

Week Report Youth Exchange the Next Step May 2016 Tribunje

A group composed of 18 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years from Bosnia, Croatia, Netherlands, Austria and Serbia met for one week at an European youth exchange. The aim of the exchange is to present the youth with an opportunity to set their own life changing goals that will enable them to take control of their lives and be less dependent on the youth care system for the rest of their lives.

After arriving on Friday and playing some name and get to know each other games we started the program on Saturday with more such games. We talked about expectations for this week and did exercises concerning personal goals like: "getting up early, believing in oneself and more discipline" for this week and the life to come. All exercises this week were complemented by energizing games and an appreciation circle at the end of the day, where everyone could appreciate things other people did that day.

On Sunday we started with pairs who drew and explained about each other in front of the whole group. In the Exploration of Tribunj Treasure Hunt game the youngsters had the chance to be physically active, build trust among themselves and explore the Tribunj. In the Country presentations intercultural awareness was created, language skills improved and bonding took place.

Monday morning we worked on the biography life line. Purpose of the exercise for youth was to make connection between their past, present and future and to help them to put their memories in their context. This was succeeded by the quality game, where youngsters had an opportunity to discover their personal qualities, recognised by themselves and from the rest of the group. Purpose was to let them insight into personal quality and to recognise quality of the others. Final activity of the day was game Werewolf,

Before the first activity of Tuesday(mind mapping about a future vision), three young representatives of the group explained to the others how to do feedback, and we did an exercise in which youngsters had to explain their values to each other. Purpose of the game was to learn how to recognise one's own values, to recognise what is important for oneself and how to present it to others. In the evening all country teams cooked for each other and prepared a great buffet.

Early Wednesday we boarded on the Taxi boats and went to the island Prvić.. Driving with the boat was good for some of the youngsters to step out of their comfort zone which was one of the goal of this trip. We had wonderful time there, swimming in the sea, sunbathing on the beach, walking around the island, playing some sports and playing board games. One of the group leaders was a participant on the Youth Exchange last year so she agreed to talk about the experience she had been through in the afternoon. She was interviewed by one of this year's participants. She talked about the impact and what she gained for herself by participating in this project. At the end of the day they got wooden boxes where they could put positive notes for each other. They kept that box as a reminder of this week.

Thursday, two participants and one of the group leaders presented tips for non-verbal communication. The main activity of the week followed: "to make 5 years plan." Participants had to cover the plan for the future in something creative, to be able to take it home. After that some of them walked to Vodice for, some of them were working on their plans and some of them got some rest.

On the last day everyone was getting into the final assignment, present your future plan to the others and receive the positive feedback and good vibes from the group. It's important for your self-esteem and in a way if you say it out loud it will stick. The participants and coaches were very impressed with all the growth of the youngsters and how they fit this among a lot of other things in their plan. As their last exercise they wrote a letter to themselves, to motivate them in the future when they will receive it and be reminded of this week. The camp ended as good camps usually end: "with a party!"

A poem from one of the participants (22 years old):

Friend, I dedicate this song to you,
in appreciation for everything.
In our memory it will stay,
the story of our holiday together.

Thank you for the fun times,
say hi to everyone for me.
Thank you for appreciating me,
and I came to love you a lot.

Thank you for the little things,
Thank you for the advices,
Because of you I came to know myself better,
And found my life path.

My friend, we will see each other sometimes,
Now, everyone must go his one way,
Never forget the things you learned,
And don't forget me, because I will never forget about you.
In this poem I have saved you.

In memory of the nice week we spent in Tribunj