young people from Germany, Turkey, Spain and Poland (Cz-Art) and took place in Zrębnice near Czestochowa in August 2015. We, as EVS volunteers, were also there helping with chosen activities and presenting EVS.

What was the purpose of the exchange? The basic idea of the project was to increase the entrepreneurship of young people and their commitment to participate in social and economic life. At the workshops youth learned valuable tips on how to create a CV, to be a leader, be innovative, make business more sustainable and more. Many of participants ended up with the small personal successes in the development of self-confidence, work organization, communication with others...

We tried to encouraged youth to start a change in their lives and become an EVS volunteer. The other workshop and discussion we proposed to youth was sustainable consumption and production and responsible business.

About CZ-ART ■

Association for Supporting Youth Initiatives Cz-Art is an association founded by young people to promote activities created by themselves. It is located in the city Czestochowa in Poland. The idea behind Cz-Art is “from young people, to young people”. It was first established to create a free space for youth in Czestochowa who could develop their ideas with support and resources of association.



Right now, Cz-Art is one of the two sending and hosting EVS organizations in Czestochowa. It has been sending young people from Poland to other European countries for several years now, to expand their visions and have various experiences in life. The organization also hosts EVS volunteers from other countries. These volunteers live in Czestochowa for different period of times. They organize activities for children and young people to improve their awareness about cultures and environment, teach them both English and their mother tongues and help them be more active and conscious about the world.

– Ewa Jeziak, the coordinator



Youth exchange



Cooking in Spanish workshop

Spanish classes



Volunteers Day



Aerobic at kindergarden



Cz-Art promotion



Burkina Faso visit

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