



MAGAZINE

Edition 1 . 2017



— Breaking Boundaries

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Dear Reader,

This edition of the ESAA magazine will recount stories which encapsulate the idea of doing wonderfully, previously unthinkable, and unimaginable things by the individual members. It will highlight tales from ESAA volunteers, who have been doing superb things across the globe both during and after their mobility.

This issue's main focus, however, lies in the effect that mobility has had in shaping individual ideas towards achieving certain goals which may have seemed previously impossible. In order to make it more engaging to a very diverse readership, our coverage is not only limited on the direct effects of mobility, but also its implied effects.

Our surveys (students, graduate impact) have been focusing on what experiences students and graduates can make and collect. In this issue, however, we want to focus on what the students and graduates are doing, what makes their actions so extraordinary, and which boundaries they have crossed personally and professionally. Basically, on how they have changed.

By telling their stories we hope to positively reinforce actions that propel our members to become global change makers and also attest to the Erasmus+ programme's many benefits.

Apiyo Okwiri
ESAA Board Member

"One of the best things
that have ever happened
to me in my academic
life was participating in
Erasmus+ programme.**"**

Dickson Ajisafe

ESAA Member

Imprint

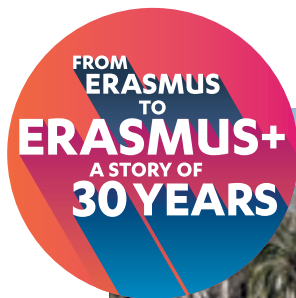
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Around the world

ESAA Events 2017

Room of Kindness

Poznań, Poland, 11 May

The main purpose of the project was to create a special room for the children in the hospital, where they can forget about their health problems and spend time creatively.

Employ your Skills

Zagreb, Croatia, 24–25 March

A professional capacity event with emphasis on student projects and organisations as promoters of youth entrepreneurship and future economic development.

Soft me Up

Jajce and Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 6–7 May

This project focused on the professional development of youths in Bosnia and Herzegovina by training communication skills, leadership, public speaking, PR, marketing, and organisational skills.

Peace of Art

Istanbul, Turkey, 6–30 April

Peace of Art is a social art project which focuses on giving child refugees the opportunity to participate in various art workshops with their Turkish peers. It aims at creating opportunities to help refugee children discover creativity and give them the chance to dream again in their new urban environment despite the big tragedies they have faced.

International Business Day

Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 8 February

The annual International Business Day hosted by Erasmus Student Network (ESN) Rotterdam brought talents from around the world together with companies. The main objective was to help the international students to integrate into Dutch society upon arrival in Rotterdam.

Erasmus+ Promotion Event

Cape Town, South Africa, 2 May

The event which took place at the Stellenbosch University showcased different education modules and partnerships with African institutions. It attracted students as well as professionals, who came to explore relevant opportunities. Erasmus+ alumni were at the stands and shared their experiences with visitors who were eager for the Erasmus+ experience.

EMA at the EU Study Week

Lipetsk, Russia, 17 March

The EU study week in Russia took place in Lipetsk and was full of thought-provoking discussions and debates. Erasmus+ programmes were presented and followed by a presentation of Erasmus Mundus alumna, who shared her personal experiences on studying in Europe.

EMA Networking Event

Kathmandu, Nepal, 7 April

EMA-Nepal chapter organised an EMA Networking Event in Nepal. This networking event aimed at bringing together all the EMA members presently in Nepal and creating a platform to further strengthen the EMA-Nepal community.

Information Session on Erasmus Mundus Studies

Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1 April

The German Alumni Group based in Sri Lanka, in association with Erasmus Mundus South Asian Chapter, organised an information session which aimed at motivating potential students and sharing practical advice with those interested in higher education abroad.

EURAXESS-ASEAN Forum

Quezon City, the Philippines, 25 April

Several alumni of the Erasmus Mundus programme and EMA attended a forum on the theme "Strengthening Philippines-EU Partnerships in Research". The objective of this event was to introduce potential collaboration projects between researchers from the EU and the Philippines.

EMA Indonesian Alumni Performance on Europe Day

Jakarta, Indonesia, 7 May

EMA Indonesian alumni were on the spotlight in the event dedicated to the celebration of Europe Day in Indonesia, the 40th anniversary of EU-ASEAN collaboration, and 30 years from Erasmus to Erasmus+. They participated in the EU-ASEAN Run alongside about 1000 runners from delegations and Jakarta citizens and also performed live the song they composed: Build Our Dreams.

Celebrating Erasmus+, EU Training and Europe Day

Kampala, Uganda, 5–9 May

EMA members participated in a public conference organised by the EU Delegation in Uganda which focused on education, training, youth and sports. It also gave Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus+ students the chance to share their experiences and discuss how they helped in shaping their careers and future prospects.



Community Leaders ESAA Working Group Meeting

Madrid, Spain, 10–12 February

By Justyna Tasic, Oxana Sytnik and Ana Godonoga
ESAA Working Group Members

Last February, ESAA community leaders from around the world got together in Madrid for a strategic planning meeting.

Members from the four ESAA founding organisations – Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association (EMA), Erasmus Student Network (ESN), garagErasmus (gE) and OCEANS Network – contributed to the planning of projects in the working groups such as Communication, Events, Professional Development, Survey & Research, and Erasmus+ Promotion.

The working environment was very inspiring. On one side, there were a lot of internationally-minded and diverse professionals, and on the other side, the interior design of the co-working space was very unique, as you can see in the pictures.

The meeting was organised as a cooperative platform of plenary and team sessions. Leaders constantly exchanged creative ideas and challenged last year's programmes with the questions of what can be done for improvement to further strengthen the ESAA community.

Participants reflected on the present and future role of ESAA in addressing the world's most pressing challenges – i.e. promoting social and economic inclusion by improving access to international education opportunities, strengthening the employment outlook of graduates, promoting intercultural learning as well as tolerance and respect for diversity, helping in the refugee crisis, and advancing environmental sustainability, amongst other things. In addition, building on these fruitful brainstorming sessions, the participants submitted high quality and relevant proposals for future projects.

The main message of the meeting was shared at the beginning by the ESAA Board: "Think about the future programmes as something you would really enjoy working on and, at the same time, something that will most contribute to the growth and development of the ESAA community". Everybody was aware of a potential budget and ESAA's strategic mission. Therefore, the main challenge was to combine the two sides of the same coin and to make proposals of programmes that would have the highest impact. ■■■

Join the Erasmus+ Generation
Online Meeting Point and ...

<http://app.wetipp.com/erasmusplusgeneration>

... keep track of Erasmus+ events
with the new Erasmus+ App!

Now available!

The Erasmus+ Generation 30th anniversary of professional success

Barcelona, Spain, 9–10 March

By Samuel López Carril
President of ESN Spain and ESAA Alumnus

FROM
ERASMUS
TO
ERASMUS+
A STORY OF
30 YEARS

Get involved in the celebration
of the Erasmus+ programme!

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus>



For the occasion of 30th anniversary of the Erasmus+ programme, ESN Spain held an event that brought together students from all over Europe to Barcelona, including key actors in student mobility and representatives from private sector companies. They held discussions on the impact that the Erasmus+ programme has had on youth employment through its 30 years of existence.

The first day of the event, which took place at the Pompeu Fabra University, consisted of conferences, round-table meetings and workshops where assistants could learn about the Erasmus+ opportunities and how it could benefit them in professional fields.

There is a need to make the corporate world aware of the current situation for students, as well as to raise awareness on the importance of the quality mobility. As most students in the academic environment lack professional experience, the organising committee focused on this topic in particular while combining it with the Erasmus+ programme.

Representatives from various national agencies in Spain, Europe Direct Barcelona, the Spanish National Youth Council, policy makers, the rectorate body of the four public universities in Barcelona, the president of ESN AISBL, representatives from garagErasmus, former Erasmus+ students who are now successful professionals, companies interested in international backgrounds, amongst a number of other personalities, shared their points of view and discussed the importance of

quality mobility for young people, both in the view of educational and employability purposes.

During the sessions, the students had the chance to interact with the public figures and learn from them directly how to make the most of an international experience in terms of opportunities for future employment. A study trip to a primary school personally encouraged the children to learn about career educational opportunities, as well as the benefits of mobility. The children as well as the international students had a great time together, sharing their experiences, knowledge and traditions. In the afternoon, over one thousand students got together under the "Arc de Triomf" with the flags and colours of their home countries to disseminate the aims of the event, promote mobility and the European feeling with a big parade of flags. This was the perfect way to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus+ programme, and it also engaged several citizens of Barcelona attracted by the event's festive atmosphere. The flag parade led all the participants to an organised job fair, where young job seekers had the chance to meet local and international companies who wanted to show them current job openings on the labour market for recent graduates.

To conclude, I have to say that the event was successful for both the organisers and participants, and every participant was able to draw benefits from it. We hope to continue our cooperation with ESAA in future projects and events so that we can keep promoting quality mobility and professional profiles amongst students. ■■■

Tom Wambeke

"We learn as much as we can from other disciplines ..."

Working at the UN adds a multicultural component to your daily activities. When designing a training course, what methods or techniques do you use to encourage participants from all over the world to feel confident sharing their experiences?

Diversity is a key driver in our overall design process because we really believe it adds value to the learning process. It is, of course, easier said than done because working in multicultural and multilingual contexts is complex – taking all the different nuances into account is a continuous balancing act between all kinds of different meanings and interpretations. In the approach that we adopt, tools such as 'empathy maps' and 'learning journeys' are excellent in capturing the complexity of the context and enable us to extract ideas for our instructional storyboarding.



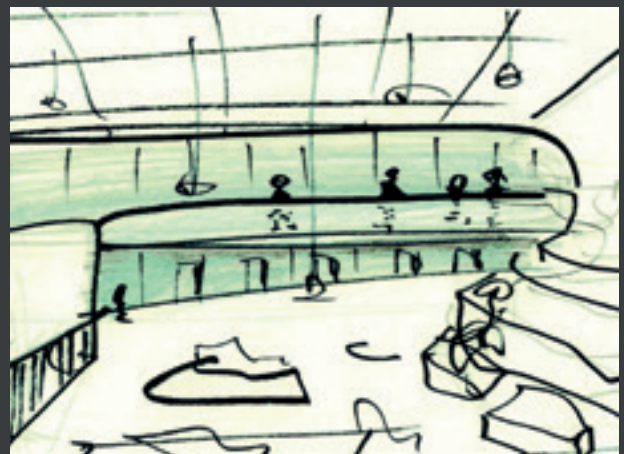
All pictures "Studio999":
"DELTA learning lab" (password: delta)
<https://vimeo.com/202369573>

How is DELTA "breaking boundaries" in education & training?

Breaking is a big word! I would rather say: "gradually exploring the next frontier of learning and trying to embed incremental innovations in everything what we do"! We learn as much as we can from other disciplines because that is an important engine for innovation. For example, learning from architects has given us a completely different view of the relationship between learning and the physical environment. We have elaborated a concept called learnscapes and our new learning lab is a direct result of that.

The Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Association works with volunteers from all over the world. Could you please share your insights on how to make the most out of a multicultural working group and that the projects benefit from the expertise of its members?

Have an open and constructive attitude and activate your listening mode to the maximum. That is an important entry point for understanding the complexities of working in multicultural environment. As a learning innovation specialist, I like a lot to use participatory methods to conduct conversations in which you can learn a lot from your peers. We have gathered over 60 methods that could help you in that: <http://compass.itcilo.org>





Tom Wambeke

Programme Manager, DELTA, Sustainable Learning Solutions
International Training Centre (ILO, United Nations)

"Diversity is a key driver in our overall design process because we really believe it adds value to the learning process."

Tom Wambeke, Belgium, graduated in Educational Sciences and holds a master in Cultural Management. He is currently finalising an Executive Business LEAD degree in Innovation at Stanford University.

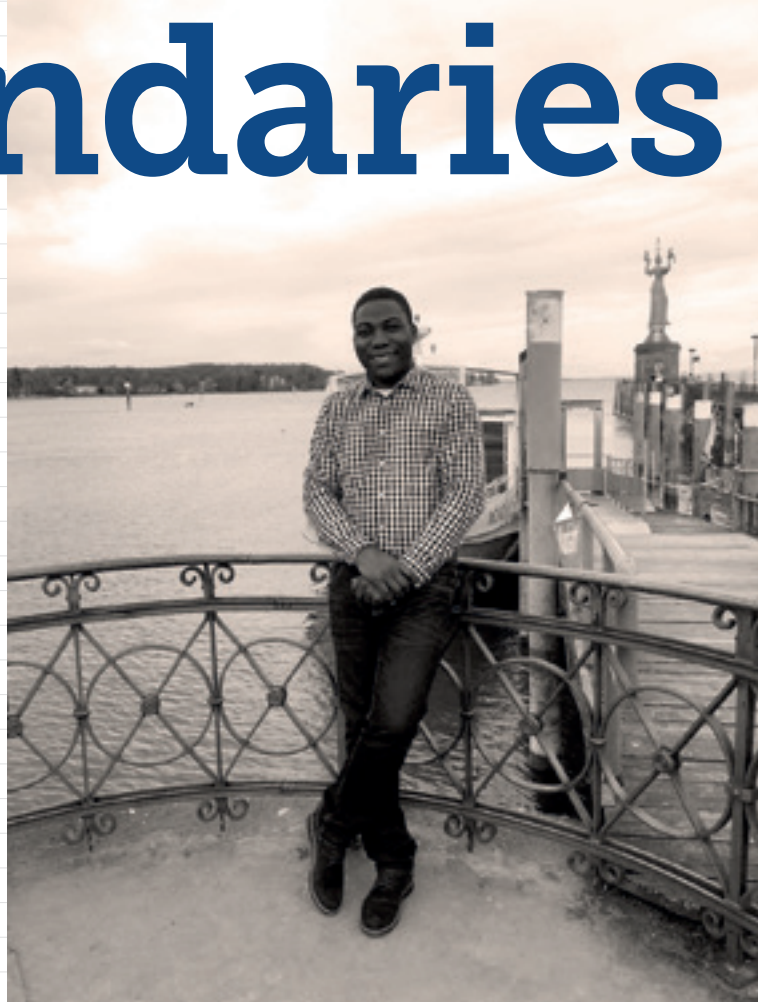
Before joining the International Training Centre of the ILO, he was assistant professor at the University of Leuven and innovation coach at Open Higher Education. He is currently Programme Manager of DELTA which specialises in providing sustainable learning solutions with the objective to generate impact and organisational change.

There, he leads a unit with a double mandate: to strengthen the centre's in-house capacity to apply state-of-the-art learning and methods in knowledge-sharing and technology, as well as to provide (e-)learning services to external partners on a global scale. In this context, he works closely together with UN agencies, development banks, international organisations, governments and NGO's.

As a certified international facilitator (IAF), he is actively involved in strategy facilitation, participatory knowledge sharing, networked learning and ICT4Development. He combines this with a passion for complex adaptive thinking, foresight analysis and futures exploration.

Breaking Boundaries

MY STORY



Hello everyone!

My name is **Dickson Ajisafe**. I am a master's student at the University of Pretoria, South Africa and the first Nigerian student at the University of Pretoria and Konstanz University, Germany, to participate in the Erasmus+ International Scholarship.

By Dickson Ajisafe

Both universities remarked on how historic this is! One of the best things that have ever happened to me in my academic life was participating in Erasmus+ programme. Nevertheless, I could not have maximised the Erasmus+ study abroad opportunity had it not been for my contact with some Erasmus+ Students from different European universities who took part in study exchanges at my department (African and European Cultural Relations) at the University of Pretoria in 2015.

"THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME HAS WIDENED MY ACADEMIC OUTLOOK, INTER-CONTINENTAL NETWORKING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT."

The Erasmus+ programme has widened my academic outlook, inter-continental networking, capacity building and potential development. The programme has exposed me to the significance of cross-cultural understanding of human relations in other hemispheres. It opened me up to the mindset and behaviour patterns of European societies and systemic operations within the European community. Furthermore, the Erasmus+ programme has presented me the platforms I need to develop the skills and capacities important for me to meet the growing need of intercultural mediators – whether in multilateral and bilateral diplomatic relations of African and European countries as well as in governmental, non-governmental and business-oriented institutions in both continents. In another dimension, the Erasmus+ study programme has equally exposed to the role of language in

communication, human relations, and capacity building, also in a professional environment. Under the programme, I have been able to develop my German language skill and proficiency to a certain level, although I am still working on my German. It has allowed me to comprehend the significance of understanding other people's cultures and how this enhances good human relations and the influence of cultural diversities in our globalised world. More importantly, as a student in a new environment, I have been able to observe my environment and to acclimatize accordingly. I have increased my study time, participated actively in class discussions, seminar presentations and group engagements at my host university. It did not come as any surprise when I did so excellently well in my exams.

During my Erasmus+ study period, I had to choose modules that were relevant to my main academic studies and research. Amongst other non-credit seminars, these included European Union Transformation, Academic Writing for Master's Students, Terrorism Studies, and Intensive German Language Course. In these courses students' regular participation was graded, in-class presentation was compulsory and graded, essay writing was graded and students were given the opportunity to write more than one essay for additional credits. All of this gave me additional insight and exposure to the European academic system and structure. I took note of students' commitment to classes and prompt attendance, which was highly motivating for me. It is interesting to notice that some of the classes I attended at Konstanz University were interdisciplinary in nature and the lecturers provided an academic environment that created platforms for unique ideas from students and open discussions towards excellent academic dialogue and performance.

" I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBSERVE MY ENVIRONMENT AND TO ACCLIMATIZE ACCORDINGLY. "

In addition, I was able to maximise value-adding opportunities for personal development myself within and outside of my host institution. One of the steps I took in this direction was to join Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Association (ESAA) through its umbrella association garagErasmus Foundation with its headquarters in Italy. ESAA is the coordinating association of other Erasmus+ student associations such as garagErasmus Foundation, EMA, OCEANS and ESN. It reports directly to the European Commission in Brussels and all its activities are fully funded by the European Commission. ESAA organises highly competitive development programmes for its members, which included Credit Mobility Strand soft skills training. Not long ago, I was selected as the only candidate from Germany and Sub-Saharan Africa to participate in a 3-day professional development training for 22 exceptional and outstanding Erasmus+ students and alumni from different regions of the world. The training aimed at exposing the participants to the awareness of values in different cultures, to sensitise them with the understanding of cultural differences in the workplace and to equip them with strategies for successful communication. This training gave me the chance to display my skills and connected me with a large number of Erasmus+ colleagues from different parts of the globe. My report on this meeting was published by ESAA.

Dickson Ajisafe

Dickson Ajisafe is a member of garagErasmus Foundation and of CMS Working Group of ESAA. He is a graduating master's student at the University of Pretoria, South Africa and Konstanz University, Germany. He is currently carrying out research on the topic "Radicalisation of European Citizens and ISIS Terrorism".



Of course, I enjoyed also European cuisine and meals. Most of the time I cooked for myself and sometimes I ate at the university canteen. Oh, my goodness, I really enjoyed those meals! It is also worth noting that I also enjoyed the weather in Germany. Although it was very cold during winter, I took responsibility and kept myself warm, ate hot food and drank lots of coffee! I was fortunate to see snow in a way I had never seen it before even to sometimes play in it. I even took some snow photos! I also travelled by ferry and boat to some places – thanks to Lake Konstanz for this opportunity! In addition, I was able to write two mini-books during my Erasmus+ period in Germany. In appreciation for the Erasmus+ Community for the privilege it gave me as the first Nigerian student at the University of Pretoria and Konstanz University to participate in Erasmus+, I dedicated these books to them in their 30th anniversary year. The books are titled: (1.) "How to Fulfil Your Destiny" and (2.) "You Too Can Succeed". Based on the mutual relationships I have built with my colleagues in Europe, the first book has now been translated into Italian and Romanian.

" I WAS FORTUNATE TO SEE SNOW IN A WAY I HAD NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE EVEN TO SOMETIMES PLAY IN IT. "



Big thanks to my Erasmus+ colleagues, Linda Bruscia (Italian) and Cosmin Dan (Romanian) for doing this for me! The German, Turkish, Arabic, Hebrew and Finnish versions of the book are on the way. Two of my European friends from Spain and Poland are currently translating one of my books titled, "Factors That Will Secure Your Future" from English into Spanish and Polish.



During my Erasmus+ period, I was able to visit the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, as a conference participant from Germany. The conference I attended focused on "Addressing Radical Ideologies and Violent Extremism: The Role of Research". Via this conference, I was able to gain a deeper insight into the causes of radicalisation and terrorist attacks in Europe as well as the channels on the continent through which radicalisation and extremism occur.

Similarly, I was privileged, amongst other colleagues from Konstanz University to visit the Council of Europe Parliamentary Sessions in Strasbourg, France. The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation; amongst other things, it promotes human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Europe. It was a huge privilege to watch the Parliamentary Assembly sessions of the council on human rights issues in Europe and engaging Harald Berwanger, (the German Representative to the European Union on European Parliament matters) on some of the pressing challenges confronting the EU was very historic for me. I was able to visit Salzburg in Austria, where I met and motivated a 22 year-old Cameroonian refugee to maximise his refugee status and add value to his life. The following week, the young man was admitted as a full-time student at Salzburg University, Austria. I was so happy to hear this!

Finally, participating in the 2016/2017 Erasmus+ programme at Konstanz University helped me to develop relevant cross-cultural relations, the competence and skills required for master's students in the field of African-European Cultural Relations. It enabled me to build a dimension of capacity needed to meet the growing need of intercultural mediators in multilateral and bilateral diplomatic relations of countries in Africa and Europe as well as in governmental, non-governmental and business-oriented institutions in both continents. I am very grateful to the Erasmus+ Community for the opportunity to participate in the 2016/2017 study abroad programme. Long live Erasmus+! Long live the European Union! Long live University of Pretoria and Konstanz University in partnership! Many thanks! ■■■■



The Associations Putting ideas into action

Activities, meetings and events organised by the four associations – picking up inspirational topics, which the European Commission created for 2017.



Topics April to June

Youth employability and skills,
entrepreneurship and jobs of tomorrow

Topic in April, ESN page 23

Promoting active citizenship and solidarity

Topic in May, EMA page 26

Education, training and volunteering
for a sustainable economy

Topic in June, OCEANS page 27
and garagErasmus page 29

FROM
ERASMUS
TO
ERASMUS+
A STORY OF
30 YEARS



United in diversity: we are ONE

By Lucie Vachova, Sabina Achim

This year, 800 people from the biggest student organisation in Europe, thirsty for any small detail on upcoming and ongoing projects within ESN, travelled to one place to join the Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus+ programme in a city that used to be divided between East and West, when the programme itself started to exist; a city that shaped the history of Europe for decades and now it is shining under the joyful, colourful spirit of this event: yes, Berlin!

The AGM is the biggest ESN event where people from 40 European countries gather to share best practices, new ideas, and decide on how the network should develop. However, it is not only about voting and plenaries, but mostly about us – dedicated people who believe in change and share a common goal: UNITY in diversity.

A special moment in the AGM was the Mobility Fair, an event promoting mobility and study opportunities across Europe, where we had the chance to present our universities to the

larger public. The panel discussion with representatives from the European Commission, ESN, and other European youth organisations, took us from strangers to friends and through three decades of Erasmus+ mobility.

The colourful Flag Parade brought hundreds of students to the streets of Berlin. With our flags, as superhero capes and painted cheeks, we faced the big boulevards. There was a ludic atmosphere: we danced, we laughed, walked under the big flags. The air was filled with excitement and we shared the most beautiful feeling: that we are a part of something big.

We had arrived in Berlin as individuals, but we soon became ONE. This is the power of our network – beyond political beliefs, historical backgrounds, or physical traits, initially strangers – we are now friends. United in diversity, we are the new European generation who understands that mobility is a lifestyle, we are those who will make a change and be an inspiration for future generations. We are ONE! ■■■

Mov'in Europe: promoting mobility as a lifestyle

By Audre Chudinskaite

There are a large number of people who would like to embark in a mobility experience, but as surprising as it might seem, many lack the right information to be able to do so. The idea to centralise information on mobility programmes' at a single source and to talk openly about the issues people often face during mobility is how Movin' Europe – an Erasmus Student Network project – came to life.

Mov'in Europe is an international project aimed at bringing mobility issues onto the political agenda and at providing better information on mobility opportunities for young people, students and graduates. The implementation of the project occurs on all levels of ESN through the development of innovative and engaging digital campaigns, face-to-face activities across the network and the Ambassadors Programme.

Since its launch in 2014, the project has come a long way. The Mov'in Europe community now counts around 150 active members who promote mobility through organising activities across Europe for information and motivation and spreading the "Mobility is a lifestyle" message everywhere they go.

During these three years of project existence, events organised by ESN sections such as Mobility Days, Flag Parades, Infomarkets and many more have attracted and informed hundreds of thousands of people. ESN volunteers not only introduce themselves to a wide variety of programmes on study, work and foreign travel, but also share personal experiences and answer participants' questions. Since the very beginning, the Ambassadors' Programme has been of interest to many young people. Mov'in Europe Ambassadors are the people who did their exchange abroad and actively contribute to engaging others and sharing survival tips after returning home.

The growing involvement of ESN sections and Ambassadors gives hope that one day Mov'in Europe will become the primary source to look for information about international mobility. ■■■



Adaptability, flexibility and living beyond borders

By Sarah Haider

Becoming a part of the Erasmus Mundus family is certainly a life-changing opportunity for many students. This is because the programmes not only help students achieve academic excellence, but also enrich their cross-cultural experiences. Two EMA members, Soumya Swayamjyoti and Giulia Barbanente, recently shared their stories of cultural exchange as one moved from Europe to India and the other from India to Europe. Here are a few excerpts from their stories:

What were your first impressions?

Giulia: India welcomed me with the warmest (and most humid) days I had ever experienced. Mumbai was a city of extremes – I saw expensively dressed people inside glamorous shopping malls while people outside were struggling in poverty.

Swayam: There is more to Barcelona than the clichéd term ‘party capital of Europe’. Barcelona has its own spirit; friendly people, football, flamenco and tapas in the evening.

What were your first-hand cultural experiences?

Giulia: During my third week in Mumbai, a friend of mine took me to an Indian wedding. My friend’s cousin greeted me warmly and gave me some fancy Indian clothes from her boutique to wear to the wedding as a present. That wedding taught me a lot about family values, traditions and friendship in India.

Swayam: During the second week of my stay in Barcelona, one of my flat mates took me to ‘La Merce’ – the September festival. The city surprised me with its openness for romantic relationships and society’s liberal attitude towards them.

What challenges did you experience?

Giulia: I am a vegetarian so I didn’t face any problems, but my friends had trouble finding non-vegetarian food. It was also not easy obtaining a visa and I felt uncomfortable attracting undue attention as a foreigner.



Swayam: I found vegetarianism and abstaining from alcohol quite difficult. The language barrier was a big problem at the beginning, too.

What are your current engagements?

Giulia: I am currently enrolled in an Erasmus Mundus PhD programme in European Law and Economics and living in Hamburg.

Swayam: I am currently working as a postdoctoral research associate at the school of engineering, at Brown University, which is one of the Ivy League universities in the United States. ■■■■



As per tradition, the Erasmus Mundus Association (EMA) recently celebrated its General Assembly (GA) held on 25–27 May 2017 at the Free University of Brussels (Vrije Universiteit Brussel – VUB) in Belgium. The much-awaited event, currently in its 11th year, gathered together around 100 active EMA members from various countries across the world.

The participants arrived in Brussels on the evening of Thursday, 25 May and had the opportunity to informally meet and greet each other. On Friday, 26 May the GA formally started with an opening speech by Apiyo Okwiri, the current president of the EMA. Following her speech, Bodil Agasøster from the European Commission and Prof. Dr. Sonja Snacken from VUB addressed the audience and sent a warm welcoming message.

After the speeches, a panel discussion on EMA's history and future took place. The discussion was based on various activities of EMA and also shed light on Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Association (ESAA) and its related bodies, including the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), the OCEANS Network, garagErasmus (gE) and the Marie Curie Alumni Association. During the first day, members got a chance to vote for the new EMA president and vice-president and also voted for the statute amendments proposed by EMA members. After a tough competition between the contesting candi-

dates, Pavan Sriram was unanimously elected as the new president of the association, whereas Lucia Loposova was chosen as the new vice-president. The day ended with the much-anticipated Gala Dinner held at Jeux D'Hiver – a stylish, modern bar and restaurant in Brussels. On 27 May, participants joined different teams and discussed the teams' past and future activities.

Formation of EMA's new Steering Committee (SC)

Together with the election of the President and the Vice-President, EMA also formed the Steering Committee for the year 2017-2019. The elected members include Teeroumanee Nadan for leading the Professional Development Team; Oxana Sytnik for the Communications Service Team; Amir Kamran for the Community Development Team; and Shiella Balbutin for serving as the new Regional Chapters Coordinator. Last but not least, Bailey Harrington was elected as the new Internal Affairs Coordinator.

The Finale

With the election of the new Steering Committee, EMA's General Assembly ended with a lot of positivity and a promising future. The SC showed their dedication in taking EMA forward in the best possible way and members who recently joined EMA expressed their desire to continue working for the association. ■■■



Public speaking workshop in Korea

By Sunhee Kim, Rosa Utset, Jungyoon Han

On 13 May 2017, ESAA and OCEANS hosted a public speaking workshop in South Korea targeting current ESAA members (both alumni and students) and prospective ESAA members. This workshop was organised as an initiative of the OYOE (Organise Your Own Event) in Seoul to promote ESAA outside of the European Union and to increase the awareness of ESAA membership. Furthermore, the event was envisioned to improve capacity building for ESAA members in key skills and to train the young professionals in good communication practice.

The theme of this workshop was on public speaking, which is a soft skill that many Asian students have difficulties with but also one particular attribute which is often required during the course of one's career. 15 participants (including 6 OCEANS members and 2 EMA members) and 3 organisers (all OCEANS) first met at Urban Garden, a restaurant in Seoul, for the opening session which included the introduction to ESAA and OCEANS. This was also an opportunity for the participants to break the ice, get to know each other and motivate one another to attend the event.

After lunch, the participants headed to the event venue, the EU Delegation to South Korea. The deputy Ambassador, Dr. Joëlle Hivonnet welcomed ESAA Talk participants with a warm speech. The event continued with a one-hour training session

conducted by Mr. Sokeel Park, a renowned public speaker who had given a speech at TED, and followed by a peer discussion on what skills make a good public speech. There was also enough time to practice what he had learnt. Participants were challenged to prepare a five-minute public speech about their Erasmus+ experience. All the presentations were recorded and participants had the opportunity to receive and give feedback to each other. It was very enlightening and inspiring to hear how Erasmus+ has shaped other people's lives!

The EU Ambassador to South Korea, Dr. Michael Reiterer, closed the training session with a short speech about the role of the EU delegations worldwide and particularly in South Korea. It was a good speech and Sunhee Kim, one of the organisers, asked for some tips in public speaking. Dr. Reiterer did not hesitate to share his personal experiences with the participants and give some advice. At the end of the event, the result of the voting for the best speakers was announced by the ambassador; three participants, Narae Shin, Soyoun Park, and Yekta Demirci were voted as the best speakers and applauded by the others. After wrapping up the workshop, the participants took part in a dinner reception at Seven Springs, a buffet restaurant near the EU Delegation and used the chance for networking with each other. Everyone was satisfied with the workshop, saying they would love to participate in other ESAA events in Korea again the next time! ■■■

OCEANS at the EU-US Young Leaders Seminar

By Scott Darby, Maja Isakiewicz

The event brought together 50 young leaders from the European Union and the United States of America – 25 ESAA students and alumni and 25 Fulbright-Schuman scholars. The main focus of the conference was migration and its wider implications on our respective societies. This mostly revolved around looking at the facts on migration and its legal and economic aspects. The event occurred on 2–4 April 2017 and took place in Brussels, Belgium.

The OCEANS Network was represented by Alin Horj, Ecem Oskay, Maja Isakiewicz and Scott Darby.

The speakers attending the seminar, including the representatives of the EU and the US institutions, talked about migration in a wider context, especially in regard to the arrival of refugees on both continents. They brought many positive steps to the participants' attention that were being made in creating a positive impact on migration. This was exemplified by numerous programmes and initiatives undertaken by NGOs, educational institutions and governments that address some short-term negative phenomena related to migration. The note was taken, however, that if the present negative impacts are not managed properly, a negative cycle will continue and may end up in isolating certain communities and lead to pessimism being passed down through the generations (such as in poor and marginalised neighbourhoods in Paris and Brussels).

More discussion followed in smaller groups, focusing on such issues as education, gender equality, healthcare, and the integration of migrants in the local communities. The overall conclusion was that migrants can play a hugely positive role in most societies by bringing in new jobs, knowledge, skills, as well as foods, culture, traditions, and energy that combined with a mindset to improve and excel can change the prosperity of entire cities, even regions. After all, the USA was built by waves of immigrants and succeeded.



The outcome of the conference was a definitive feeling that more needs to be done for the newly arrived migrants in the early stages of their journey to help them integrate quickly, and to educate local communities on intercultural dialogue.

The key conclusions and a summary of the first EU-US Seminar for Young Leaders will be put in a post-conference publication which will be presented to different stakeholders within the EU and US institutions. ■■■

Opportunities to learn, meet, travel, and grow

By Velimir Tasic

It is good for your career if you have studied abroad and done volunteering work before the age of 25. Why? Just be curious and open-minded, and let me explain:



Firstly, you will open yourself endless opportunities to learn, meet, travel, and grow. Nowadays, technology and mobile first-world social skills have become very crucial. Young people are always looking for their own ways to explore the world. Sure, you will ask 'uncle Google' for some advice on different topics that are challenging you at the moment, but do not forget that almost 100% of the interesting and useful advice on the Internet are still written by humans. Hmm, social skills.

Let us continue with a few points about volunteering, study abroad, and social skills between the lines. Volunteer, Volunteering, Volunteerism – as usual, the definitions are diverse and puzzling. Organisations which offer opportunities for volunteering have diverse missions and purposes. Therefore, in a very broad sense, I see all organisations as either professional or humanitarian. It is important to comment that volunteering in humanitarian organisations can be also profes-

sional from a project or activities perspective, and vice versa. However, what matters most is that it is your choice, and the organisation you are active in appreciates your contribution. On the other hand, studying abroad is even more important as it creates opportunities that otherwise would probably not be available for you. For instance, the chance to live in a foreign city with colleagues from different countries and to learn new languages, as well as to come into contact with different cultures and much more ...

garagErasmus can help you explore various possibilities for studying abroad and provide professional volunteering possibilities – and these accompanied by excellent opportunities for professional growth and mentorship programmes. Just join the garagErasmus online network and offline chapters, and you will get a chance to meet a curious community of young people who are passionate about studying abroad and developing themselves professionally even further.

We live busy lives and it can be hard to find time to volunteer and study abroad, but the benefits of volunteering and





studying abroad are enormous to you, your family, and your community. The right match can help you to find new friends, reach out to the community, learn new skills, explore new cultures, learn new languages, advance your career, and so on.

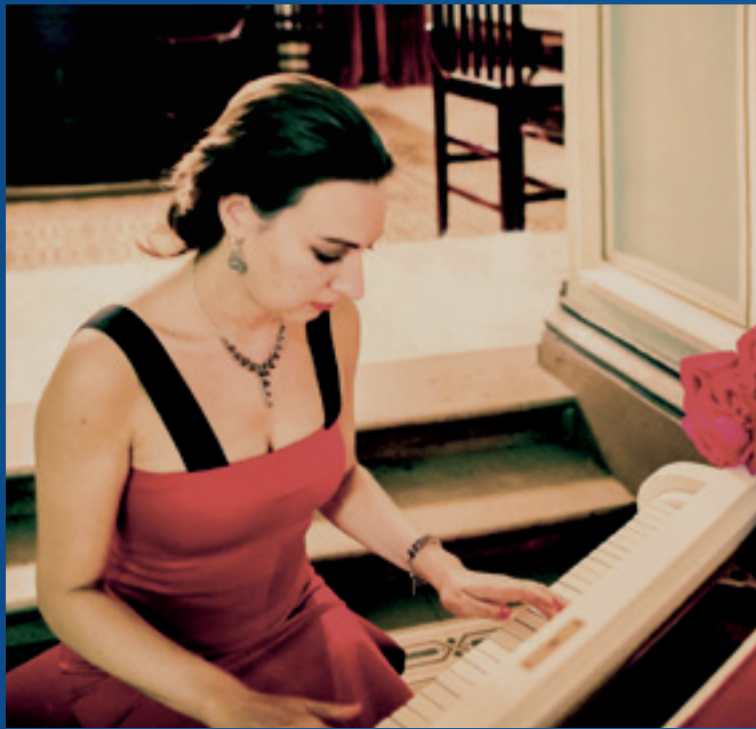
The places where we grow up shape our views on the world, which are also influenced by our families, our social status, and family relationships. Curiosity is added to this by the way we think and which habits we have. Looking therefore from a global perspective, we should all feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to attend school and at least once lived in a different city from where we spent our childhoods.

Volunteering and studying abroad are these days much easier than it was in the past. In fact, with the first programme beginning when many are still at elementary school, people start today at a much younger age than their parents may have. This means they see the world differently from their parents, too. There is no point looking at their problems, as our own problems in our generation will probably be very different. Although they might look similar at first glance, the reasons behind the challenges are always individual. Especially when it comes to technology. For example, those who were introduced to the Internet at an early age are very lucky! They have had the chance to learn almost anything; an opportunity that was not available for most of our parents. The same goes for volunteering and study abroad programmes; they were not always available (or at least, much less available) to our parents than to us.

Therefore, look for synergies and positive experiences. I was lucky to have had the chance to see and explore the world much more than my parents – thanks to volunteering, studying abroad, the Internet, and hard work. When I compare myself to my childhood friends, I am more curious and open-minded than most of them, always looking for synergies and positive perspectives. I am still under 30. I started volunteering more than 10 years ago and since then visited over 20 countries on three continents, and I have lived in over five countries longer than only a few months. Thanks to volunteering, studying abroad, curiosity, open-mindedness, synergies and the positive perspectives.

Modern technology seems to bring almost everything closer to us, making things much easier to learn and explore more than ever before, but that is no reason to stay at home on the computer. Get around, feel the wind and explore the world of endless opportunities to learn, meet, travel, and grow. The comfort zone is one of our biggest enemies. Volunteering and studying abroad are two experiences that definitely challenge our comfort zones while bringing some life-changing benefits. They prepare us for tomorrow much better than many other experiences.

In summary, join the garagErasmus and meet the professionals that are open to change and always happy to help; share their life-changing experiences in foreign study and professional volunteering: <http://app.wetipp.com/garagerasmus/subscriptions>



Ekaterina Matveeva

At just 25, Ekaterina Matveeva has completed her BA and MA, including Erasmus Mundus "Crossways", mastered eight languages, become the first female memory athlete with Russian roots, been featured on TV shows, named UK Business Woman of the Year by GradFactor. What is more, she got her TEDx talk out there, two published books, and will soon be hosting her own channel. Her company was listed in the Top 20 of the world's hottest start-ups in 2015 by CNBC, and was recognised as one of 200 world's growing start-ups by WebSummit 2016. Let's find out a bit more about how it all started and where it's going ...

Amolingua ESAA Success Story

By Ekaterina Matveeva

I had the idea of starting my own school when I was a teenager and a few years later, at my final Mundus destination I began working hard on to make it come true. The first steps were made in 2014, followed by testing in an incubator and accelerator in 2015; according to CNBC reaching the Top 20 in the world for the start-ups in 2015; winning GradFactor's award UK Business Woman 2015; and in 2016 finally launching Amolingua, which made it amongst WebSummit's Top 200 growing start-ups in 2016.

In a nutshell, Amolingua is instant one-to-one language tutoring. It works on the principle of total immersion recreated online in your daily routine. Students can connect with their team of tutors for conversational 1-to-1 lessons via video apps, complete tasks and communicate with their team via messenger, and track their progress using our custom video app.

We are not just about grammar and vocabulary. We also train people how to speak in public in foreign languages, how to

use cultural intelligence in international negotiations and how to memorise lots of information quickly.

Turning my mind from a linguist to a manager and a leader, figuring out how to build my team, addressing the market, testing the service that we provide, and allowing our service to evolve naturally were my biggest challenges. And creating a product from our service: a platform and upcoming smart TV channel.

Now we're finalising our work on the platform, developing our unique video and audio materials that will allow students to access them both: materials for self-study and work with their curators on subscription basis and lesson packages with tutors for one-time purchase. As we are both busy teaching, the platform should go live this autumn time. Stay tuned! Until today, we have taught over 400 people, expanded our team to around 100 tutors who are capable of teaching 35 languages. In total, more than 130 people are working on this project. The next step is to reach our goal in creating a more connected, multilingual world. ■■■

More about Ekaterina Matveeva:
www.matveevaekaterina.com
and her project: www.amolingua.com



You want to tell
your ESAA story?

Get in touch with us!

Send us an email:
communication@esaa-eu.org

