

Mountain Running Championship in Poland - a GREAT MIXTURE OF YOUTH AND SPORT EXPERIENCE, 25-26 July 2015 - Międzygórze



*It is common knowledge that being a volunteer represents a noble choice. Nevertheless, a considerable number of people have a reluctant approach when it comes to accomplishing tasks that do not have a financial outcome. Moreover, people have a tendency to overlook the fact that the moral satisfaction triggered by a voluntary act surpasses the material enjoyment. The account of my personal experience might change the beliefs of some non-believers as far as voluntary work is concerned. Will we be capable of leaving our pragmatic needs behind and focus on willing actions? It remains to be seen. **Szondi Denis, Romania***

During 21 days, Europejskie Forum Młodzieży hosted 33 volunteers from 12 different countries in the project **YOUTH – Youngsters Originate Unique Team of Harmony**, co-financed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), in a frame of Action 1 (Large scale European Voluntary Service events) of ERASMUS+ Programme. Volunteers travelled from countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy, Macedonia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Croatia, Ukraine, Turkey, Georgia, Romania and Austria. The main aim of this project was to help the Municipality of Bystrzyca Kłodzka and ULKS Sport Club “Bystrzyca Kłodzka” in the Organization of the XXIII Mountain Running Championship of Poland in Anglo-Saxon styles.

In order for everything to go well, the first week was spent trying to integrate youngsters, allowing them to know each other, to exchange their cultures, thoughts and ideas. There was still a lot to do and it was important to create some strong bounds between all. Polish lessons were provided so that the volunteers had the chance to learn but also to communicate better and integrate with the local community. Due to the fact that most of the activities took place in the mountain and that there was a competition to support, a two days First Aid course was provided to the volunteers. This way, volunteers were also prepared to help in case of injury or accident of any participant or spectator of the competition, as well as of any volunteer.

*The first week included team building activities such as energizers, name games and workshops in groups about various topics including Erasmus +, EVS, breaking stereotypes, etc.. which I found very useful in terms of getting to know each other and get closer to those people with whom I would spend three weeks in the same building. Every day each country group was presenting their culture and sharing information and facts with the group. At the end of the week I felt that we were entire group and were ready for future work. **Nana Mevlupishvili, Georgia***

The second week was mostly spent in the mountain, preparing the running tracks, arranging the marks for the paths, cleaning the ways of the National Park, getting to know the tracks and check points of each run as well as meeting the people from the Municipality with whom we were cooperating. Together we managed to have everything ready in time for the Championship to go as well as planned.



First I have to tell you, that I wasn't sure about the project because of the topic. Cleaning mountains and preparing running tracks doesn't look like fun. But actually it was. I enjoyed every single moment of the project.

Katerina Stehnova, Czech Republic

During the weekend, the first morning of the championship was blessed with a fast but heavy storm that made the paths a little slippery but still usable. Despite this, all volunteers were ready and on their post, supporting and encouraging the runners, providing them water whenever they needed and preventing them to run out of the path.



The two days went without any incident and in conclusion we may say that the competition was a success. Simultaneously with the completion, all weekend we had an information point where people could be informed about voluntary service, EFM work, YOUTH project, among many other useful information. Also, we provided activities for children with balloons and facial painting.



After finishing the competition it was time to clean the mountain and leave it again as well or even better than when we arrived on it. Despite of some tiredness, teamwork and team spirit made this task go really well and fast and it was the final proof that all group was fully committed with the project. All volunteers and organizers had also a brief public meeting with the Mayor of Bystrzyca Klodzka in order to receive the certificates of appreciation.

Finally, the last days were spent with the final arrangements of the project, writing Youth Passes and Final Reports but also knowing Poland a little better. The volunteers had the opportunity to get to know a little more of Lower Silesia region as well as its mountains and hill tops due to some hiking.

We had the chance to enjoy wonderful landscapes and mountains in Poland! I'd never seen forests like here! Poland is beautiful! :) Sara Cobos, Spain

In the end the whole project was a great success, the objectives were accomplished. The volunteers had 3 fantastic weeks in Poland. Many friendships were made between young people all around Europe, as well as the volunteers from all around the world. It was a unique opportunity to meet this part of Poland in such a surrounding. Aleksandar Jordanovski, Macedonia

Besides the experience from sport event organisation the project was useful to learn new things about different cultures and people, improve my English language. Also we had free time when we were able to explore Poland nature around our home, for example, in the weekend I rent a bicycle and biked more than 200km, visited about ten different cities and a lot of villages in Poland and Czech Republic, communicated with local people, enjoyed Poland. **Peteris, Latvia**

Each and every open-minded person who claims that has a healthy lifestyle should take the `EVS pill` at least once during her lifetime as a testimony of her willingness to help. The phrase "There is no such thing as a free meal" must be lost in the mists of oblivion. Remember not to talk the talk if you cannot walk the walk.

Szondi Denis, Romania

During the project, I gained teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management and also self confidence. It was a great way to have experience in a new field and so I became more open minded. **Merve Aydin, Turkey**

With so many different cultures you have to learn to be tolerant, patient and open minded. You have to be prepared to find experiences you couldn't imagine but experiences that will enrich you personally and professionally. **Sara Santos, Portugal**

During the three weeks there was also time for fun times like parties, barbecues and various games. It was very interesting for me to talk with people from other countries and learn about their traditions and customs so different from mine. **Ana Ramos, Portugal**

In conclusion, I think this was an amazing learning experience and really helped me a lot to get to know myself better and my place in the world. It also showed me that people all over the world are the same, with the same problems, dreams and aspirations and that an open heart and mind work wonders. I really hope that more and more people will experience this kind of thing and that it will help them and the people around them in their life. **Bruno Pavlovic, Croatia**

21 days went in a blink and the entire group of volunteers returned home, hopefully a bit richer than when they arrived in Poland. It was big experience with a lot of different challenges but in the end, all involved learned something.



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