

“One year on the European Voluntary Service programme was a University of Life for me, a practical university that I continue now. I learned so many things, I built new life values. I understood what I want from life, how I want to live and spend my time. I learned how to be strong and confident. How to follow my goals!” (Jevgeniia, 22)

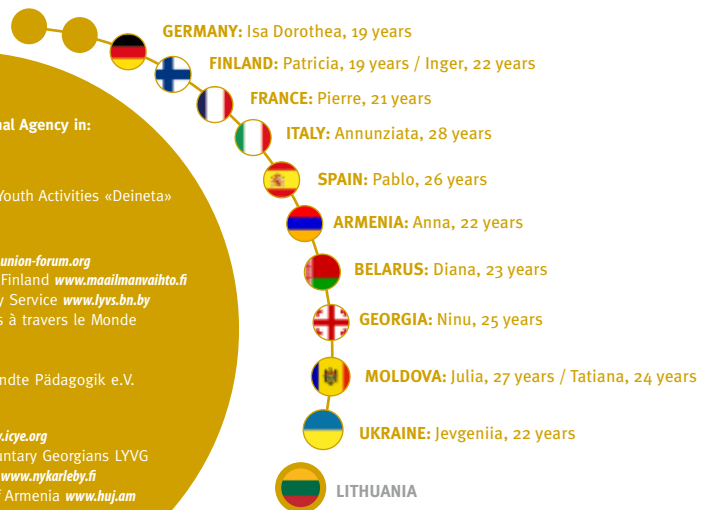
Project granted by the Youth in Action National Agency in: Lithuania

Hosting organisation: The Centre for Voluntary Youth Activities «Deineta» www.deineta.lt

Sending organisation: NGO «Union Forum» www.union-forum.org
Maailmanvaihto ry - ICYE Finland www.maailmanvaihto.fi
League of Youth Voluntary Service www.lyvs.bn.by
JTM 35 Association Jeunes à travers le Monde www.international-jtm.com

AFSAI www.afsai.it
IFAP - Institut für Angewandte Pädagogik e.V. www.ifap-apolda.de
AFAIJ www.afaij.org
ADVIT/ ICYE Moldova www.icye.org
The League of Young Voluntary Georgians LYVG
Youth office in Nykarleby www.nykarleby.fi
HUJ - Voluntary Service of Armenia www.huj.am

Activity dates: 15/09/2008 - 15/09/2009 (12 months)



« THE UNIVERSITY OF LIFE IN KAUNAS, LITHUANIA

Pablo (26 years) from Spain joined 11 other young people to spend a year (2008/2009) working as a volunteer in Lithuania. The other young people were: Isa Dorothea (19 years) from Germany, Pierre (21 years) from France, Annunziata (28 years) from Italy, Patricia (19 years) and Inger (22 years) both from Finland, Jevgeniia (22 years) from Ukraine, Diana (23 years) from Belarus, Tatiana (24 years) and Julia (24 years) from Moldova, Anna (22 years) from Armenia and Ninu (25 years) from Georgia.

The Centre for Voluntary Youth Activities «Deineta» was established in Kaunas, Lithuania in 1988 to promote and organise schemes for youth volunteering. With a small staff of four it manages to run a wide range of European Voluntary Service projects in Lithuania and elsewhere, as well as short term summer camps.

Pablo and the other volunteers worked in different care centres in Kaunas and Jonava catering for refugees, children and young people with physical and mental disabilities, children from disadvantaged families and old people. They also worked on conservation in the Kurtuvėnai Regional Park which has its own natural ecosystem and whose recreational facilities are in constant need of maintenance and protection. In their leisure time they organised a number of social events which included decorating a Christmas tree in the pedestrian precinct in Kaunas, an international football match and a week long bike tour. They used all the events to involve local people and to promote volunteering.

At the end of their stay all the volunteers felt the experience had helped personal growth. They had become more confident and welcomed the practical experience of working with refugees and people in care. It was real life as opposed to the rather abstract world of their university studies. They had learned a lot about social work in Lithuania and through their frequent contact with the local population they had learned some of the local language. Living and working with an international group fostered a respect for difference and strengthened their European awareness. His experience in Lithuania helped Pablo to find employment in a care home in Spain following his European Voluntary Service.

The working methods of their hosts were enriched by the injection of different cultural approaches applied by the volunteers and their close involvement with the local communities brought a real sense of Europe to the people of Kaunas and the surrounding area.

