

OPEN YOUR EYES

2014



* **GENERAL INFO**

* **THE PROJECT**

* **TOURISM**

* **FREE TIME**

* **EVSDIARY**

THE IDEA

This brochure is the outcome of 11 months of volunteering in Bratislava, as EVS volunteers under the project '*Open your eyes*' by INEX Slovakia.

It was written according to the experiences and events occurred from February to December 2014 by the EVS volunteers Rita D'Andreamatteo (Italy) and Milena Milošević (Serbia).

In this brochure you will find general information about the European Voluntary Service, INEX Slovakia, Bratislava and surrounding, EVS activity and personal experiences.

The aim is to summarize a life experience and, at same time, provide an useful guide to the project for the next generation of EVS.

MILENA & RITA, *EVS 2014*

ABOUT US

*"Yesterday I was clever,
so I wanted to change
the world. Today I am
wise, so I am changing
myself."*



MILENA MILOŠEVIĆ

My name is Milena, Mili. I finished my Bachelor psychology studies and I run to my EVS in Bratislava. Before that I was volunteer in a lots of different organisations, all the time traveling somewhere. My hometown is Šid. I studied in Novi Sad, my second hometown. For me most beautiful city in Serbia, my Novi Sad, makes you feel happy just when you walk through some random street. I like summer and sea side, good coffee and chocolate, it became my new custom is Slovakia to take cake and hot chocolate. I am interested in educational reforms, gender studies and functioning of our brain. I like listening Aretha Franklin and smooth jazz. I love colours and flower patterns.

RITA D'ANDREAMATTEO

I am 28 years old, I was born and live in a small town by the sea called Lanciano, in Abruzzo region. I have a bachelor in Romanic linguistic and philology. I started participating to international workcamps back in 2006 and since then I have never lose the enthusiasm. I love being lost in the nature far away from civilization and chaos, especially I love camping by the sea or streams so I can hear the sound of water at night. In Slovakia I fulfilled some of my dreams like hugging a fluffy lamb and sleeping in the woods. I miss good fresh tomatoes and other sunny countries products so very much, but here cakes are very good so I am happy anyway.

**WHAT
IS
EVS?**

EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

"An EVS project is a partnership between two or more promoting organisations. These organisations are responsible for recruiting volunteers for their project.

Volunteers participate in EVS through a Sending Organisation in the country where they live and a Receiving Organisation that receives and hosts them during their period of service.

Projects last from 2 weeks to 12 months, and as a volunteer you can work in a wide range of fields, such as culture, youth, sports, children, cultural heritage, arts, animal welfare, environment and development cooperation. At the end of your EVS period, you will receive a certificate confirming your participation and describing your project – the Youthpass.

You will receive free accommodation, food, insurance and pocket money. The only thing you might have to pay is a small part of your travel costs."

[European Youth Portal]

...

What papers do not say is that EVS is much more than volunteering and travelling. It is a *life experience*, it is *time* you can use to find out what you really like and understand what you want to do. It is a *break* from the routine you can use to focus entirely on yourself without distractions and pressures from family or friends. It is a *chance* you have to get the best from yourself, or find your own limits.

You make connections, learn, explore, discover, work on yourself and your future.

Once the 'background' is removed, you can finally define your contour.



INEX
Slovakia

INEX SLOVAKIA

INEX Slovakia (INternational EXchanges) is non-profit and non-governmental organisation offering remarkable experiences, personal development and meaningful free time activities for young people through international voluntary activities and non-formal education. We have been encouraging young people in recognition of new cultures, creation of new friendships from all around the world and getting new skills and experiences since our establishment in 1993. We are sending volunteers to almost 80 countries all around the world for more than 2000 projects thanks to our membership and partnership within international networks of youth organisations Alliance for European Voluntary Service Organisations and Service Civil International .

**"OPEN
YOUR
EYES"**

OUR EVS PROJECT

- ADMINISTRATIVE WORK
- FRIDAYLISTING
- TEA MEETINGS
- PROMO MEETINGS
- PROMO PRESENTATIONS
- SOCIAL NETWORKS
- CAMPAIGNS
- INTEGRA
- PREŠPORKOVO
- VČELI DOM
- TRAININGS FOR LEADERS
- LEADING WORKCAMPs
- CREATIVE/GRAPHIC WORKS
- EVENTS
- WRITING OWN PROJECT
- VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT

Unlike many other EVS projects, Open Your Eyes will keep you very very busy and there is always a lot to do.

Most of the work will take place in the office, since *administrative work* is the core of the project. Friday lists and updating the databases are the most important tasks assigned to EVS.

Promotion of INEX activities and volunteering are also a big part of the work. The EVS volunteers are involved on several levels, from the planning to action, from social networks to direct contact with the future volunteers.

In spring the EVS will take part in two trainings, with the aim of learning how to become a *leader of workcamps*. Following, summertime will be spent travelling around Slovakia to lead several international workcamps, abandoning the office routine for two months or more.

EVS will also be involved in activities with *social* background, such as preparing events for disable or children in structures around Bratislava.

Finally, *Tea Meetings* are organized entirely by EVS on a regular basis in the INEX office to encourage volunteers participation in INEX social life.

**SMALL
BIG
COUNTRY**

-SLOVAKIA-

WEST TO EAST

As you will experience by yourself Slovakia is Country of beautiful castles, mountains and lakes...

Some of the nice **cities** that you should visit:

- *Kosice*
- *Banska Bystrica*
- *Banská Štiavnica*
- *Zilina*

There is quite a rich history in Slovakia and medieval spirit which you can see in **castles**:

- *Bojnice*
- *Cerveny kamen*
- *Spis*
- *Devin*

Some drops of beauty **mountains** and **National parks** where you can go for relaxation and recreation:

- *High Tatras – the Tatra National Park*
- *Carpathian beech forests*
- *Low Tatras National Park*
- *National Park Slovensky raj*

Special places for **summer**:

- *Slovak sea: Zemplínska Širava*
- *SPA: Dunajska Streda*

WHERE
TO GO

WHAT
IS THERE

SMALL

BIG

CITY

-BRATISLAVA-

YOUR NEW HOME

Population: 425,500

One of the city dominants which can be seen from far distance is The Castle of Bratislava. The most attractive part of Bratislava is the Old Town where the most historical sights as well as cultural institutions are concentrated. It's tiny lanes offer an ideal atmosphere for romantic walks to those who love to follow signs of history in the middle of modern world. Don't forget to check links for free tours, its good way to get to know the city for free. Slavin is a memorial monument to Soviet soldiers, from there you can have very nice view and beautiful sunset of course. Near city centre there is Hodžovo námestie (Presidential palace), which is open for tourists. There you can find big green lawns and usually exhibition of some artists. You can have peaceful day for relaxation in Železná studnička park. In the night take a walk at New bridge (Most SNP), enjoy Danube and UFO restaurant. Very near there is Aupark shopping centre with huge green park, Sad Janka Kraľa. There are a lot of random lakes all around Bratislava and one of the prettiest ones is Zlaté piesky. You can enjoy in museums, some of them are Museum of transportation, Museum of clocks and museum in Bratislava castle.

**WHAT
TO SEE**

**WHAT
TODO**

ONLINE LIFE HACKS

-USEFUL LINKS-

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

<http://cp.atlas.sk> - **Bus + Train**

<http://www.slovakrail.sk> - **Trains**

<https://bustickets.studentagency.eu> - **Cheap Bus**

<http://regiojet.sk/> - **Bus**

<http://www.slovaklines.sk/> - **Bus**

<http://imhd.zoznam.sk/ba/mhd.html> - **Local transport**

FACEBOOK USEFUL GROUPS

BLEM - Bratislava Language Exchange Meeting

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BratislavaLEM/?fref=ts>

EVS in Bratislava

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/625147090939867/?fref=ts>

EVS Couch surfing

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EFDCouchsurfing/>

Bratislava Couch surfing

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/74589831124/?fref=ts>

Used stuff for sale

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/usedstuffforsaleinbratislava/?fref=ts>

FLEM - French Language Exchange Meeting

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1445899082353940/?fref=ts>

TOURISM

BA +

Visit Bratislava

<http://visit.bratislava.sk/en/>

Free City tours

<http://www.befreetours.com/>

SLO-

Travel Slovakia

<http://slovakia.travel/en>

Bratislava Bike point

<http://www.bratislavabikepoint.com/EN/index-en.html>

**LIFE
STARTS
AS
WORK
ENDS
-FREE TIME-**

EVS COMMUNITY

As for being an Erasmus, the best part of EVS is that you are part of a community, you belong to something bigger than you.

If having an EVS partner already saves you from the foreigner loneliness, meeting your EVS fellows will definitely be the experience that design your period as a volunteer.

Value the people around you, they will give you support, they will move the first difficult steps in Slovak language as bad as you will, you will travel together and relax after work.

If you do not want to spend your days in your four walled room in front of Skype with friends that are miles away or worst, with your mom, you have to meet them.

On arrival training and *Mid term* are usually the best time of EVS and it is the right place to start building up your community.

Once in Bratislava, *BLEM* are happening every Wednesday, there you can find new and ex EVS breaking the working week routine with a beer and a lot of loud chatting.

You will get more inspiration from these people than from any other thing, they will be like home to you, I promise. Without them I would have been lost.

**GREAT
ADVENTURES
REQUIRE
GREAT FRIENDS**

SPORTS

FOR EVS
BUDGET!

RUNNING

Bratislava is a city that offers plenty of opportunities to practice sport almost for free and surrounded by beautiful environment.

If you like *running* or you have a *bike*, you can enjoy km and km of bike trail along the *Dunaj* on the *EuroVelo13*, running along the former Iron Curtain. Starting from Petržalka you can meet the Austrian and Hungarian borders in few km.

CYCLING

Turning right at the UFO, follow the trail until *Čunovo*; in few moments the concrete buildings will be replaced by nature and beautiful fields. You will meet several small restore points with food and drinks, in the summer you can also stop by ponds and swim.

ICE SKATING

During winter time it is possible to find several ice rinks where you can rent skates and try *ice skating* for few euro, remember to use gloves!

YOGA

If you need to relax, then *Yoga* is the right thing for you. It is possible to find open air classes during summer. Many cozy Yoga studios offer classes in English and there is no monthly fee, you pay right after the lesson directly to the instructor.

HIKING

Hiking is extremely popular in Slovakia, a good pair of shoes is all you need. You can explore the surroundings of Bratislava such as Devin and Berg enjoying the best this Country has to offer: *nature*.

RAINY DAYS

Welcome to central Europe, where streets are covered in ice and summer is gone with the wind.

It might not be as rainy as in London, but Slovakia is not a place for hanging out in the streets and squares. Finding indoor activities is a necessity when the sky turns gray and your hands start turning blue.

Tea House are probably the best choice ever. As you open the door you walk in to a Turkish warm atmosphere. Pillows and carpets fill the rooms instead of chairs, the lights are low and time goes by very slow (especially for the waiters). In this charming places you can spend a whole afternoon just sipping precious teas and relaxing, even if the World would go to pieces, you would not notice.

If you need sugar, all you need to find is a *Cukráreň*. These mythical places have all kinds of cheesecakes and other delicious sweets. When life gives you lemon, have an hot chocolate.

As this brochure is made by two girls, shopping is here considered as an activity. Shopping mall are warm and full of shops and coffee, but if you are looking for something EVS budget approved, you can spend hours and hours looking for the right outfit in second hand shops. *99 cent 1 kus* will be your motto.



WATER PROOF
FUN

TEA – HOUSE

CUKRAREN

SECONDHAND

**THE
PAGES
OF
OUR
LIVES**

- EVS DIARY -



RITA D'ANDREAMATTEO

- ITALY -

SI VOUS NE TROUVEZ PLUS RIEN

APRIL

2014

3# MONTH

Good morning Slovakia, Country of quiet, shy people, silent dogs and random statues.

I am your new Italian EVS volunteer, some of my friends call me Rita *sans toit ni loi* :)

I've always been travelling a lot since I was a child, I and my inner traveller have grown up together. I've been couch surfing, backpacking, travelling alone and with friends, I've slept in the airport and missed trains, I've been on work-camps and I've been hosted by my friends families all around Europe, I've been longing for a shower, I've been an Erasmus.

People might think I have the urge to escape, to run away from my self and my home.

In a way it is true: since I've become an adult, I've never spent more than one year in the same house, I'm not running away tough, I'm seeking for something.

All men seek for happiness, I am seeking for a place that feels like home.

Some say home is where your family leaves, but what to do when, beside your relatives, you have an Erasmus-time family scat-

tered all around the World?

What to do when your heart dwells in every single place where you have been happy at least once?

What should I do when my memory does not lie in one single place?

If you were in my shoes, could you stay one whole year in your home town sending CV and waiting, waiting for something to happen or change?

I couldn't. I relied on the lyrics of a song and decided to change.

"Si vous ne trouvez plus rien, cherchez autre chose."

"When you can't find anything else, start looking for something different."

I chose EVS, I chose the place where I had felt at home before. It happened last September in Banská Stanica, during a Youth Exchange with INEX.

I was always in my socks (that's not common in Italy), there was a good smell of fresh wood burning, I felt confident and full of hope, I felt a connection between me and the other participant, I felt happy and useful, and a dog licked my face. That is the closest I can feel to such a concept called home, I felt I be-

long.

And now..

Now I have my life in Bratislava, where I had no time to feel alone, not even for a second.

I have friends, I cook for my flat-mates , I have a new routine, a new language to learn and everything can still happen.

Now I can rest, for one year I won't have to question myself :

“Am I in the right place?”

By the way, today I've met Dada in the train station, a girl from the Exchange.

I remember on the departure day I greeted her saying see you but she answer goodbye, because we would never see each other again. I answered we couldn't know.

Now I know, things cannot change but we can change things.

IMPRESSIONI DI SETTEMBRE

Summer is almost over and September is at my door.

Have you ever experienced that typical distress that comes around New Year's Eve?

Well, I usually feel it every September when I realize another summer has gone.

I think it happens because summer always meant change and new experiences to me, and this year makes no exception.

I look at myself, trying to see the changes within me, hoping the routine won't bite hard and make them fade away with time.

It is not always possible to bring the new yourself in your old life.

Everything you've experienced is at your back and it is hard to understand whether is just a memory or it become a part of your identity.

I am taking this incoming autumn as an experiment, in fact in 4 months my EVS will be over.

Will I live up to the experiences I had?

This summer I've coordinated two workcamps and made new friends, had an amazing mid-term training, I lived in the forest starting the campfire every single morning, sleeping with friendly dormouse and other animals. Now I have a kettle and take the bus to work every morning, I barely talk to anyone in 7 hours

AUGUST

2014

7# MONTH

and even if a bat entered in my flat, the only animals I sleep with are the reindeers on my pyjama.

Am I my experiences? Right now I don't know, but I will keep looking for myself.

My Mid-term training offered me something to work with: I will *try to live in the present*.

I will try hard to follow the advices of my fellows EVS because their words are the most precious thing this summer and EVS gave me.

EINMAL IST KEINMAL

OCTOBER

2014

9# MONTH

Exactly one year ago I visited Estonia for the second time in my life. I joined a Caravan Tour about Fair Trade and Make Chocolate Fair campaign. We were travelling every day, from the Baltic Sea to the Russian borders, from North to South. I tried herrings for breakfast and discover salty crystal butter. I dipped my fingers in the Baltic sea for the first time in my life, my eyes saw sunset and dawns with amazing light and colours.

There was always this kind of warm lazy atmosphere in the morning, when we were living our beds shivering, sleepy and all uncombed; this hour spent sipping hot hot tea in our pyjamas and wool socks was the best of it. That is the time I decided I had to apply for EVS, there was no more time, I had to do it straight

away!

I took my decision one cold night, while having a good-night cigarette with a Macedonian EVS, shaking from the cold in the orange light of the hostel backyard. It was a clear and sharp decision, I will never forget that moment. When I come back I applied for INEX, and had a Skype interview within few days. What happened next, that is a well-known story.

I have asked myself over and over what would I lose during the year I was going to spend abroad, how many occasions, friendships. How my life would change, in which direction. The truth is that I will never find out. What I know for sure is that this is not a temporary deviation from the normal course of life, not something I can forget while

stirring time with coffee. What I have now will not end by the time I get home. It will stand by my forever

even when I will start forgetting how it felt like to be an EVS. This is not a moment in life, *to je život*.

EU TENHO MORRINHA

Everything comes to an end. Unlike other events of life like the end of a love or a friendship, in the case of EVS you know it from the very beginning, you see it coming.

And yet.. you behave as if you do not know, as if it would last forever, a moment stretched up to the infinite.

There is a part of you living each day like if it was just another drop of water in a rainy day, the other can see a life change ahead and every single day becomes a diamond slipping out of your hands.

Living in this contradiction, few days of work are left and my mind constantly travels back and forward from Bratislava and the life I have here, to my town and the life I am not having there.

Each place I visit I leave a brick of my own home there, and now all I have a cracked house without roof.

I know this experience is finished

and I cannot have more of it. I will wake up on the 22th of December and there will be no more Dunaj, no more cooking with Milena, no more Slovak class or lunch breaks in Rio Pub. I will no longer be an EVS.

Maybe the days I have left as a volunteer in Slovakia feel like not enough, but the ones I already had were enough to leave a permanent mark inside of me.

I've seen the brightness in one little spark.

I've seen what I chose and I've seen what I need,

And that is enough, to want more would be greed.

I've seen what I was and I know what I'll be

I've seen it all - there is no more to see

NOVEM-

BER

2014

10# MONTH



MILENA MILOŠEVIĆ

- SERBIA -

Hey there! :)

I have a lot of things to write you about but, let's start with some basics, introduction!

My name is Milena, I am 22 years old and I am Bachelor psychologist. I'm from Serbia, from small town called Šid. I love colours, Disney cartoons and sunny weather!

Soo, why am I here? Why Slovakia? Why INEX?

One of my biggest goals was to feel independent and to try to swim in sea of life. To see am I brave enough to try something totally out of my comfort zone and I was feeling a little bit lost because I had a rough idea what I want to do in my life, but I wanted to be sure. Then I found out EVS. When I searched for my EVS I was searching for a project and not the country, because for me there is something beautiful in every country. I fell in love with INEX project, with various activities that I can do here, I love that it is in capital city. I searched about Slovakia, about Bratislava, about INEX and I found a lot of great things. So, I applied. It was a long process searching for 2 months and waiting the response... And one morning I woke up and saw the message "Your volunteer accepted!", and of course I started to jump all over my room, called my mother, share happiness (you know how it goes :D). But, there was one decision that I

had to make. Will I go and pause my studies? Well, I didn't have second thoughts too long. I decided that for me in this period of my life this can be really golden opportunity. And one very dear person told me once that there is no good and bad decision, there are only decisions and that decisions made our life how it suppose to be. So, I started swimming :)

Almost second week past so I will try to remember everything. First week passed in resting, exploring, meeting new people, town, culture...On the first day I met my 2 cool new roommates Rita and Caro, our coordinator Mirka and my lovely mentor Yuliya! I have to say that we have very nice apartment and my room is very fluffy. We live in Petrzalka and there are many colourful buildings (that is one of my favourite things here). First day we went to a post office to buy tickets for public transportation and eat lunch at Aupark. Next day we came to the office, and met rest of the INEX crew. Later we have some Slovakian lunch which was veryyyy tasty :D We also have free tour through Bratislava and heard a little bit about Slovakian history! Some of my Bratislava impressions are that here are a lot of random statues on random places and that look really cool! There are a lot of nice old fashion buildings! In Friday Tomaš

FEBRU-
ARY
2014

#1MONTH

take us to Slovak pub and we try traditional Slovak food! Soup with sausage and cabbage, halušky, pirogy, makovnik and for drink Kofola of course :) It's enough to say that we couldn't breath after it :D In the weekend we went to Retro market in KC Dunaj and to castle Devin and nice place to have a walk, Marianka. In Monday our work days begun! In the office is nice, also colourful. Rita and me worked on updating data bases of workcamps. It is good to see that there is so

many opportunities for young people! Also we had a few meetings with volunteers who want to go on a workcamps. One day we went to Integra to have workshops and it was really nice. For me that was new experience and at first I was a little bit scared how it will be but till the end I was happy that I go there! Right now we are in Presov on a workcamp. My next post will be about this workcamp so stay tuned for more!

MARCH

2014

#2MONTH

Ahojte!

My first workcamp is over and it was PERFECT! It was perfect because of several reasons... I had great co-leaders, good group of volunteers and such various clients. We had Workcamp in Barlicka association for seniors and young people with disabilities. I worked before with both group of clients but never so long and intensive and especially I never had to work on a workshops and programme for them. I have to say that just the thought about working with senior clients made me nervous, I didn't know the language so good or what are they able to do or how to behave in their presence. Also the same when it comes to young people. So in the middle of my self reflection situations and thinking

about how should I deal with them there was also other side, me as a co leader speaking with the volunteers. It was bilateral camp between Japan and Slovakia. And of course as we people are all different and when it comes to international groups there are several things that you need to know: there is a lot of cultural differences, you have to be ready for compromise, be patient and tolerance and don't forget for time perception. Mine 5 minutes and yours are not the same :D First week we work with seniors and we learn to dance sloooooow Makarena! Also we had some safety instructions about how to push the wheelchairs. It was funny because we are totally start to behave like seniors, we went to bed at 9:00 :D Second week was more energetic.

We were drawing , dancing, playing and enjoying with youngsters. It was fun! All in all it was unforgettable experience!

Presentation in schools - For now we were in 3 schools, one was in Senica, one in Bratislava and in Modra. In Senica it was typical fair for NGOs. We were speaking with people a lot and try to catch them, it was interesting :D We also had small performance, talking about ourselves and our EVS experience. In Bratislava school it was very good. It was more individual approach, we were speaking to few groups in classrooms and they seemed interested. In Modra it was a little bit different. First we had workshop about dictator. We had it outside because it was beautiful day and we really enjoy it! Later we were "books", like participants of a living library. We had to think about our beginnings as a volunteers. It really made me think and I try to explain it good.

Integra - It was special experience. We celebrated Fasiangy with clients. Topic was Easter so we paint our faces and put masks together

It's amazing how you can get to know people in just 2 weeks and how you can find a place in you're heart for some random strangers that in the end become friends.

with the clients.

Racism campaign - We were going through Bratislava and making a picture with a posters "We fit together", as a slogan of the campaign. It was successful campaign.

Leaders week - We were in Sv. Jan near Bratislava for our Camp leaders training. A lot of it was in Slovak, which for me was good because I learned a lot of words and phrases. I met my co leader, Camila, who was also mine and Rita's roommate. We will lead together teenage camp in Banska Stiavnica, in July. I will also lead one more camp, its about horses and it will be in Zlatna na Ostrove, in June. I'm really looking forward to it. This summer will be very busy for me, because in August I'm going in Portugal, also on a worcamp but as a participant. I was just accepted few days ago. Ive never been in that part of Europe and this is a great chance to see it :))

Presporkovo- This Friday we were in Presporkovo, centre for mothers and kids. It was awesome.. A lot of kids all of the time playing :)

Workcamp is a beautiful place for get to know yourself and others...In just two weeks you have a small interpretation of a real life. You have happiness, fear, joy, sadness. You

JUNE

2014

#4 MONTH

start living in another planet and you make your own world. I lead Horse race camp in Zlatna na Ostrove together with one of the best leaders, Peto.

I've never worked in a farm before and this was my first experience in that kind of surroundings. Starting from taking care of the house garden, pulling the grass out, taking cherries, cleaning the horses, barns, donkey and his house, making playground for children and a lot of raking, painting. You never know until you try that's true, I took my rubber boots, roll up my sleeves, put on my working clothes and start with an adventure. We worked 6 hours every day, from 9 till 3 and every day we went 2km on our bikes to the farm. Farm life is something different, all the time surrounded with animals, nature, a lot of hard work... But we manage it! We really worked hard and we helped, we could see our work. In the end

of the workcamp we had horse race which we helped to be organized. It was like a cherry on the top. It's a small place so we couldn't expect some big race, but it was as whole workcamp, a little bit crazy. And one of our participants actually participated in the race, and she was 5th! Of course, it wasn't just hard work. It was a lot of fun. Preparing the meals together, playing cards and jungle speed, walking around the Danube, swimming... For free weekends we went to Komarno to see European squer and one day we were relaxing in thermal park Velki Meder. We had Feast of cultures where all the participants presented their countries, with delicious food or presentation.

As a conclusion I would just say that experience like this is good for anyone who wants to get to know the world.

(Dedicated to E&D, crazy volunteers from horse race camp)

OCTOBER

2014

#9 MONTH

I love this feeling...being foreigner in the city. It gives a lot of freedom.

And you feel some kind of important because you speak English all the time and you don't understand conversations around you. You discover new roads, new ways and new habits. You learn the places for the best lunch, tastiest coffee and places where you can dress up cheap. It's amazing how many things, you

discover with just one simple walk.

I can say that life of an EVS is challenging. And it all started with a bug. With a tiny bug that goes into your head telling you have to go somewhere. First she is discreet just whispering and in the end it's so loud you just have to start searching. It's the fear of unknown that you have, asking yourself thousands of

questions are you going to survive 1 year in country that you don't know, language that you don't speak and people that you never met before. Than you start you're journey, your crazy ride and you see that sometimes things are so out of you're comfort zone that you want to pack you're bags and go home instantly to you're safe environment. But, you think better and you stay, because you just can not give up and let all of that new experiences and beautiful moments to happen without you.

My summer was quite busy, but I can say it was the best summer so far. It was a lot of drama, laughing, crying all the feelings except indifference. It was 4 camps, 6 leaders and 38 participants. It wouldn't be hard if they were all the same but of course all of them were completely different. I think I became richer knowing all of them. I already wrote for horse race camp and I will write in few lines other camps:

Banska Stiavnica teen camp – Although I have experience with teens this was something way out of anything I ever did. There was 10 participant plus 3 leaders in Banska Stiavnica working on Calvary, picking the grass most of the time. As in every school this wasn't exception of typical things that teenagers do. From not respecting the rules and not doing the job well, faking sick

there were some nice moments around the fire and enjoying the excursions (my favourite was Bojnica castle).

Barlicka – Wonderful, wonderful experience. From that rigid, scare person that I was when I first had camp with disabled youngsters I became in love in this work. I enjoyed in making programme with volunteers and I got inspired from their great ideas. I saw world with different glasses. This workcamp was also special for me because I was with my younger sister. It was challenging for both of us, but in the end our relationship became better and I showed her a bit of the world that I am living in.

Integra workcamp – it was perfectly not perfect experience. A lot of things went wrong and I had change of leaders, problem with language and some not so motivated volunteers. I think I gain so much from this workcamp just because of that problems I learned how to manage them by myself and in the end I was so proud. Also I meet 2 great girls that became my really good friends.

After the busy summer there was Potaborka, where all the leaders evaluated workcamps they lead. It was nice event, we got medals and certificates. Then there was QSI inspirational workshop. We had 120

kids and 5 of us. In the end we split groups in 60 and had our presentation. It's nice and a bit chaotic but it was new experience and I could see that some of the kids got interested, which for me was the most important thing.

When season of workcamps is over there is tradition in INEX to make VEM – Volunteers Evaluation Meeting. It was organized by Rita and she did amazing job. I had job of a trainer and lead several sessions. I was thrilled doing that because of so much of positive energy from everyone. People were so open, happy with their experiences, laughing at some problems that they

have and they inspired me to travel more.

It wasn't just about working I also went home during the summer and with Olga (ex EVS) I went to Prague. In Prague it was magical; I didn't expect it to be that nice. It blew me away totally.

I can say I discovered Slovakia, I travelled everywhere: High Tatras, Kosice, Zlatna na Ostorove, Banska Stiavnica, Zemplinska Sirava, Prešov, Spisky hrad, Tranava, Modra, Senica...it was great getting to know all these places and make memories there...and its not over... yet...

– THE END –

*As you prepare your breakfast, think of others.
Don't forget to feed the pigeons.
As you conduct your wars, think of others.
Don't forget those who want peace.
As you pay your water bill, think of others.
Think of those who only have clouds to drink from.
As you go home, your own home, think of others
don't forget those who live in tents.
As you sleep and count the planets, think of others
there are people who have no place to sleep.
As you liberate yourself with metaphors think of others
those who have lost their right to speak.
And as you think of distant others
think of yourself and say
"I wish I were a candle in the darkness."*

Mahmoud Darwish

RITA D'ANDREAMATTEO MILENA MILOŠEVIĆ

BRATISLAVA, NOVEMBER 2014



INEX
Slovakia



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme



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