



WINKS

Pictures from the life of EVS volunteers

Jump into the volunteer's ferry!

European Voluntary Service Project developed in The Foundation of Social Integration Prom

01.09.2011–31.07.2012



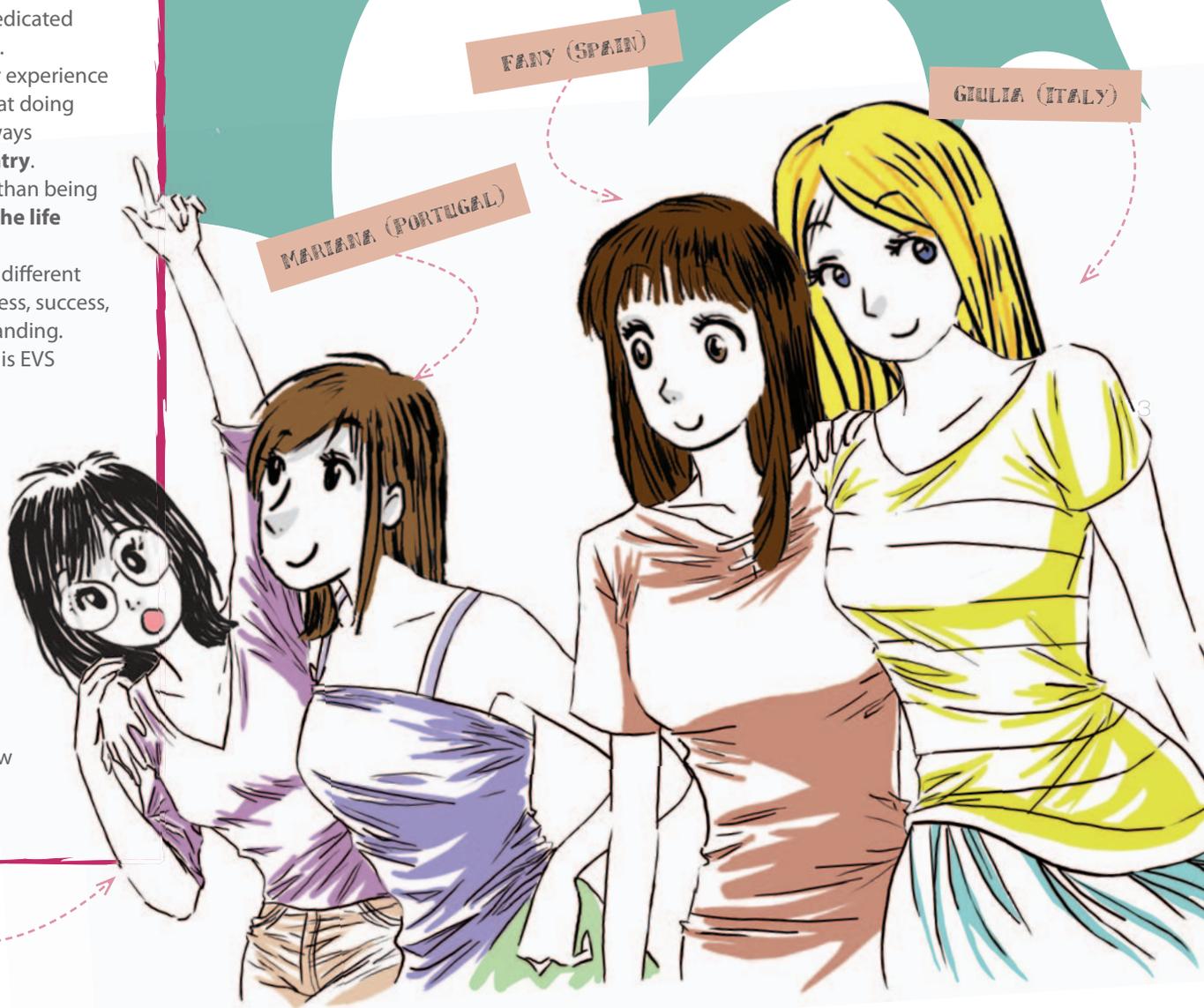
LET'S JUMP INTO THE VOLUNTEER'S FERRY!

HEY!

Would you like to know more about "Jump into the volunteer's ferry", our EVS project?

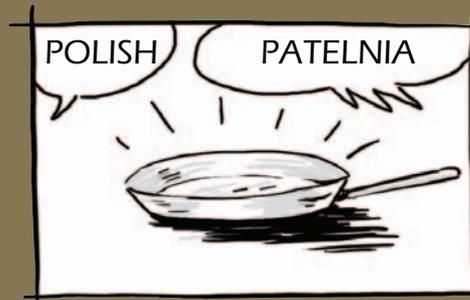
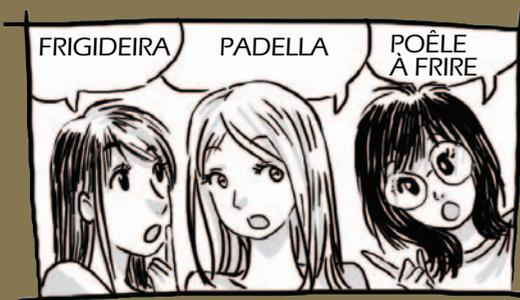
We were 4 girls (**Fany** from Spain, **Mariana** from Portugal, **Émi** from France and **Giulia** from Italy) and we decided to go abroad for 9 months – to work in a volunteering project – from October of 2011 to June of 2012. **Foundation of Social Integration Prom**, in Wrocław (Poland), was the organization that hosted us and offered a memorable EVS experience. The main task of the project was to help different social groups (Polish children, Romani communities and adults with mental disorders) to have opportunities equal to the rest of the society. We tried to develop **active citizenship** and **mutual understanding** between people by non-formal activities: workshops, discussions, presentations. We were working in **community centres** for youth and children, integrating Polish and Romani communities, and in the **'You are not alone'** club – a place for people with mental disorders and their families.

Four hours a week were dedicated to Polish language lessons. We would like to share our experience because we really think that doing an EVS is one of the best ways **to discover another country**. Being a volunteer is more than being a tourist. We took **part in the life** of the local community and we **shared** with them different kinds of emotions: happiness, success, fears, and mutual understanding. We have come out from this EVS experience with an **increased knowledge**: now we know more about ourselves and others, the Polish and the Romani cultures and spirits, how to use our language skills and how to work with communities at risk of exclusion. This experience is definitively **a part of our life**, an unforgettable memory, and Poland is now our second home.



HOW?

Be understood



The Foundation of Social Integration
Fundacja Integracji Społecznej

P R O M

The Foundation:

We worked for **Foundation of Social Integration Prom**, which is a non-governmental organization established in March 2004 in Wrocław and it comprises of people interested in giving **conscious and effective aid**. The organization cooperates with teachers, psychologists, art therapists, trainers, dance instructors, lawyers, cultural animators, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, students, voluntary workers and other NGOs.

Who they help:

The Foundation choose as its main goal to help the most needy by the integration and activation of different environments, including social groups which are discriminated or marginalized, and those in danger of **social exclusion**.

The beneficiaries:

- ▶ children and young people from large families,
- ▶ families endangered by unemployment and threatened by pathologies,
- ▶ national minorities (particularly Romani people),
- ▶ the unemployed and the poorest urban inhabitants,
- ▶ disabled people, including mentally ill.

How they help:

- ▶ The Foundation runs youth clubs for children and young people of a low economical status, with a full teaching and **supporting programme** (help with learning, foreign languages, dance courses, model-making, artistic, sports activities, logopaedic aid and psychological assistance).
- ▶ They organize excursions and holidays.
- ▶ Within **Governmental Romani Programme**, they participate in arrangement of clubs for Romani children, artistic competitions with Romani subject matter, Reviews of Young Romani Talents, integrating summer camps for Romani and Polish children, training courses, conferences, study visits.

- ▶ They publish publications on **Roma issues**. Already published: The Roma Education (2009), Situation of Roma Minority in Czech, Poland and Slovakia (2009 part I; 2011 part II), Comic History of the Roma in Pictures (2008), Drom-Road History of the Roma in Europe – Comics (2010), Situation of Roma Minority in Czech, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (2010), The Roma Issue in the Policy of State of Central and Eastern Europe (2011).
- ▶ They run free social and legal advice centres in the area of Wrocław.





"The Dwarf's Corner" and "Rays"
 "Zakątek krasnoludka" i "Promyki"

Our children

The Foundation runs two integration community centres for children **"The Dwarf's Corner"** and **"Rays"**. Both places are available to children of primary school age, who wish to spend their free time in an active and interesting way. These centres are opened five days a week after school hours, from September to June. We **support and care for children** from dysfunctional families: affected

by alcohol or violence, not well integrated (ethnic minorities like the Romani community), big families which cannot take care of all the members. We help our children to go through each level of school education, **to be open-minded, tolerant, creative** and free from prejudices.

We always communicate something, even if we don't realize that at first. One time, I was outside with the children and we met a girl who looked like she had Asian roots. One of them said to me: 'Maybe she is French like you, Emi?' They are more open-minded than in my own country!

I never had to create new methods of communication, like I did in Poland: using my hands, paper, dictionary, point at similar things to illustrate what I mean. But the children are adorable and they always try very hard to make me understand their jokes.

Our everyday work

- ▶ Helping with homework (compensatory classes).
- ▶ Workshops: computer, languages lessons, painting, sports, drama, manual workshops, dance, board games, edutainment activities.
- ▶ Discussions about healthy lifestyles and personal experiences, how to live with others in the society.
- ▶ Exchanging information about different countries, roots and habits.
- ▶ Sportive and cultural events.
- ▶ Tea time and cakes.



"Terni Romani Bacht" ("Young Roma Happiness"), the Polish-Roma dance group, it is a great success!





"You are not alone" Association
Stowarzyszenie "Nie jesteś sam"

Our Club



We had a Christmas Party with a Nativity play, in which we took part. Can you imagine four girls unable to say more than two Polish words having a role in a play in Polish?

We also help in the Club **"You are not alone"** that offers help to **people with mental health problems and their relatives**.

They are opened in the morning five days a week, even during holidays.

This association have been working with mentally ill for fifteen years, helping the patients and their families through a rich program of activities to occupy their free time. In the club, the patients spend time playing, talking or sharing different activities. That helps them to feel closer to one another.

The main goals are **to help and protect the basic needs** of the patients after hospital treatment, to help them return to the society, **to change stereotypes** about mental illnesses.

It's possible to live all together in a mutual respect and tolerance, in spite of our differences. We all go through difficulties but they are not alone and we are not alone. There's no difficulty that cannot be solved or overcome.



Now, I am not ashamed of my language mistakes, I just try to be understood. It's possible to communicate beyond the languages, with a smile or a positive energy!



Our activities

- ▶ Art workshops: painting, collage, plasticine,
- ▶ Computer,
- ▶ Foreign and sign languages lessons,
- ▶ Dance, drama,
- ▶ Board games,
- ▶ Discussions on our experiences and everyday life,
- ▶ Presentation about our countries, roots, habits, kitchen,
- ▶ Cultural outings,
- ▶ Tea time and cakes.





Volunteers' everyday life
 Obrazki z życia wolontariuszy

Our host city



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► Before coming to Wrocław, we didn't really know this city, even if it's **one of the biggest in Poland**.

In our countries, Poland isn't a common travel destination and we just considered it a cold land. Actually, we were a bit afraid of what we would find here... But instead Wrocław turned out to be an amazing city! Apart from the historical places to visit, there are a lot of cultural and artistic events, huge parks and flea markets, rivers and islands, cheap restaurants... Each time we went through a new alleyway, we tried a new bar or pub just because the atmosphere and inspiring interior design always surprised us. And we even survived very low temperatures!

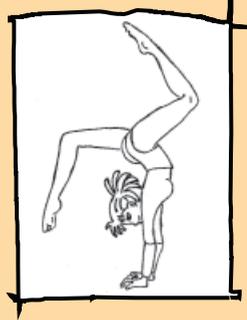
► It was easy to feel at home because Wrocław is one of biggest

University cities and it hosts lots of students and more than **40 volunteers every year**. Therefore, making new friends wasn't a problem: we were not alone, definitely!

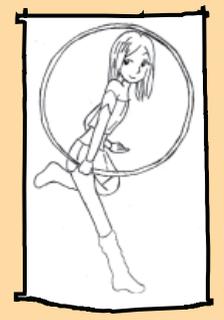
What surprised us was the fact that all Polish people, young or old, tried to communicate with us, even if they could speak only Polish...

► Wrocław can offer both the advantages of a **city life** and connections with **nature** – parks and small rivers; also castles, mountains, fields and lakes can be found in the region.

“ I loved the city! Every time we met volunteers from other cities I would feel so grateful that I lived in Wrocław and not any other place. ”



AT YOGA CLASSES



Volunteers' everyday life
Obrazki z życia wolontariuszy

The snapshots

Our EVS was not only work in the centres but **many events around** that hosting organization invited us to participate in. There were also special EVS trainings organized by Polish National Agency of "Youth in Action Programme". On the trainings we could meet other volunteers and develop new friendships. This all made the project even more diverse and interesting.

Here are some pictures !!!



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Romani Center on Brochów

Zakopane green school

EVS on-arrival training in Warszawa

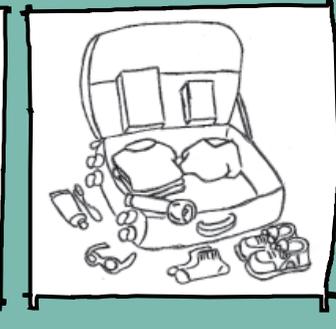
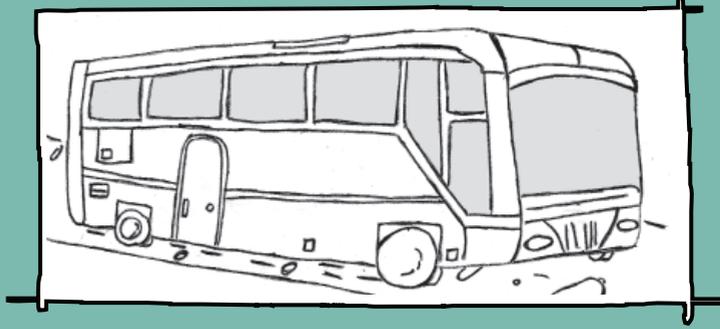
Festival of minorities Culture Kaleidoscope

Christmas Party

EVS mid-term training in Kazimierz Dolny

EVS presentation in primary school

Easter and Eko Fair



Volunteers' everyday life
 Obrazki z życia wolontariuszy

Our trips



During our EVS, we had the opportunity to go to different Polish places, thanks in part to the different training courses we had attended and our friends who could host us!

Poland has a lot of charms. We discovered a lot of awesome things that can only be found there. Travelling with our friends and sharing the same memories were the best ways to feel closer and united.

Travelling through Europe is quite easy and cheap from Poland. We took advantage of this opportunity, visited different countries like Germany, Czech Republic, the Baltic countries, Hungary, Norway, Belgium...





The European Voluntary Service Wolontariat Europejski



Education and Culture DG
'Youth in Action' Programme



O u r E V S

The **European Voluntary Service (EVS)**, Action 2 of the Youth in Action Programme, provides young Europeans with the unique chance to express their **personal commitment** through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a **foreign country** within or outside the EU. In this way, it seeks to develop **solidarity**, mutual **understanding** and **tolerance** among young people, thus contributing to reinforcing **social cohesion in the European Union** and to promoting young people's **active citizenship**.

Open to all young people aged 18 to 30, EVS is a true '**learning service**'. Beyond benefiting the local communities, by participating in voluntary activities, young volunteers can develop new skills and, therefore, **improve their personal, educational and professional development**. Volunteers can benefit from specific training throughout the activity and agree on their expected learning outcomes, processes and methods in advance.

Their **learning experience** is formally recognized through a **Youthpass**. Participation is free for the volunteers (except for a possible contribution of a maximum of 10% of the travel costs) who also get board and lodging, insurance cover and an allowance for the duration of the project. Special conditions apply to encourage the participation of young people with fewer opportunities. For instance, they can participate from the age of 16.

The European Voluntary Service is also **an opportunity** for organizations and institutions that want to host and send volunteers. Sending organization, host and/or coordination can be any nonprofit organization. The organization must obtain the status of an accredited EVS organization.



EVS for me, it's the best way to stop racism, to be open-minded and aware of what happens around us. I could feel the spirit of Poland and working with the local communities helped me to feel more at home.

I was so lucky because I met a lot of amazing people, all of the volunteers like me, we felt like a big family. They came from Italy, France, Germany, Portugal, Georgia, Turkey and Spain.

I've learnt to be more independent, self-confident and more comprehensive. I've learnt that it's possible to communicate beyond the language, with heart and gestures! I discovered surprising amounts of inner resources.

I really enjoyed my time with the kids. After 9 months I can say that I love each one of them and that I will miss them. I also like it when I enter the Club in the morning and everybody smiled to say hello, showing that they like that we're there.

The children asked me sometimes about my family's roots and I really think they listened attentively to what I said. I also liked seeing that they wanted to share their life and their problems with me. It was a real exchange, I shared my own experiences as well and I really think we felt closer and much more confident than before.

I have learnt a lot while working with the teachers and now I know I have a lot of skills useful in this kind of work. I feel more confident and now I know I am able to do a lot of stuff that I didn't know before.

National agencies:

To find out how to be volunteer or how to host/send volunteer, please contact the **National Agency of "Youth in Action Programme"** of your country:

ESPAÑA

Agencia Nacional Espanola
www.juventudenaccion.injuve.es

PORTUGAL

Agencia Nacional para a Gestao do Programa Juventude em Accao
www.juventude.pt

FRANCE

Agence Francaise du Programme Européen Jeunesse en Action (AFPEJA) et l'Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Education Populaire (INJEP)
www.jeunesseenaction.fr

ITALIA

Agencia Nazionale per i Giovani
www.agenziagiovani.it

Further information can be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/actions_en.htm

Project Partners – sending organization

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The project and the publication has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects only the views of the authors. The European Commission cannot be held responsible for any possible use of the information contained within.

Free publication.

Editor in chief: Anna Świetanowska
Graphic design and text: Kolektyf, Emi Lee
Precious cooperation: Volunteers, mentor, coordinator
An edition of: 500 copies
Printed in Poland
Printing house: Panda
Wrocław 2012

