

TRAVEL

*It leaves you speechless,
then it turns you into a storyteller*

International Initiatives for Cooperation

Bulgaria 2017

EVS Diary

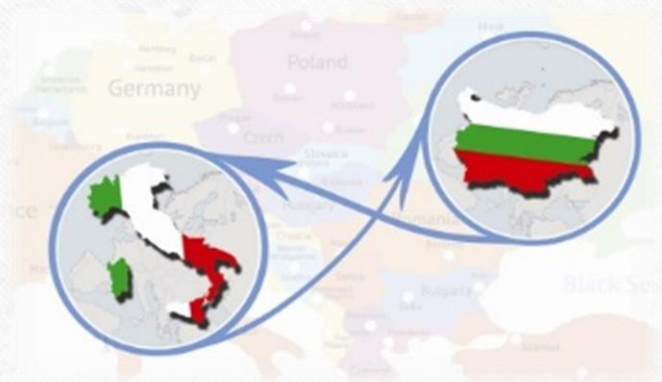
By Loreta Pasquarelli

9th August 2017

Italy- Bulgaria

Travel for prospective, appreciation and understanding.

Travel to see the world and all of its beauty.



When I was a child, I used to read books. I would read page after page and imagine faraway lands. Now that I started to travel I decided to turn my memories into a special diary made by memories, photos, inspiration quotes to never forget that adventures are the best way to learn.

Maybe, I'll look back on this and I'll smile because it was the life that I decided to live.

Traveling allows me to see that the world is not always about me.

It allows me to see how other people live and learn from them.

It allows me to turn my dreams in reality.

Challenges

The bus stopped in a small station. David was waiting for me. A big hug as a good welcoming. He led me home - three-floors house completed with a basement.

Maria, Telmo, Louise and Zane were waiting for me.

Maria offered me a tea – the view is beautiful from the balcony - she told me that my roommate is not here, but she will be back with the all Turkish-team that is here for a special project.

Ezra, this her name. She doesn't speak English but for sure knows how to smile!

Ebranur visit often our room – she bring delicious Turkish coffee, we speak about our lives and our dreams.

Review my English, adapt my self in a new house, share space with other 10 people from all around the world, understand and accept different lifestyles and learn from them, be autonomy but learn how to cooperate, build a new life, be part of the community, learn an other language – Bulgarian counts for two! – visit neighborhood as soon is possible, take pictures as souvenirs, start a new diary, bring my passions and get inspired by the new Bulgarian life.

Razlog is a small town in the countryside of Blagoevgrad district.
Everywhere you walk, you can hear the sound of the water and you can see mountains all around and horse-drawn carts.

It is a peaceful place to meditate and practice yoga in the morning.
Step Valley is a special place where I can recover myself and see the all beautiful view of Razlog – from over there it doesn't seem so small.
Not far away, there are three mountains, composing a special triangle – Pirin, Rila and Rodopi.
No matter how tall they are, they cannot block out the sunrise.

All truly great thoughts come while I am walking there: The Ancient Bulgarian Calendar and its connection with the Earth's orbit and Jupiter' orbit
around the Sun - consisting in 364 days and 52 weeks.
Integral part of the philosophy of this calendar is the projection of the Cosmo's rhythm in human world: Earth, Nature and all Cosmo are united in
12-years cycle (Each year Jupiter resides in different constellations, likened by our ancestors of animals)
Three years ago, I was lost in the numbers of Chinese calendar. I love these magical numbers.



Explore, Dream, Discover

Greece



*I am not the same having seen the moon shine on the
other side of the world*

I joined the my team-work for an adventure trip in Greece –
traveling by car and sleeping on the beach.

A different way and prospective to explore myself.

Our nights in “The 1 billion starts hotel” in the suite “moon view”

The rhythm of the waves that cradles my dreams and guides my
breath with "the greeting to the sun“.

Nights and days go with no-routines and no-expectations, guided
by adventure.

On-Arrival Training

Sofia – September 2017

The earth is what we all have in common



Erasmus+



Three hours travel by bus from Razlog to Sofia.

The bus stopped in the same Sector of my first time in Bulgaria.

So much memories comes in these exactly moment: I still remember the skyscrapers visible from the plane and the numerous cars parked with a perfect layout, squares that formed a huge puzzle with green and blue tiles.

Now the perspective is reversed: the skyscrapers are so slender that they seem to touch the sky, the fountains gush , the cars whizz through the cobbled streets, the baroque monuments paint the city of gold and marble.

The majestic Lady Sofia welcomes expats from all over the world.

The huge green gardens are home for communist statues with a perspective on modern "futurism".

Everything so differently proportional from the calm and relaxing Razlog - big monuments, big churches and mosques, big fountains, metro and trams.

A full week spent to know much people as possible – they come from everywhere around the world – Latvia, Italia, Bulgaria, Spagna, Portugal, Germany and more...

Ivaylo, Florentyna, Sharon, Belinda, Bea, Roberto, Giada, Fabio, Maria, Junio, Danai, Karin, Rory, Angie, Ieva , Assia, Igor – it was like know them from longtime ago, as we already met somewhere.

A special connection with some of them – that magical sensation to be part of the same earth.

A full week to get know more about European opportunities.

A full week of non –formal activities that gave me possibility to research self-motivation and self-determination.

A full week of questions, stories, answers, smiles, hugs, peaceful and delightful sharing moments.

Important step in my EVS program where I could see from different prospective, get inspired and think about my personal project.

SYA Academy in the school



We often give stories for our students to read, but how often do we tell them a story?

Children have an innate love for stories. They create magic and a sense of wonder of the world.

Stories teach us about life, ourselves and others.

Storytelling is a unique way for students to learn how to develop and understand their surroundings. They learn about respect and appreciation for other cultures, how to promote a positive attitude with people from different lands, races and religions. They also learn how to improve a feeling of relaxation and listening skills – our work with the kids takes place mostly in the afternoon, a time when they are very tired and excited at the same time.

By gaining these tools, it can help kids to communicate their thoughts and feelings; it encourages active participation and the use of imagination and creativity.

As narrators, we couldn't miss a translation from English to Bulgarian, which we completed with visual support (gestures and paintings) for our "Bela's story" and her friends Wind and Bij that together discover the autumn life.

With a Montessori inspiration, we also couldn't miss the moment where the kids connected this story with a personal discovery, research and curiosity.

After, we collected some different leaves and created our personal forests and golden mandala.

It was a great way to remind ourselves, as a group, about the different autumn's colors and to learn new English words.



There must be provision for the child to have contact with nature, to understand and appreciate the order, the harmony and the beauty in nature... so that the child may better understand and participate in the marvelous things which civilization creates.

-Maria Montessori-

Once upon a time...

Storytelling and Yoga!

Once upon a time, a YogaKids Trainer that started a personal project in schools around the world as non-formal classes to share values and learn how to connect body mind and heart from the childhood. She couldn't never find a circle of peaceful kids set on lotus-pose, but she was so happy to see them get funny knocking on the floor pretending to be *Rain* or flying in the sky pretending to be *Cloud* and make their best to keep the balance in the *tree-pose*!

She found a solution in an handmade theater - the box of dreams - for a non-formal English class made of storytelling, dreams as well as a fun game called Yoga.

It was a very interesting moment when kids raised their voices - not to make noise but to express potential : in Razlog district we will have future drivers, doctors, football players and an astronauts!

They learned about nature and colors , with приятел молив.

And lastly, they played together through YogaKids to connect body, mind and heart using yoga poses and a "namaste" - a greeting for all the friends combined with a smile.

The school she likes is made by actions, dreams and imagination, and...YogaKids across the world!



*Let the children be free;
encourage them;
let them run outside when it is raining;
let them remove their shoes when they find a puddle of water;
and, when the grass of the meadows is damp with dew, let them run on it and trample it with their bare feet;
let them rest peacefully when a tree invites them to sleep beneath it's shade;
let them shout and laugh when the sun wakes them in the morning as it wakes every living creature that divides its
day between waking and sleeping. -Maria Montessori-*

#BeActiveDay

Yane Sandansky school organize each year
#BeActiveFamilyDay.

All kids and their families take part on
different funny games cooperation games.

I saw a new prospective of community,
where different branches of society are
involved in give a good example of team-
building.



A good foundation for creative adults is made by Pretend Players in Childhood.

What kind of activities could be better than pretending to be an important organization that defends the rights of children - giving voice to them, playing to roll our dreams around the world?

During the week of the 20th of November is a special celebration all around the world –The world children's day. On 1989 UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We expressed it to the kids and we shared our ideas about rights and our dreams and wishes for all kids around the world.

We made two activities, pretending to be a big organization as UNESCO.

In circle, kids rolled a ball to a friend – while they gave voice to their future wishes for all kids around the world.

They wrote their wishes in Bulgarian on a billboard prepared for the occasion by the volunteers.

Then, we repeat together "I would give every child" and we translate in english their wishes; so, in the same time, we learned new english words and we gave voice to our rights.

After that, kids have drawn their dreams and hopes for the future -pretending to be the head of the organization previously builded together -inspired by hopes dreams and imagination.

Was interesting see the future dreamed Razlog and districts: gift stores, a mayor that give gift for kids from a plane, Martians, angels making wishes, future full of love and nature and solidarity organizations!

A school atmosphere in which pretend games are encouraged, or even just tolerated - taking on different roles - allows children the unique opportunity to learn social skills such as communication, creativity, humanity and empathy.



***20 November - Universal Children's Day
#KidsTakeOver***

***We spoke about our dreams and wishes for all kids around the world...
...and we brought our dreams to reality!!!***



Moga

Moga is a rehabilitation center for vulnerable children and adults.

We go there twice a week and together we paint crafts for the Christmas bazar that we will organize to raise funds.

But the part that I prefer is to prepare paths in order to stimulate their psychomotor and see their progress within an hour is really exciting.

Slavi is a silent child. The first day he met me was not a big fan of mine. He did not like to struggle with my exercises, but today he's happy when I ask him if he wants to walk with me. I have to hold him by the arms, he is not stable, but he is happy when he feels his feet touching the floor and he forces himself to lift his back from the sofa to hug me and kiss my cheeks.

Crissy is a very smart kid. He likes to play with the colored cardboard footprint I created for them. We walk and jump, we go up and down and its energy is so strong that it also convinces Slavi to participate in our games.

The time I spent there is a peaceful moment where I can really feel at home and those people inspired me a lot. Moga in Bulgarian means "I can". They are really motivated and they never stop in front their disability. They walk around the city and they are very welcome from their surrounds.



Mountain inspirations

Everyone needs a friend who will call and say: "get dressed, we are going on an adventure"



Sweet melodies of water. They merge deep and acute along the streets of the streams and at the feet of refreshing springs, to gently settle on the banks of the lakes.

The mysterious theories of reflection and refraction are clearer to the mind, illuminating the eyes of surreal paintings: all around the evergreen forests painted with this golden autumn.

Snow-capped peaks are reflected on the water that flows and do not seem to stop.

The 7 lakes set in elegant ways.

Rila, creative mountain and protector of wild beauty and an old magic.

It supports the steps of those who make their passage in search of their own sea

(Rila Seven Lakes memories)

Festivals, Folklore and traditions



Pagan rituals and orthodox ceremonies mixed with a unique folklore.

Hundreds of eyes watching and admiring the gorgeous white dresses embroidered by reliable hands - the entire scene was full of multicolor crewel.

The choirs of women which remember the echoes of the mountains.

Magical vibrations: drum blows, whistling flutes, banging bells.

The dancing circles open and close, form spirals, and sharp wooden clogs jump here and there.

On the scene, the past was all around : those who made the story of Razlog - discovering the wonders of this country. Oppressed women and men, looking for a flag flying in the sky - as a liberation door.

A show that I will never forget.

A show that doesn't forget : doing the full of a theater to support those who need more than us.

Winter in Bulgaria



I wasn't a fan of -10 degrees before to come in Bulgaria. But I really like to have my morning tisane stepping on the snow in the garden and play like a child with snowballs and try my best to make a funny snowman! The trees are beautiful with white leaves, forests seem shine with the sunlight. The snow goes down, the chimneys smoke, Razlog is silent.



Boulevard Tree Event



Feliz Natal



Feliz Navidad

Buon Natale

Frohe Weihnachten

Merry Christmas
2017

Весела Коледа

Collect yellow leaves, big enough to contain a poem.

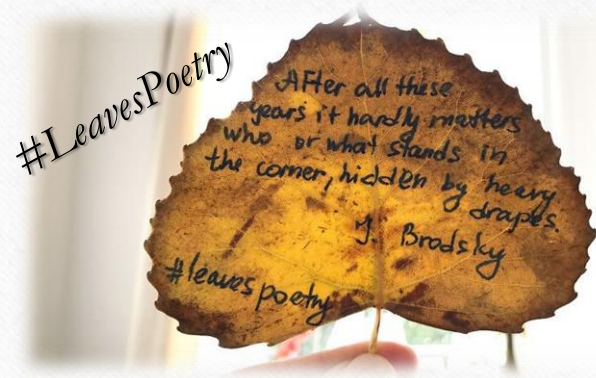
Our *Tree of Life* was decorated with handmade crafts and jars containing poems written on leaves – journey, life, wishes, love, friendship - in many languages and with the dual purpose of express ourselves and inspire more people.

Bakeries brought mini баница and sweets – that tree was so delicious looking!

Schools trees paint the street of peaceful and pure colors!

Local organizations and local stores made the best solution of advertisement and good looking!

Deska came from Gorno Draglishte with wine to warm up our cold hands, banitsa and her beautiful warm smile, dressed up with traditional clothes! I will miss her!



A sharing moment that satisfied my continuous journey and research about the sense of humanity and community.



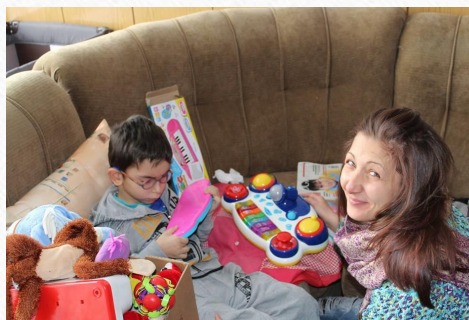
One gift - countless smiles

Santa's dress fits very well to Vincent. He is very happy to dress up and his innocent comes really from the heart! Kids love him!

This campaign was made with the aim of encouraging kids from local schools to donate "Unwanted toys" and support orphans and vulnerable children.

We gave a certificate to the kids as a reward for their infinite goodness. We have collected many toys.

The children in "Home for Kids", "Moga rehabilitation center" "Hospital" and "Kindergarten" were surprised and happy. Their faces were joyful and grateful.



EVS Family

A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles.



In Italy we are used to say “*Natale con i tuoi...*”

This year my Family is composed by Maria, Telmo, Vincent and Luca.

We are planning to organize a special trip – starting on the 23th of December 2017.

We’ll take a night-train from Sofia to Istanbul and a flight on the 24th to Izmir. We’ll be back again to Istanbul on the 28th till the 5th of January.

Sound as a good plan full of adventures: beautiful landscape to see, new people to meet and new cultures to discover - Filling the cup of Humanity!

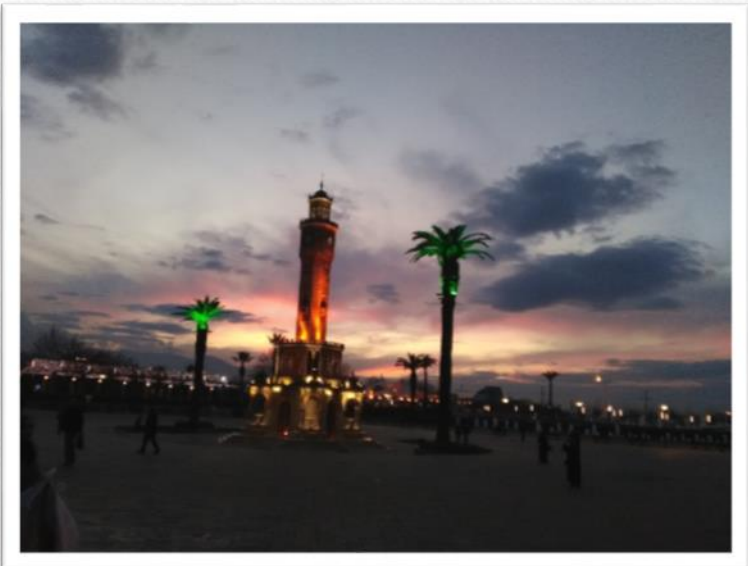
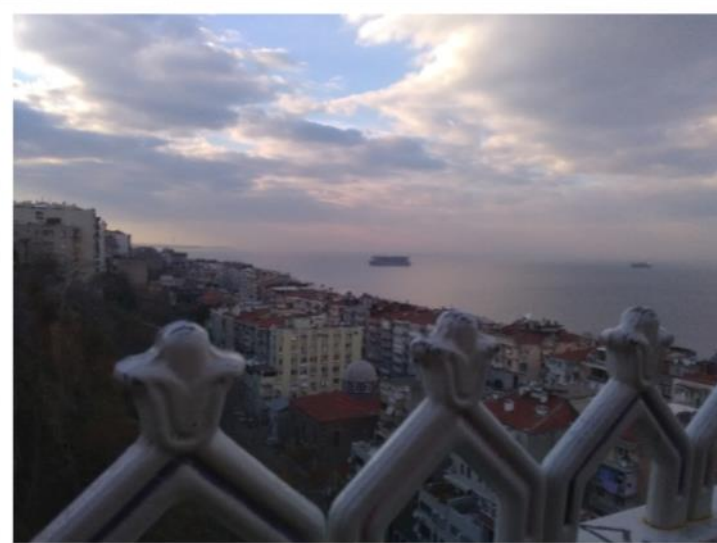
Christmas in Izmir

Shanti slept the all night near our feet.

Shanti is a peaceful cat, in the Friendly Shanti Home Hostel.

Om Shanti in Hindi means I'm Peace – Sister Seeta is in my memories from my last Rwandan trip.

The hostel is small, the rooms are colorful and the living room looks so familiar that is very easy to get closed with all guest in the hostel.



Kelly is an Australian woman. She is also doing a volunteering experience.

She invited me and Maria to visit the Syrian refugee camp – they will build toilets and they will share the all day with the community that is living there.

The camp is big, composed by blue tends. The ground is full of mud.

Women and kids came closed to the car – I greet them with a Salam Aleikum.

We started collect the wood that we will be using to build toilets : we split it by measurements and while Arthur marked the limit with a pencil we were busy cutting with a saw.

The children watched us curious and smiled to see us work.

A team building has been the road to great success.

I could not miss to run - stepping in the mud with the younger children.

The women were filming us while we were dancing in circle with the children.

The village chief invited us to drink a warm tea and smoke fresh tobacco.

It was a very busy day - a bathroom was completed, the children played and we went home tired but happy to have shared such intense and unrepeatable moments with people who left their country because of the war, but they never stop to hope for a better future.

A bathroom with wooden frame and a blue curtain that matches very well with the rest of the camp will not be a Turkish hammam but will certainly give them more dignity.

The blue eyes of the girls, their smiles, their continuous climb, hugging, call us for a last run, the curious eyes of older children, the colorful clothes of women, the strong taste of the tea - images that I will never delete from my mind, wherever I will go, they will be with me!

Forever a volunteer!



Happy new Year Istanbul 2018



*A new year starts with a wonderful light on the horizon,
which frames the chimneys of the mosque and the
embroidered walls.*

*The clouds are gentle, they continue their journey and allow
us to enjoy the slow rising of the sun. The seagulls fly lonely
and then form dancing flocks.*

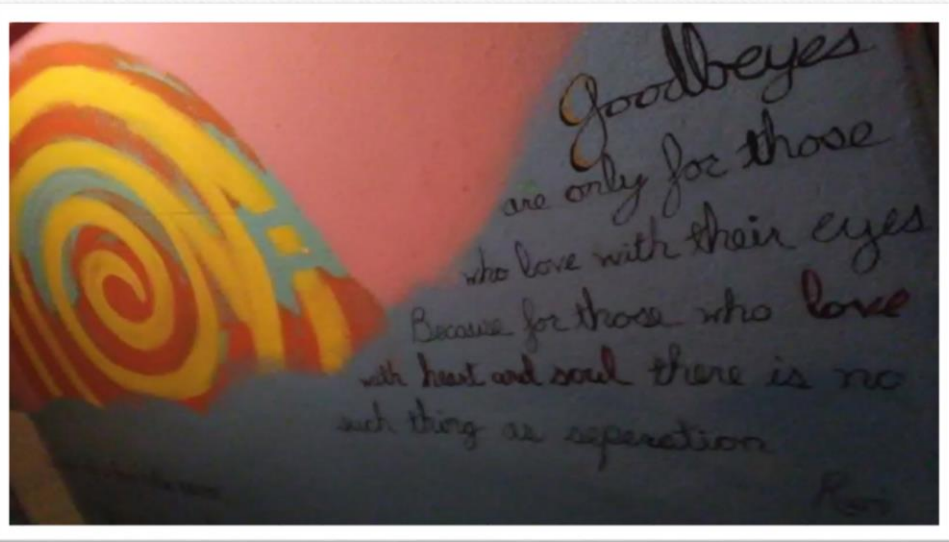
When the sun gives light, it is peace in my heart.

I close my eyes and I bless this moment.

Skyscrapers shine near Malaga bridge.

Istanbul, 1st of January 2018

Friendship



If that central station of Razlog could talk, would say many stories about tears cutting in perfect halves the cheeks of the volunteers.

Yesterday Maria and Telmo were on their way back home.

I know that this was not a goodbye, but I can feel the “silence”.

I already miss my coffee with Maria and our speeches in the balcony.

I already miss Telmo singing under the shower and our laughs guessing speeches in our mother tongue.

EVS gave me two special team-partners and two специални приятели !!!

Friendship means to love with the heart and soul.

Daily Life Inspirations



15th January 2018

*Our heart is a treasure map
Each step that it moves in the circle of life
It's a possibility of shining light.
Allow things to unfold through the Universe
And you'll find your purpose in life.*

*Our Heart is a shining sun
Which spreads the cosmic love energy on the stage of life
Our heart is a shining sun for every living creature.*

*Our heart is a shining light
That comes and goes
And it gives life to the flower of life.
When I'm lost, I'll find my way
Each step that it is moved in the circle of life
It's a possibility of shining light.
When I'm lost, I'll root myself,
In silence with divine harmony
Till the shining light of the sun.*

#lifeDreamsAreLifeJourney

#followYourDreamsTransformYourLife



Ask yourself what you want from your life, answer with sincerity and start doing it, without guilt or fear.

Maybe, you will be afraid.

However, it will make you realize that making it different depends on you and it is a matter of every day.

To Continue to achieve your dreams you need to know how much you are able to risk for them and have the courage to make unsafe, not comfortable and not advantageous choices, but full of enthusiasm!

*Start asking yourself what could improve your life
and do it, now!*

Since I was teaching I have learnt a lot.

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Loreta Pasquarelli

Om Shanti