



ERASMUS+  
EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE  
PROJECT

# Volunteer's discovery

01.01.2018. - 31.07.2019.  
JĒKABPILS, LATVIA

Discover yourself by volunteering!



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## **Publisher**

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## Project manager and coordinator of activities

## Evelina Elksnīte



My European Voluntary service (EVS) story started in the spring of 2017 when I was introduced with NGO for the first time in my life, became a volunteer and started to work with EVS volunteers from Ukraine in organization "Jekabpils NGO resource center". It was a great deal for me at that time, because work in organization made me feel useful after dropping out of my studies. I think that my own experience of choosing an alternative life path instantly made me empathetic with European volunteers and their reasoning of why they are choosing to spend some of their time abroad working for the greater good. After this volunteering experience with Urkainian volunteers, organization invited me to continue work with European volunteers in the next EVS project as a coordinator and later I took over as project manager as well.

There is definitely not enough space on this piece of paper to describe what this 19 month long project "Volunteer's discovery" meant to the volunteers, to the local community in Jekabpils and other places in Latvia, to organizations and to local communities abroad which will hear about experience of our project. What I can approve is that this project embodied in itself everything that EVS is about.

Colorful cultural exchange, which included not only tasting the best sides of each culture, but also some clashes of cultures, which made our cultural awareness so strong and much more useful than if we would have learned all that in school. We all learned tons of practical skills, we learned communication and how different it can be depending on the situation, we all increased our patience and empathy, discovered a lot about ourselves, we brightened the strengths of our personalities and encouraged each other to work on our weak sides. And we managed to achieve all this while we worked for the community. There are no two people in the world among whom there is no chance of misunderstanding each other. But there are only few who choose not to go away, but stay with you through the unpleasant as well as through the good times. Those ones you call your FAMILY. This project made a new family, "Volunteer's discovery" family, and I truly believe that experience that members of this family and this small book will carry around the world will be an inspiration for new volunteering families.

# Volunteer's discovery

The aim of the project "Volunteer's discovery" was to promote the popularity, recognition, experience and opportunities of European voluntary service (EVS) among European and local youth, to support non-formal learning of young people for the development of their competences and skills; to stimulate the cooperation of Jekabpils city and county non-governmental organizations in the implementation of EVS projects, thus enriching public processes with the effect of the

presence of a multicultural environment and inviting young people to participate in them.

In 19 months, 7 volunteers from 6 different countries were hosted in three different organizations in Latvia and worked towards the project goals and improved their own competences by various activities. This was the third EVS project implemented by Jekabpils NGO resource center. The project was written in 2017 by Agita Pleiko, the Chairman of the Board at that time.

Start: 01/01/2018  
End: 31/07/2019  
Place: Jekabpils, Latvia  
Project Reference Number: 2017-3-LV02-KA105-001950

**The Coordinating organization:  
Jekabpils NGO resource center**

**The Hosting organizations in Latvia**



**Volunteers hosted**

**Indre from Lithuania**  
For 4 months  
**Marta from Poland**  
For 6 months

**Firuza from Azerbaijan**  
For 2 full months  
**Ani from Armenia**  
For 12 months  
**Marion from Austria**  
For 9 full months

**Julien from France**  
For 12 months  
**Hasmik from Armenia**  
For 12 months

# Our positive mentors



**Maira Tropa**  
Mentor to  
Hasmik



**Eliza Lenša**  
Mentor to  
Marion



**Ilvija Voiciša**  
Mentor to  
Julien



**Ieva Druveniece**  
Mentor to  
Firuza & Ani



**Santa Kūlite**  
Mentor to  
Marion



**Ieva Bagātā**  
Mentor to  
Indre & Marta



**Bridge to the Future**  
Ganja, Azerbaijan  
Volunteer sent: Firuza



**Vsi Telsiu jaunimo centras**  
Telsiai, Lithuania  
Volunteer sent: Indre



**Verein4YOUgend**  
Linz, Austria  
Volunteer sent: Marion



**Future in Our Hands**  
Abovyan, Armenia  
Volunteers sent: Hasmik & Ani



**CONCORDIA**  
Lyon, France  
Volunteer sent: Julien



**Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa  
Przedsiębiorczego**  
Wola, Poland  
Volunteer sent: Marta

# Our dear Sending organizations

# BRIGHTEST

ARMENIAN  
BOOK  
GIVING  
DAY



POLISH  
LESSONS



ENGLISH  
LESSONS  
D.I.Y. CLUB



100 FOR  
LATVIA



ENGLISH  
LESSONS



GERMAN  
LESSONS



AZERBAIJAN  
CUISINE

FRENCH  
LESSONS



EVENTS IN  
OTHER  
CITIES ARMENIAN  
CUISINE



PHOTO  
EXHIBITION



RUSSIAN  
LESSONS

SPORTS  
WITH  
SENIORS

# ACTIVITIES

SUMMER CAMPS FOR KIDS AND YOUNGSTERS



VISITS TO THE MUNICIPALITY



INTERNATIONAL CULTURE EXCHANGE VISITS TO SCHOOLS



ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENTS



TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCES



JEKABPILS CITY FESTIVALS



POLISH MUSICAL PICNIC



JAM SESSION



CREPES PANCAKE WORKSHOP



VIDEOS ABOUT JEKABPILS, RODACY & EVS



# **OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS**

**AND THEIR  
REFLECTIONS  
ON THE PROJECT**

**WHAT  
DID THEY  
DISCOVERED?**



# Firuzza Gadirli

**From:** Baku, Azerbaijan

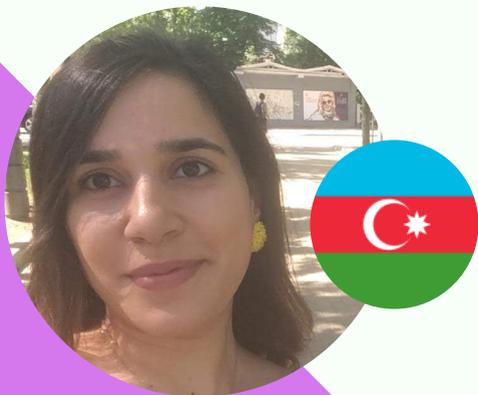
**Born in** 1994

**Duration of volunteering:**

01/04/2018 - 11/06/2018

**Hosting organization:**

Jekabpils NGO resource center



# Julien Samir Benzina



**From:** Lyon, France

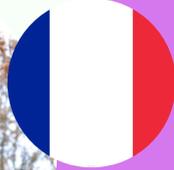
**Born in** 1992

**Duration of volunteering:**

15/04/2018 - 14/04/2019

**Hosting organization:**

Ušiš



"The **Crepes event** was the one which made me the most proud, because of the chance of sharing french culture and differences between cultures."



"I think our **language lessons** are the ones, which made the biggest impact on locals and that we encouraged inhabitants of Jekabpils to travel more, to be more open to the world or just to gave them a new passion."

**"European Voluntary Service** is about meeting new people, introspection and new opportunities."



"**I discovered** that I like to live off the grid and that having a 9 to 5 job which has no meaning even to make money is not good for me. I need to do things which has a purpose, it is a blessing and a curse at the same time. In volunteering world, a lot of people are like this and by speaking to and meeting with new people with the same mindset, I realized that it was what I wanted. A lot of people in our generation are like this."



# Hasmik Petrosyan

**From:** Yerevan, Armenia

**Born in** 1992

**Duration of volunteering:**

25/04/2018 - 24/04/2019

**Hosting organization:**

Ūsiņš



"From the time spent in this project I **will never forget** amazing nature with gorgeous forests, my Latvian friends from NGO, all volunteers from all over the world and garlic bread."



"I **enjoyed** just looking at the horses, working with kids and doing handmade workshops in NGO."

"**Latvia is** so far but so close to my heart and soul. The nicest views and amazing seashores, nice and polite people and safe, peaceful place."

"Life is too short to make things difficult so **take your chance** and do your EVS!"



"For sure, this was a great life experience for me and I **became** more independent, confident, mature and timely organized. I found so many amazing things there even when it was very hard and dark days. I found myself that everything happens for a reason. Just believe in yourself and give love to others."

# Ani Davtyan



**From:** Yerevan, Armenia

**Born in** 1995

**Duration of volunteering:**

01/05/2018 - 30/04/2019

**Hosting organization:**

Jekabpils NGO resource center



"What I enjoyed the most of my job, was the fact, that the **organization was open** to accept suggestions and discuss everything together, before having new events."

"Of course, during this one year I had a lot of time to think about myself and my future. **I am planning to work with my NGO**, to be a trainer or maybe a mentor, to be surrounded with volunteers."



"From the time spent in this project **I will never forget** people I met here and lived with. **Jēkabpils is** a second home where I would like to be back. **Latvia is** a country I would suggest people to have their EVS in."



"**I discovered** what are the main things, that latvians are interested in, when there is something happening around. They like to be active in sport, to eat a lot during all events, to try to learn languages and handmade activities."





**From:** Linz, Austria

**Born in** 1999

**Duration of volunteering:**

27/07/2018 - 17/05/2019

**Hosting organization:**

Jekabpils NGO resource center

# Marion Lichtenberger



"I discovered that **it doesn't matter where you are,**

the most important thing

are always the people you spend time with."

"The biggest benefit of the project for me was

that **I had a lot of time**

**to reflect on myself**

and to discover

**what I want to do in my future**

which is studying

psychology."

"The part of my job I enjoyed the most was **doing gymnastics with seniors,** because they

always seemed so thankful that someone is doing something with them, and I also enjoyed doing those exercises."



# Indrė Sabaliauskaitė



LATVIJAS POLI SAŅEMĪBA  
"JĒKABPILS MEDŽARĶI  
BIEDRĪBA "RODACY"

**From:** Skuodas, Lithuania

**Born in** 1999

**Duration of volunteering:**

01/10/2018 - 31/01/2019

**Hosting organization:**

Rodacy



*"European Voluntary Service is a great opportunity to challenge yourself and discover much more than we are taught in schools or universities."*

*"What **I discovered** for sure is that any kind of help is useful. Giving more than receiving enriches your soul."*

*"**Jekabpils** is a safe and calm place to live. Its nature is stunning. You will fall in love with Mežaparks and will find yourself not being able to resist going for a walk alongside Daugava's river."*



# Marta Magdalena Boczoń

**From:** Tychy, Poland

**Born in** 1996

**Duration of volunteering:**

01/02/2019 - 31/07/2019

**Hosting organization:**

Rodacy



"For all the best and the worst moments, I am grateful. I'm happy I experienced Latvia. I wouldn't change a thing. It was amazing in it's simplicity & complexity."

"I've grown. I've changed. I want more. I'm ready for more. **This project was crazy, inspiring, annoying, sad, frustrating, beautiful, challenging - it was perfect.** My journey/ experience here was... well is the biggest benefit. Not only for me but for people I worked with, inspired, challenged or annoyed. **We learned from each other - every day.**"

From the time spent in this project **I will never forget** things I've done for the first time here and kept on doing them.

"**Volunteering** itself teaches you empathy. Working abroad made you leave your comfort zone and this leads to personal growth. You can explore and discover the world, which WILL surprise you many times."

PROJECT  
"VOLUNTEER'S DISCOVERY"  
WAS COORDINATED BY ORGANIZATION  
"JĒKABPILS NGO RESOURCE CENTER"

GET IN TOUCH WITH US - FIND OUT MORE,  
BECOME OUR PARTNER OR VOLUNTEER!



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