

PORTFOLIO: CIA INVESTIGATORS



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Editor: Jerneja Dečar

Cover: Denis Zelnik

Lecture: Klementina Kralj

Co-lecture: Kätlin Tamm, Joana Carmona

Design: Denis Zelnik

Co-design: Mira Partljič

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Editorial



The European Commission offers youth sector opportunities to gain new knowledge throughout mobilities that they are providing for us. The Erasmus plus project Creative Innovative Approaches Investigators (CIA Investigators) is one of the opportunities that was given to 24 participants gathered in Maribor, Slovenia.

The CIA Investigators mobility aimed to investigate the volunteering field to include more youth and youth with fewer opportunities into EVS projects abroad. One of the results is the CIA booklet, which is representing the participants of the project.

With this collection we want to:

- **share participants views,**
- **reflection of their work methods,**
- **share good practices.**

Editor

Jerneja Dečar



Name: **Maja**
Surname: **Bernik**
Country: **Slovenia**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

Apart from political and other insecurities happening, I see EU as something positive. It has a great impact on bringing people from all over the continent together that we can feel more connected and is creating many opportunities for the youngsters.

What kind of options does the youth/ youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

There are many options. I am not familiar with all of them, but some, that I know, are: European voluntary service, youth exchanges, internships, loans, ...

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

I'm still fairly new in the field of working with youngsters. Nevertheless, I think reaching out to young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, is very important. One can do

that in many ways, but from my point of view educating from an early age is most important. That way youngsters get to know and are aware of opportunities waiting for them. Another important thing is cooperation between organisations involved in youth work on both - local and international level. Getting to them through different events and activities, that are interesting to young generations, work very well also.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

Although I've never participated I see it as a great way for young people to get some life-lasting experiences, to grow and to find out what they are capable of. I think it has an impact on the hosting part (city, organization, ...) too. Local people learn a lot by spending time with the volunteer, getting to know their background and a way of thinking. It's definitely an opportunity to connect, one way or another.



Name: **Joana**
Surname: **Carmona**
Country: **Portugal**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

European Union is a political and economic set of nations unifying their diversity and cooperating according to the common values/goals of peace, freedom, respect and equality, solidarity and inclusion, cooperation, democracy and development.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Although the opportunities, provided to the young people, have been raising and developing in a positive way in the past few decades, there is still a lot of work to be done in the sense of spreading the accurate and useful information, increasing the participation of the youngsters in voluntary work and other international opportunities that improve their education, experience and personal development. Specifically, I believe the focus should now be to broaden this involvement among young people with fewer opportunities.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

By enrolling E+ projects as a study exchange and an EVS project, I have participated in (and now also helped in the planning and implementation of) training courses that gather young people with this aim. These trainings are extremely enriching as tools of a non-formal education, as

they contribute for the personal development of young (and old!) people, as well as for the global development of the society, putting on practice the actions that lead us to achieve the common goals of EU.

Besides, the methods of inclusion that I experienced were normally based on talks or small presentation, trying to spread the information as much as possible in a local and close environment. I believe that the first step to get people – especially the ones with fewer opportunities – aware of the possibilities that are out there, is the direct contact and communication with peers who experienced it before. It gives a human and real touch, with a completely different impact than paper or online contact.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

European Voluntary Service is a program of Erasmus+ that allows people aged from 17 to 30, from European and other Partner countries, to work abroad in various fields as volunteers, aiming to strengthen the European citizenship identity and to implement the EU values. It promotes the mobility of young people around the world for an intercultural exchange, breaking borders and stereotypes, creating bonds and improving communication within people with different backgrounds. EVS is an enriching experience where volunteers have the chance to try and develop their interests and competences, while they can, simultaneously, have a positive impact on a local community.



Name: **Athanasia**
Surname: **Arvaniti**
Country: **Greece**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

It has some positives and some negatives. The good part is that it considers the quality of life of European citizens as something important (usually). Also the chances it provides for young people to work and volunteer abroad. At the same time, though, it's a little hypocritical because a lot of money (more than needed) goes to things that are not useful for society as a whole. It's also very unstable when it comes to maintaining its unity and although it would be helpful to have a union of cooperative states in the long-term, the EU is not very successful at that and it's becoming less and less competitive globally.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

The youth as a whole has some opportunities, depends on where in Europe they live and how well they are informed. There are plenty of problems when it comes to proceeding in life and seizing chances, especially during a general political and financial crisis. The good thing is that there are volunteering and training programmes for those with fewer opportunities and that works towards their integration in society. The bad thing is that these projects often are not enough for everyone and not every country promotes these opportunities enough. For example in Germany many services are covered but the situation in the Balkan countries is not the same. That's the state's fault as well because many times European funds are not used appropriately.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

Firstly people who were included in programmes themselves suggested me to join for the same purpose as well. Afterwards it was the social media that provides information to anyone, so we're all free to apply. Then it was the local organization hosting a preparation meeting and communicating with us, so that we form a team spirit and start talking to each other and cooperate. They were available (organisation and participants) via social media, telephone, email and even in the organisation office. It is similar with the receiving organisation abroad, only that they also have group activities, discussions and free time spent together as a group.

Personally as a Pride volunteer (haven't been one for long) I've been using social media and freely talked with people in order to attract them to the purpose. Additionally there are activities and weekly informative meetings that are open for anyone interested in LGBTQ+ issues. Moreover we host multiple events throughout the year and we have the 4-day Pride festival for visibility and action.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

The title EVS means volunteering/working somewhere for a few months in order to help achieve an aim that is useful for humanity. In another way it's a change of life, a tremendous experience and a big leap out of the comfort zone, because we're all afraid to try something new and to do something we haven't done before. You become a citizen of the world and responsible for it.



Name: **Barbara**
Surname: **Knez**
Country: **Slovenia**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

It's easy to trade the goods. People move around easily (for travel and work) but unfortunately it is not so stable at the moment (Brexit, possible changes after French elections, refugee crisis ...). I think it's still pretty safe and has clean environment.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Opportunities for the youth depend on the country of residence a lot. In our country they depend a lot on »who-knows-who«. It's very important to be flexible as well ... I personally admire the most those who dare to open their own business – I think there's too few young people in this.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

As a student I already got in touch with the option to go study abroad as an Erasmus+ student. Amongst students this information was and still is very well-known and popular. Unfortunately I didn't know about other projects for the youth at that time. I found out about this projects a bit later, when I was unemployed and I found them on different Facebook pages.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

It's a good way to get to know other cultures, to travel, to develop yourself ... and not to take too many responsibilities as well.



Name: **Dóra**
Surname: **Vető**
Country: **Hungary**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

Due to having an academic background in International Relations, when asked about my opinion on Europe and/or the European Union nowadays, I cannot help but approach the question from a critical perspective. In short, as a result of recent international events, which are highly affecting the EU as a whole, I see great fractures within the European community, which are highlighted by the rising nationalism and euroscepticism within the member states. I believe that the European Union has taken a significant turn compared to the times it was established: the Union's initial efforts built on common values shaping European identity seem to be fading. Despite visible struggles within the Union, I still believe that being a member state of the EU provides great opportunities in several areas, for instance and very importantly – especially in the context of such projects like the „Creative Innovative Approaches Investigators” – the field of education.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Being a citizen of an EU member country offers a lot in many ways, including the many initiatives aimed to prosper the youth. People do not face as many obstacles, for instance, when traveling to another country to seek better opportunities, either academic or professional. The European education system is coherent and of high quality, offering great opportunities to not only the youth, but to adults as well, for example in the framework of the EU's Lifelong Learning Program. In addition, the EU with its efforts to decrease youth unemployment increases the chances of youngsters to find a job suitable for them in the competitive market.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

Some of the projects I have previously attended were aimed at social inclusion, mainly focusing on the inclusion of youth and youth with fewer opportunities. One of the Erasmus+ training courses I participated in was built around the topic of youth employability, with a special focus on the opportunities offered by Erasmus+. Some of the methods the training used to increase youth employability were interview simulation(s) and the creation of a CV – both American style and EuroPass. I find these basic and easily implementable methods very useful, since everyone experiences the struggles of job hunting, the preparation process before an interview and the interview itself. Properly preparing youngsters for job search can be considered a great way of increasing their chances of employability.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

The European Voluntary Service is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for young people to be involved in a community's everyday life. While they not only help out people in need, they have the chance to explore their abilities, as well as to get to know themselves better by experiencing something really special. As far as I heard from people participating in an EVS project, the volunteering is a life-changing experience.



Name: **Emilis**
Surname: **Jasinevičius**
Country: **Lithuania**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

Europe is really available nowadays. It is easier to travel. People are more tolerant and communicative. Today Europe presents a mobility for international projects and a development of the cities.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

The youth have a lot of free education. Europe gives a lot of good opportunities to gain knowledge and experience, which is helpful in the future when looking for job and in different life situations.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

You learn a lot based on simple and harder skills in the projects, which help you to build a team, solve problems, you become braver and more open-minded (feeling free to present your opinion).

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

EVS is a very good opportunity for the youth to find themselves, to gain a lot of experience and knowledge, which can help them in the future.



Name: **Estrella**
Surname: **González Campos**
Country: **Spain**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

I think EU is, still, a project of integration and development. On the other side, the multiple crises currently facing the EU could produce some beneficent EU reforms, encourage further political and economical integration and transform us into a more effective and cohesive entity.

What kind of options does the youth/ youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

The youth in the EU has a possibility to know different cultures and their customs. Nowadays, that is possible even for the youth with fewer opportunities, because each day there are more and more opportunities and mobility programs like Comenius, Erasmus, internships, etc., adapted for different ages.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

Comenius in Romania and Erasmus in Warsaw.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

EVS seems to be an opportunity to meet other countries within the EU and to live with other people from other countries for a longer period of time. I also believe that it is a very good way to foster cooperation within the community which is very important to create cohesion between us.



Name: **Etele**
Surname: **Mészáros**
Country: **Hungary**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

For me, as a young person, the European Union helped a lot during the past years. It gives a lot of opportunities, both for living and working. It starts to build a community between members and makes the market more fair (less corrupted). I come from the Eastern Europe and I think Europe helps this part even more.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

The EU supports the education system in all the member countries. Young people can study and work as volunteers abroad. That helps a lot to get to know the community and to get experience.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

For me, two of the most common ways of learning about projects abroad are social media and my friends.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

EVS is a really good opportunity to find our place in the world. We have a chance to spend several months in another environment, experience another culture, learn a new languages and get many different experiences. It has opened the world for us. I am also thinking about going on the EVS. Why not? You can only win from it! You can work in your field or try something different, something new.



Name: **Filip**
Surname: **Bobek**
Country: **Slovenia**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

European union is a pillar of the modern society. It provides its citizens with a variety of options and activities. It promotes tolerance, mobility, free trade and inclusion. European Union provides us with options that were not available through history. It is designed to bring us closer to each other and it provides us with unlimited possibilities.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Regarding the youth in EU I could say that we hit the jackpot with endless possibilities. The most important thing in EU for the youth is definitely the Schengen area (traveling without border controls) as well as the educational projects (Erasmus+). Nowadays it's even easier for people with fewer opportunities to access these programmes because it's possible to get life-changing experience with almost no money at all.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

At our local NGO (Klub mariborskih študentov – KMŠ) we're trying to include as many students from Maribor to our programmes as possible. An important part of promoting inclusion is spreading the information. To include someone in something you first need to give them the right information. We are preparing seminars, forums and try to reach as many students as we can. After receiving information comes the second part, to provide them with required infrastructure and support. We have a rich network of partners which we share good practices with. Through this we know we are always improving. We help students find workshops, seminars, training courses and many more programmes/activities throughout European Union.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

EVS is a great opportunity for non-formal education, meeting new people and for widening your horizon. You can do all that almost for free.



Name: **Francisca**
Surname: **Padilla Pérez**
Country: **Spain**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

I think that EU was a good idea about joining nations together, to be stronger and to break barriers between countries from the same continent. Nowadays the idea of standing together has developed in the wrong direction, because some countries are putting pressure on others to change their ideals and want to overrule them.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

In my opinion young people should study or do training courses to make opportunities for themselves in the Europe. Even if you don't have a college degree at least you should gain the language skills. In my opinion if you want to move abroad you should speak at least English and the language of the country where you are moving to.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

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What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

It is a program that allows you to volunteer in a foreign country and receive money support from the European Union. Volunteers are integrated in the daily activities of the organization that host them and perform tasks of information, social care, communication and conservation of the environment. The participating organizations work on issues such as information and policies in the field of youth work, personal and socio-educational development of young people, civil involvement, social assistance, inclusion of the disadvantaged, environment, non-formal education programs, ICT and media literacy, culture and creativity, development and cooperation.



Name: **Giovanna**
Surname: **Nardella**
Country: **Italy**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

I see the EU nowadays as the most powerful supranational organization in the world. It is not just because of its economic strength; the European Union is for sure more than an economic union, it is a combination of economic, political, social and environmental aspect. It is something that contributes to improving the Europe image in the world and it protects the European identity and culture.

What kind of options does the youth/ youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

The world is full of challenges, we need leaders with global outlook who dare to stand up and who dare to stand out and do something different. Young people must lead the changes in their communities. I believe that we don't need to talk about what options youth has but it's better to talk about what opportunities they can create. I think we have a lot of passion, creativity, energy, flexibility and commitment to be able to achieve our goals.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

I think the inclusion starts through little things of life. Nowadays social media has a strong impact on young people (also with fewer opportunities). In this way, interaction is a lot easier and different possibilities to get included into projects are recognized.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

To me EVS is a fantastic opportunity to develop my skills, to learn how to be a part of a big project, to learn how to respect all opinions and to be passionate about achieving something wonderful. EVS is also a way to travel abroad, to see the world, to know new cultures, to meet new people and to learn new stuff.



Name: **Ieva**
Surname: **Surdokaite**
Country: **Lithuania**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

I see it as a strong unit, where all parts (countries) propagate the same values (peace, democracy, growth etc.). The EU encourages people to take some actions to change the society (for example this kind of projects). I think it's a source of innovative changes to make our lives easier and better.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Youth can easily join organizations related to their way of thinking, values, hobbies and passions. They have free education in almost every country. They can travel within the projects for free (with Erasmus+), go on international volunteering or internship projects. In general these options give youngsters the opportunities to grow individually and to expand their horizons. At the same time activities abroad challenge individuals and also make them to step out of their comfort zone.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

Personally I belong to the AIESEC organization and the method of inclusion that I experienced was a simple promotion. I was involving people by spreading organization's ideas, activities during workshops, conferences and posters on Facebook. On the other side I was included into an Erasmus+ project by a friend who went to that kind of projects (by telling about what a good experience it is). Basically there was a mouth to mouth method, where people are spreading this information amongst themselves.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

It's a really good opportunity for the youngsters to find themselves, to get unforgettable and life changing experience. Also it's an easy way to gain your personal goals and skills (learn new languages, get more sociable, ...).



Name: **Ignacio**
Surname: **Navarro Arenas**
Country: **Spain**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

At the moment Europe is separated. I think that for this reason the volunteers are really important for the Europe Union, they can bring our culture together.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

The volunteering is an opportunity that can help the majority of the populations. In my opinion in Europe situation is different, there are less opportunities, but if you are willing to search, you can find great opportunities ones.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

The very important method is meeting the target group and to create good relationship with them. After then we can do a very good work together. It's important that the youngsters are informed and organized so they will have opportunity to gain new skills.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

It's an amazing experience which can improve and complete every individual involved. When we meet new people from other countries we can say that we have the tool to help the world.



Name: **Indrė**
Surname: **Kveselytė**
Country: **Lithuania**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

I like the situation in Europe nowadays, because I feel that countries are communicating with each other, we have free borders and can travel wherever we want to. There are a lot of international organizations for the youth and for elderly people, which help them to communicate, stay in touch and share ideas about making Europe better.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

I think there is a lot of options for the youth. They can study abroad, can volunteer in many different areas and there are also many perspective jobs for them. There are organizations, which help youngsters to decide what they want to do and also help them to fulfil all their wishes.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

I think the main method to include people in international projects is social media, it's accessible to everyone. It's exactly how I discovered the projects abroad, then I searched for more information about it and finally decided to go to Erasmus+ project. It gave me a good impression so I'm on my third project right now. I hope it's not the last one. At the moment I'm promoting E+ and trying to include friends as well.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

I don't have any experience with EVS yet, but I'm planning to go to volunteer for few months in the future. I hope it's going to be a good experience for me.



Name: **Klementina**
Surname: **Kralj**
Country: **Slovenia**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

The basic aim of the EU was to foster economic cooperation and has later on spread also on to other fields like climate, health, justice and migration and became a big political unit. Like every other thing also EU has positive and negative sides. If I focus on positive sides and connect them to options for personal development and growth, I think being united means more options and places for people to develop and gain experience, grow and live their dreams. Today we can basically live and work anywhere we want..

What kind of options does the youth/ youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

There are quite few options for the young, I think the only problem is that many of them are not aware of those options. Besides EVS there are also short-term youth exchanges, trainings, working camps, those who like children can go abroad as an au-pair, others decide to work on cruise ships, go on student's Erasmus+ exchange, etc.. I believe when there is a will, there's also a way for any wishes.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

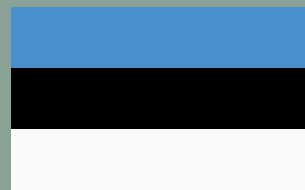
I experienced short-term youth exchanges and I work tightly with EVS volunteers. I found those options through the internet, Facebook posts and through friends. Because I believe that not many young know about this possibilities, it would be really great to spread awareness through school system too in a way of presenting the mobilities with good practices and also with EVS volunteers who would share their experience.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

EVS project is for the youth under the age of 30. I am now not the candidate for it anymore and I regret not taking the chance while I still could. I remember reading about it few years ago, but I guess I didn't have enough information and decided not to apply. At the moment I am privileged to work with two EVS volunteers and in my work I also met many more. I think this is an opportunity everyone should take and so I encourage the youngsters for it.



Name: **Madli**
Surname: **Kaljula**
Country: **Estonia**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

European Union is like the glue that holds Europe together and connects it as a space, which shares similar values, aspirations and hopes for the future. It's like one big appreciative family where all its members are valued and have a chance to share their opinions no matter how old, young, experienced or inexperienced they are, where everybody has their rights but also responsibilities and even though they face some quarrels sometime then in the end they're still stronger together.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Youth and youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have more opportunities/options than ever before. My mother always says that in a way it's the "tragedy" of our generation that we have so much to choose from. The youth doesn't only have a chance to be active players in the general youth field but they're also being acknowledged as valuable partners in increasing number of other sectors where adults are usually in charge (e.g. reducing the legal age of voting). On the other hand, for the youth with fewer opportunities still much more remains to be done to improve their accessibility to different fields and to different options. But as the awareness of different issues, concerning that target group, increases we're also moving towards a better society for everybody.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

One part of increasing inclusion is definitely raising awareness about the opportunities/projects and explaining the concept of those to the target group. Lots of young people (no matter if with fewer opportunities or not) are unaware of such opportunities even though they would be perfect candidates to take part in such projects. We used to use methods such as workshops in youth centers, meetings with students in schools/universities, use mobile youth work to meet young people in places where they like to spend their time and promoting the opportunities there (such as main squares of the cities etc.). The general idea is to bring them the information and make the process easier, accessible and more personal. Such methods also provide an easy opportunity for young people to get information faster and easier.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

Before doing EVS I thought it would be just a fun and enriching experience, an exciting opportunity to step out from your comfort zone in an international environment. It was all that as well but it was so much more than I could ever imagine. EVS was a real life-school and taught me some of the most valuable lessons and skills I've acquired in life so far. It gave me an improved perspective on life and on the world, changed my plans for the future and made me appreciate and understand different cultures, people and ways of life much more. EVS is an opportunity and a door to the exciting world full of thousands of possibilities. In short EVS has real potential to affect and change lives in a major way.



Name: **Marek**
Surname: **Runga**
Country: **Estonia**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

It gives us a lot of possibilities to travel free across EU countries. There is no problem or hustle to go and exchange money or with payments in other countries. EU also tries hard to make people feel like home in every culture.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

To be honest I haven't witnessed or seen any of that.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

I only had practice in different countries with my chef degree, I haven't really worked abroad. But during the practice in restaurants I developed more knowledge of how to serve food and how to prepare different dishes.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

An opportunity to work in a country which you want to explore, experience its culture, people and country itself more.



Name: **Maria Luiza**
Surname: **Tsikala**
Country: **Greece**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

European Union in my perspective unites the nations of Europe which share the same values and aims in political, economical and social way. People can sell/buy goods, travel and work in every country of the European Union.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

The youth and also the youth with fewer opportunities (low class, Roma, high school drop-outs, people with disabilities, ...) in Europe nowadays have more opportunities for personal development than ever before. In my perspective travelling abroad with low or no costs, volunteering and non-formal education (especially with Erasmus+ projects) is a powerful tool for the young to help them gain working experience, develop their soft skills and open their mind.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

One of the most crucial aspects of any projects is the ability of the facilitators to include the participants as much as possible in every part of it. Before the projects, which I took part in, the facilitators always tried to connect all the participants by, for example, making Facebook groups. Another way of inclusion is helping people who do not speak English to participate in the activities by asking other participants (or the leader in youth exchanges) from the same country to translate for them, so they also have the chance to be a part of the youth projects and learn the language.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

EVS is a life changing opportunity for youngsters from the Europe. I think it's an excellent way for somebody to gain working experience, develop and discover new places.



Name: **Maria**
Surname: **Tsimara**
Country: **Greece**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

I believe that European union is an institution which promotes democracy, freedom, diversity and justice. It is my belief that, because of the EU, the European nations have come closer and they have the ability to understand each other, especially young people participating in European programmes. However, EU and its accomplishments are in danger due to some economic, political and social reasons. I believe that EU has to try to return to its fundamental values so as to protect its citizens and fight its enemies.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Despite the fact that there is economic depression in many European countries, which is closely related to its effect on young people, I believe that EU still offers many opportunities to the youth, for example expands their horizons, enables them to gain knowledge and skills and become better citizens. One of these important opportunities are the Erasmus programmes, which are either for studies, internships or volunteering. Through these programmes young people have the chance to chase their dreams, a career and try to make the world a better place.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

Most of the times I came across with various programs through personal research. To be more specific, I learned about many projects from social media and websites about youth topics that I follow. Also, my university helped me to broaden my horizons by special seminars and events about volunteering, youth work, international internships and Erasmus opportunities. Furthermore, some academic societies, which I am also a member of, like ESN, promote special projects and activities for young people.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

EVS is a significant chance for young European people to learn things which will help them in their career and give them the opportunity to contribute to common good causes, like to promote European values and fight for people's rights. I would like to learn more about the programme and also participate in an EVS project and in this way have personal experience. For this reason, I applied to participate in this project in Maribor.



Name: **Melanie**
Surname: **Muljar**
Country: **Estonia**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

European Union is a messy place.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Youth with fewer opportunities has better opportunities to learn proper English.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

I haven't been on any project before, this is my first one.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

I understand the European Voluntary Service as a help to those in need.



Name: **Mohamed Ahmed**
Surname: **Mahfouz**
Country: **Italy**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

As I am a part of Italy and I live here at the moment, I can only tell that the European Union is delivering the sense of consistency among most of its countries and achieving most of the values EU had set a long time ago, when it was first established.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

The part that the European Union is including different youth within its programs is being highly promoted. These opportunities got developed to include different target groups and a lot of variable activities to be involved in. EU has a multi-role part - integrated with community services and voluntary work, as the Erasmus+ is being also enriched and developed to offer more and more opportunities for the youth in multi-based disciplinary project around the European Union countries, or even within the countries with aligned policies and agreements.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

My experience is limited as I am a new participant in such projects. I only had the chance to be included within these activities abroad through interactive, unconventional ways of learning. Sometimes through intensive workshops and fun activities with physical attributes, however it helped a lot in both, delivering and maintaining the real value of the expected results and outcomes.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

I think that all the voluntary services around the whole globe, even apart from the European Union, pretty much have a really great importance within the issue of changing communities and social solidarities. In my opinion I think that it deserves much attention and value to develop the accessibility and availability of such kind of services using multiple platforms and online based techniques.



Name: **Roberto**
Surname: **Aceti**
Country: **Italy**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

European Union is experiencing some problems about extremisms, right and left political movements but its health status is strong and I believe that European Union and its citizens can figure out this situation and, in the end build a strong European Union where all the nations are united in one flow, one system in a peaceful way.

What kind of options does the youth/ youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

EU youth mobility is trying to push this target group in its programs in order to give them an opportunity to grow, to learn more about the EU and to give them international and intercultural dimension. All of this in order to increase their opportunity to be active part in the society and to help them to facilitate to find a job.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

Basically inclusive methods were the participants and they have an active part in the project. Personally I like to create a dialogue based on a strong interaction.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

EVS is a great opportunity that EU is giving to its citizens. It is an opportunity of personal and professional development, a life-time experience and an occasion to know different places, people and cultures.



Name: **Tünde**
Surname: **Máté**
Country: **Hungary**



How do you see Europe (European Union) nowadays?

I see European Union as a very strong, but fragile system. With the euro crisis, migrants crisis, growing nationalism and euroscepticism all happening in Europe more or less at the same time the EU has to face one of the biggest crises in its history. If European union can work this out, I believe it will be stronger than ever.

What kind of options does the youth/youth with fewer opportunities in Europe have nowadays?

Because of the open borders everyone in the EU have more opportunities. Even the youth with fewer opportunities can now spend some time abroad studying through the EU programs. A lot of people from my country (Hungary) moved abroad and became more successful, even those with limited language skill.

What kind of methods of inclusion, to attend projects abroad, have you experienced? Which methods have you used in/at your work?

I think social media is one of the best methods to use when trying to reach youth with fewer opportunities. Even children, who live in straitened circumstances, have Facebook profile and it's pretty easy to reach them through carefully placed advertisements.

What does European Voluntary Service mean to you?

European Voluntary Service is an amazing opportunity for european youth. It is an unique chance to get to know a foreign country, culture and people. It also helps young people to become more independent and to gain new skills.



Jaka Kovač, The CIA trainer



Jerneja Dečar, The CIA facilitator



Maja Bernik, The CIA facilitator



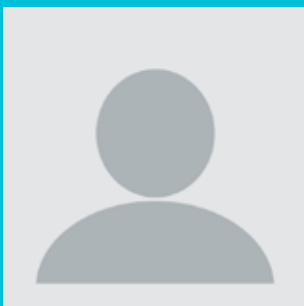
Klementina Kralj, The CIA facilitator



Joana Carmona, The EVS volunteer



Denis Zelnik, The CIA facilitator



Kätlin Tamm, The EVS volunteer



Gautier Evrard, The EVS volunteer

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