

INVENT IT, BANK IT Erasmus+ youth exchange
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Partner organisation from Hungary: Emina Career Guidance Foundation

About Erasmus+ in brief:

Erasmus+ is a programme of the European Commission. Its main topics addressed are education, training, youth and sport. It runs from 2014 till 2020. One of the main aims of the Erasmus+ programme is to develop skills and employability while modernizing the above mentioned sectors as well. The budget of the programme is 14.7 billion EUR which means a 40% increase compared to the former spending levels the programme had. Around two-thirds of this budget is allocated for providing learning opportunities abroad for individuals. The programme is open to students, apprentices, teachers, lecturers, young people, volunteers, youth workers and people working in grassroots' sport from EU countries and some other states such as Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, etc...



Erasmus+ aims at addressing concerns and problems in Europe. It pays attention to the youth sector in general, particularly in regard to the youth unemployment, early school leaving and social inclusion of young people. It also focuses on sport issues with relation to grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as fighting against match-fixing, doping, violence and racism.

Important features of the Erasmus+ programme:

- recognition and validation of skills and qualifications
- dissemination and exploitation of project results
- open access requirement for educational materials, documents and media produced through Erasmus+
- international dimension
- multilingualism
- equity and inclusion
- protection and safety of participants

About the project “Invent it, bank it”

The project “Invent it, bank it” was focusing on the topic of entrepreneurship. Its main goal was to give us the mindset of an entrepreneur which is a key element of starting a business career and is also helpful in fighting youth unemployment.

The participants of five countries (Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia and Romania) became a great team by the end of the eight-day-long program, thanks to the teambuilding activities and the wonderful location called Riterio Krantas. The hotel, surrounded by lakes,

swamps and forests, located 28 kilometres west of Vilnius gave the opportunity to disconnect from the outside world and fully concentrate on the tasks given to us by our coordinators. Not to mention that we were lucky enough to experience actual summer weather in Lithuania despite of the fact that it usually lasts only for a few days.

The ice-breaking started on the evening of our arrival and continued through the whole week, with games, outside activities and of course parties each night with a different theme. The fun was well deserved as we had a very busy daily schedule. We were given various tasks individually and in different sized groups which gave us the opportunity to talk to everybody, even though we had a quite big and various group of people. We learned a lot but (maybe even more importantly) had a lot of fun, which is quite a big accomplishment for me since learning on a hot summer day might not sound like fun to everybody.

The methods of non-formal education made the learning experience a lot easier and enjoyable. By that I mean that we didn't only get the chance to learn facts about entrepreneurship – which probably wouldn't be that exciting – but we also got to 'be entrepreneurs'. We had the opportunity to have our first selling experience by selling flowers and making real money, we got to play around with fake money to advertise our own social business idea, to actually write a business plan, to present it in front of our simulated angel-investors and a lot more. Thanks to the diversity of tasks and the amazingly precise organizing done by our facilitators we never got a chance to get bored.

The Erasmus+ programme not just provided budget for accommodation in such an elegant, modern place and for food 3 times a day with coffee breaks, but it also made possible to reimburse the price of our tickets (up to a limited amount which depends on how far is the country of the participant is from the place where the project takes place – EU has an official distance calculator for this purpose). Luckily we also had great organizers and facilitators who were responsible to accomplish the goals of the project and manage the learning and working sessions during the implementation.

The „Invent it, bank it” game

The main activity of the programme was a game named “Invent it, Bank it”. This was rather a simulation of a little society with real-life economical features such as own currency called “riterio” which has strengthened or weakened related to the current activity of the users. Participants were supposed to make money by their own effort with a starting capital of 1000 euros. This could have been exchanged to the above mentioned riterio or just simply put it in a bank account with a decent interest rate. Our expenses had to be covered from this amount as well which included the accommodation, daily meals, programs and fines (for being late from sessions).

We were encouraged to start our own business ideas in order to make money that led to interesting initiatives from casino, massage, self-defense or language classes to “Vegas-like” marriage centres and real-life tinder cupids.

By having the opportunity to attend different games and activities throughout the week, such as the human-sized monopoly game or the flower selling contest in the city of Trakai, we could earn extra money for more investments, or just to spare some for the final results.

Another key part of the week was the stunningly prepared real-size monopoly pitch, where 4 teams were competing against each other for the prize, which in this case was a lot of money. It was interesting to see how teams were trying different tactics or how the game turned into an intensive and steamy competition among the teams and its members. During the game it started raining, and it was amazing to see how all the competitive barriers evaporated immediately, and everybody just tried to protect the vulnerable monopoly pitch. The whole battle lasted for almost 6 hours, with all the teams having the opportunity to experience ups and downs during the game.



At the final evaluation, after a really tight race among the best competitors in the Invent it, bank it game, the winner was announced and the reward was a 50EUR (real euros) voucher for an online business course.

During the process of the whole week, participants could learn to realize their own ideas, how easily money can flow away, especially close to a casino, and more importantly, everyone was able to get a few hints about economics in general and to learn how money comes and goes around among people.

Learning outcomes

First of all, an Erasmus+ activity shows us that coming from different cultures and speaking different languages makes no barrier in making friendships. We may think differently on many topics but in my opinion this is one the true values of the projects that we get to see other perspectives for a full week.

With the Invent it Bank it theme we learned the basics of a business and what characteristics you need for being successful in it.

For me the hardest programme element was the task when we had to sell flowers. We got a certain amount of money that we could spend on flowers, and the winner was who could make the highest profit within 4 hours. Literally, I would have never thought that selling a bouquet of

flowers for only 5EUR could bring such happiness and excitement in my life. It may sound easy but after getting rejected for the 50th time in 15 minutes, your level of persistence drops a little bit. Fun fact is that the selling was really not about the flowers: it was rather about the story we could figure out to make people buy flower.

We played life-sized monopoly which taught us that no matter, how south things go, we can never give up. One team basically went bankrupt but with some lifesaving deals, they managed to reach second place. It was also a great experience to develop some negotiation skills. But most importantly we had to work as a team. Make decisions together, regarding what to buy or sell and for how much should we get or give. As we went deeper into the game, we realized that it is easier to share the roles between us, so everyone can focus on their task.

Creating a business plan might sound easy, until it becomes to the numbers, especially when we have nothing to compare to. And making a pitch takes it to the next level. Standing in front of four investors, who are really interested in the details, like why would your company worth to invest in, that's a hard task...

It was a fascinating week, with tons of experience and learning opportunities. When it comes to informal and non-formal education, it is something that everyone should experience at least once in their life. It gives a great hint about interpersonal skills you might or should develop further. Even better if it has a topic connecting to your studies that you can put into practice, before jumping into the deep water.

Personal experience of a participant

"I spent a wonderful week in Lithuania in July, thanks to the Invent it Bank it project. I had a great time, the activities were really interesting and I learned a lot. This project helped me improve my English skills and I met many very nice people from different countries. It's always good to speak with people from other nations, get to know things about how they live, what their country is like. I even got friends here, because we had to work in groups and as a team we got closer to each other. The place where we stayed was beautiful. Riterio Krantas was one of the most beautiful hotels I have ever been. All of the meals were delicious and I realized how much I love potato. There were trees everywhere and there was a lake where we could swim. We were also very happy to have had sunny time during the project. We took a lot of amazing pictures. I think it was a very good idea to get more „Riterio” for photos, because we were getting to know each other better.

You had to be creative and clever for the Invent it, Bank it game. I invented my own business, it helped me evolve my creativity and maybe later I can use this idea in my life. The real-life monopoly was my favourite part of the project. We got a giant monopoly board and the participants were the figures. In this game, everybody turned back into a child. Everybody tried to make a bargain or tried to sell a field in the monopoly board. My team was the best, because we divided the tasks. I think that was the reason why we won the game, because we cooperated well.

We had also a task/game which took us to the real world with real money. We had to sell flowers. It was an interesting experience to me, because I've never done things like this before. Unfortunately our group had the last place, but we learned that we should never give up. We made videos as well: my personal favourite was the one about an application of cats Tinder called Flufinder. On the last days we had to invent our real life business. It was a bit hard to find a really good idea, but we had a lot of time to work this out. The investor's part of the project was a bit different from the other games. I was a bit nervous before my presentation, because I never had to sell my own idea. But during the presentation I really calmed down as everybody was friendly and helpful – except for those who did not invest in my business 😊

Besides, we had fun every night and had great parties. One night we wore costumes, we also had spa night, bowling night, casino night.... In the Just Married tent we got the chance to have weddings. Unfortunately I had a divorce after only one night but it was really funny. I think this project can be useful for anybody because here you can get many tips for your future career. I am glad that I got the chance to be a part of this initiative, and I truly recommend it for every student who wants to have a real life adventure.

