

My experience from the youth exchange GET READY!

My name is Janja and I was one of the participants in the youth exchange Get Ready! in Kaptalanfured, Hungary. I come from Slovenia and I was also the leader of our national team, which was a new and challenging role for me since I am more shy around new people. Furthermore, this was my first youth exchange ever and it was surprisingly a very fulfilling experience that I wish I found out about earlier in my life. As a team leader, I travelled to the location of the exchange before it actually took place, so all the leaders could get to know the aims of the project better and each other, of course. Project coordinator, Veronika, introduced us the area where the exchange later took place and introduced us with the workflow at the exchange. Since we got to know each other a bit and established a comfortable and fun environment, I couldn't wait for the actual exchange.

The exchange itself was a wonderful experience, full of knowledge and fun. I got to know a lot of wonderful people who shared their knowledge and I shared mine in return, we learned how to learn from each other. The learning methods surely were very diverse, from learning through games and sport activities to simply having a discussion around the fireplace. I think everyone involved in this project put a lot of effort in it. I like how every country in the exchange had to organise different workshops for others and those were really fun as well. Through cultural evenings we also got a chance to improve our geography and history knowledge, also culinary, since we all cooked a national dish that represented each country. Through the whole exchange I enjoyed the beautiful nature of Balaton, which we also explored a lot with hikes and walks. As a group we also played a strategy game throughout the whole exchange called Secret friend and Secret killer that made everything very fun in our free time. The following paragraph is a short note from my diary;

Our exchange started with breakfast around 8 am. Some of the participant's days were brightened up due to the arrival of the first gifts and letters from secret friends. The Slovenian team was preparing the breakfast today. At 9 am we started our activities with energizers, for example the Tom and Jerry game. Later on we played a group puzzle game with three islands and after a coffee break started with another game, "Cemetery" , where you are a secret killer to somebody else in the camp and your weapon is a random object. There were already a few victims today, they were killed with toilet paper, wood, paper, ball, etc.

After lunch it was BEACH TIME because our lovely Veronika gave us a "day off". We enjoyed the sunny weather and refreshing water. We played volleyball, Uno, went swimming in the lake and enjoyed some cold drinks and ice cream. For the end, we had pizza at the beach instead of dinner in the camp, then walked back home and hanged out at the fireplace. "

To sum up the whole experience, I think every young person should participate in such kind of exchange. I have learned to appreciate knowledge and nature more. Since the digital era is slowly shutting us away from nature and it's wide range of free and fun activities, we should all at least try to hang out in person more, go for a hike together instead of texting each other and just take time for one another. I have become more self-confident through the role of the national team leader and gained awareness of different levels of responsibilities. I expanded my range of social and learning / teaching methods and how to adapt to certain situations.

Even though the exchange lasted for 10 days, it was so fun that it all felt like a relaxed weekend in Hungary that me and surely the whole Slovenian team will never forget. We are all very

happy that we improved our English, speaking and writing, learned some other foreign words and made new friends that we would love to visit at some point. I appreciate all the effort that the Hungarian organisation put in to make the exchange fun, instructive and something different.

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Janja Palko

