

Personal Reflections of young people who attended the youth exchange

"You(th) up for Intercultural dialogue and Learning"



Tirana, Albania from 1st to 7th of March 2020



Admira Mehić

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Being a part of this exchange is a great experience for me, and I believe for all other participants in this project. There are only a few projects like this in the place where I live, so this was a great opportunity for all of us. This project is really a useful thing. Socializing with all those people who were there until the last day.

We have learned a lot about the culture, traditions, customs of other countries and nations. We practiced a lot of English. I think after this project we all look differently at stereotypes, which was one of the main topics. I also look at the culture and traditions of other countries differently.

I have understood some things clearer and basically, we are all the same people with the same rights with just a little different tradition that we carry from our countries. There were so many different people there and we all had a lot of topics in common. I hope there will be more projects like this because I think young people definitely need it.





Aida Maslo

Bosnia and Herzegovina

For me, this exchange is about getting out of the comfort zone, meeting people from different countries and practicing foreign languages. This was a huge experience for me. I learned a lot about new things. I will pass on my acquired knowledge to my colleagues and my community. I also learned a lot about other communities and how important it is to respect each other. This project also opened our eyes to not divide people into good and evil, because we are all the same, we are all made from flesh and blood.

Aleksandra

Serbia

This was my first project as a teacher and a very special project for me. From my first meeting in Shkodra, later going to Tirana with the students, I had wonderful moments with wonderful people. The students were very active and in the mood for work. Tirana is a very nice city and people are very kind and warm. I enjoyed every day and learned many new skills. Thank you for everything.





Argjend Luzha

Kosovo

My experience in this exchange program: “Youth up for Intercultural dialogue and Learning” of RYCO in Albania, so far was the best helpful activity for strengthening my personality, education capacities and role as a citizen in social cohesion. Meeting new people and cultures was such an awesome experience for me, where we could share our common interests regarding objective education, cooperation and meet our common goals for a peaceful future in Balkan and in the world as well.

Since this program was about Intercultural dialogue, I’m very glad I had the chance to meet other peers from Balkan, our neighbors, to see our perspectives, and co-work on our common needs and interests, promote peace and love, and break stereotypes, and all types of social constructions. Within this program through games, within modules, we had the chance to learn more about soft/life skills, such individual work/team work, communication, management, intercultural work, which I consider are mandatory for every human resource and I learnt a lot.

Regarding Cultural Capital, which I consider a school in its self, through international night, where we had to bring things that represent our cultures, and through non formal talks with each other, I had the chance to learn more about, food culture, arts, music, traditional costumes and manners, and it was so interesting and beneficial for me. It was all great. And in this regard, I look forward to have more activities and programs like this one, where we can work together for a sustainable society. And if there is a slight chance that the same groups, can meet again, for one more exchange in another neighbor host country, I would really be interested and excited to participate and give my best in it.

Anes Mušić

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The project was a great way of exploring other cultures with an amazing crew. Particularly Albania with its great people and history. This method of learning definitely convinced me that intercultural dialogue is a great method of exchanging experiences, chance to improve my social skills and English.



Arton Jakupi

Kosovo

While I grew up I was told that we are the future of the country, the fate is in youth hands, but I don't think that we are going to bring positive changes if we keep thinking the same way as our predecessor did, thinking about borders won't open new doors. Investing in youth and helping them break the barriers is the best way to give our future another direction, to achieve worldwide peace. The closer you are with each other, the harder is to be apart! I never thought that I would create this kind of connection with new people for such a short period of time and now that we have the feeling that we will never meet again is devastating.

This program went beyond my expectations in a good term, I learned that we have so much in common and the only barriers are the borders that society made us believe. Breaking our borders was the first step to great changes and we achieved it through the Exchange Program and what is left is creating stronger bonds with each other so we won't need others to keep them. This is not just a letter to express my amazing experience, but is also a request and a prayer to give us one more opportunity to meet each other again and to go further on our mission to create the future without the influence of the past.





Darija Džigurski
Serbia

I can't remember the last time I had so much fun like this. There were so many activities to do. Every day was different and interesting in its own way. It was never boring. To me it was so amazing to see that much people who have never seen each other before work together that good as a team. It was truly an experience of a life time. I don't think you can get it anywhere else. I've meet so many new amazing people and friends, and I still talk to them. Even though we didn't know each others languages we still managed to talk to each other and learn some new language. My favourite part was speed dating in the beginning. Such a fun and entertaining way to meet a person and their favourite movie, book, song, food... in just two minutes.

Edona Idrizi
Albania



I was really honored to be part of the Youth exchange. It was something special that I didn't get to experience before in which I actually learned a lot more about peace and getting along well with people of other culture and ethnicities. I really loved the exercises we did and enjoyed the time i spent with the others. I made some really good friends there who are really nice and also taught me a lot about their culture and traditions too. I'm really looking forward to be part of the next exchange and why not see my new friends again..thank you so much for the opportunity

Elvira Muhaxheri

Kosovo

In this cultural exchange, I can say I had one of my best experiences of my life. First because, it was my first trip with my friends abroad, and I didn't feel bored or sad because I met amazing people who made me feel comfortable around them. The fact that we had the chance to meet with people with the same age but very different countries was definitely a great way to spend time. I learned new things from them, by exchanging information, about their country, language, and other cultural things. Those five days of work were more relaxing than tiring, like it happens in school, where we have formal education. It was an all well-put event, they took care of everything, and the only thing left for us was to have fun and enjoy each other's company. I think everyone found it interesting and fun so we all became friends for a very short time, and if there is a chance I would love to meet them all again.



Emrah Husić

Bosnia and Herzegovina



Youth exchange as part of the “Youth Up for Intercultural Dialogue and Learning” project is one of the best that has happened to me this school year. We learned a lot about this new thing, perfected our English skills, learned a lot about other traditions of cultures. I met so many wonderful people, from organizers, volunteers to participants and everyone in attendance, they were all good company there. I would love to participate again in similar exchanges. I think this project really changes our view of the world as individuals. We understand differently what we had imagined in our heads in a different way up until then. One wonderful experience that I definitely want to repeat.



Endrit Loku

Kosovo

The Youth Exchange program was amazing. It is going to stay for a long time in my memories not only for its fun it gave but also for the lessons it taught me. After this program I realized that most of the things that keep us distant from each others are just beliefs that we were raised to believe. Each day was more interesting than the other and after each day it passed i had a new special friend in my life. The only thing I can complain of is that it had an end and that's why I am asking you if you can give us another opportunity to meet each other's one more time, and this time we would not meet as strangers as we did last time, but we will reunion as a family.

Enisa Muratović

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In this youth exchange, I have learned about other young people, importance of respect for other people, tolerance and intercultural dialogue. Youth in BiH are increasingly leaving country due to lack of opportunities for learning and development. We have got this unique opportunity and have used it to the maximum to learn something useful for us and our environment. At this exchange, we presented primarily ourselves, and then our country, municipality, and school.



Ermira Ymeraj

Albania

Life is a journey for everyone. Inside a room, house, place, or country, you are unique; therein the space where you grow up and give whatever you can to become someone you like. I became a teacher because I always loved this job that gives me the opportunity to feel the individuality and the destiny of many students. I meet them when they are 15, and I tell them goodbye when they are 18. I take them with the pain of impossibility, and I fill them with hope that the school is the place of knowledge exchange. This happens and it is moving, especially when I invited them to be part of the “You(th) up for intercultural dialogue and learning” Youth Exchange. Their eyes were shining, as they met peers from different countries. Their world was not small anymore, was not the house in the middle of the mountain where they need hours to go to school. Their house was that big room in Tirana, with youngsters from different places. There was no fear to speak their mind, there weren't prejudices, no different, no poor or rich, no strong or weak ones. Everybody was the same: hungry to exchange their best opinions or ideas. Each of them had time to think, learned some values, felt that life in those seven days should not end, they felt good, with no boundaries between them, careless and free. They matured in those seven days. An experience like this motivated them to go back to their lives with different aims. They learnt that world is beautiful when you exchange the best parts of the heart of a human. They grabbed each-others' hands and aimed towards new possibilities that this YE environment, the teachers, and volunteers provided them with. They brought the best in the students' personalities, when it comes to the needs of the youth to act for themselves and the others. I still have a way to go, I still want to see eyes filled with hope, I want to feel heartbeats that have their meaning, I want to see students' minds full of taking new ideas and giving ideas. This is my mission, for them, and only for them. On the other hand, you organizers, that stimulate and give life to such exchanging opportunities, stop by my school. It needs hope to take courage to live the dream of change.





Fjolle Kodra

Kosovo

I can easily say this youth exchange met my expectations and even more. It was all about learning from other communities, dialoguing with our peers about our similarities and differences, all this practiced through open-mindedness. Everyone radiated positive energy, and was willing to discuss everything without being judgmental. Prejudice, stigma, discrimination weren't present in any moment, and everyone's thoughts were valid. The most important part, educational things aside, are the long-lasting friendships that we created. It felt like we'd known each other for our whole lives, just after a couple of days of talking, singing, dancing and exploring the city together. Everyone was open to learning new things from the others tradition and culture, and a lot of new words were learnt. Over all I'd say it was an amazing time and always hoping for the next phase with these amazing people.

Ilma Mušić

Bosnia and Herzegovina

This was my first visit to Tirana and I think this project for sure has broken the stereotypes that we had before.

The main goal of the project was to bring people together, and the right thing was to start from the young people so they can change the opinions of the others in their communities. Right now we are all thinking of spending summer together thanks to this project.





Jeta Raka

Kosovo

Going into this youth exchange, even though I was completely open-minded, the "anxious" feeling was still present time to time. What if I leave a bad first impression?

What if the other participants aren't as open-minded and just don't want to talk? A lot of: "What if's". But when I say things took a 180° turn, minutes after we met everyone, I really mean it. Without romanticizing at all, I can surely say it was "a time to be alive" type of moment. We learnt, we discussed, we socialized, danced, sung, etc. We found out that we're more similar than we think, culture and tradition wise. And even though the differences were present (it's common sense) they made the discussions even more interesting, and everyone left knowing a bit more about the others country. The program was very good, a balance of everything: learning, energizers, exploring the city, and fun of course. The volunteers were really nice, and always down to help. The facilitators were really good at explaining everything and made the atmosphere really nice for everyone to share their thoughts. But the most important thing I'd say, were the friendships we created, everything just clicked and the energy was always positive when hanging out. Saying goodbye was the hardest thing I had to go through. And I really, really, really hope I get to see these people again. It just needs to happen.



Maria Radosavljevic

Serbia

This was a chance for me to meet young people from the Balkans and share opinions and attitudes about culture and coexistence. This was also an opportunity to better understand the views of young people from other countries and to state what I already knew that we are very similar, similar in the challenges we face, similar in the systems we live in, similar in food, etc. During the exchange, we performed a flashmob to indicate togetherness, the connectivity of the hands symbolized our connections, how close and knotted they are. During the video workshop, we had the opportunity to creatively send a message to our friends about how dialogue, togetherness and co-existence are both possible and desirable, and that we should all invest in good neighborly relations. In this way, through direct encounters, the prejudices that are imposed through the media and by the environment in which we live can be dispelled. My message is that we should not live in the past, in the wars and burdens we have inherited from our ancestors, but should think of the Balkans as a space that only a united can thrive on. We will achieve this through youth mobility programs that will provide young people with opportunity to make work together which will slowly change the image of the Balkans as a region that invests in youth, democracy, intercultural dialogue and human rights.

Jezuella Koka

Albania

What can I say about this exchange? It was amazing! At first I thought everything would be formal, working all day and 7 days were a lot. But, now I wish those 7 days were 17! I had lots of fun, but also learned a lot. I met new friends from other countries and learned about their cultures. The commitment showed by the teachers was wonderful, let alone how friendly and vocal they were. As a teenage girl, I felt comfortable and ready for work every day more, because the way of working they met us with, made me love it, made me love working! If you ask me if I would take part again in something like this, YES, of course I would! I'm happy there are organizations that help youth this much! Thank you for this experience.



Marko Todorović

Serbia

Amazing experience that I met and spend wonderful time with very nice people in Tirana. Five absolutely more than interesting days. Now i have many new friends. I would like to participate in some other this kind of projects, and to meet again those people. Once more very good project and organisation, thank you very much this project!



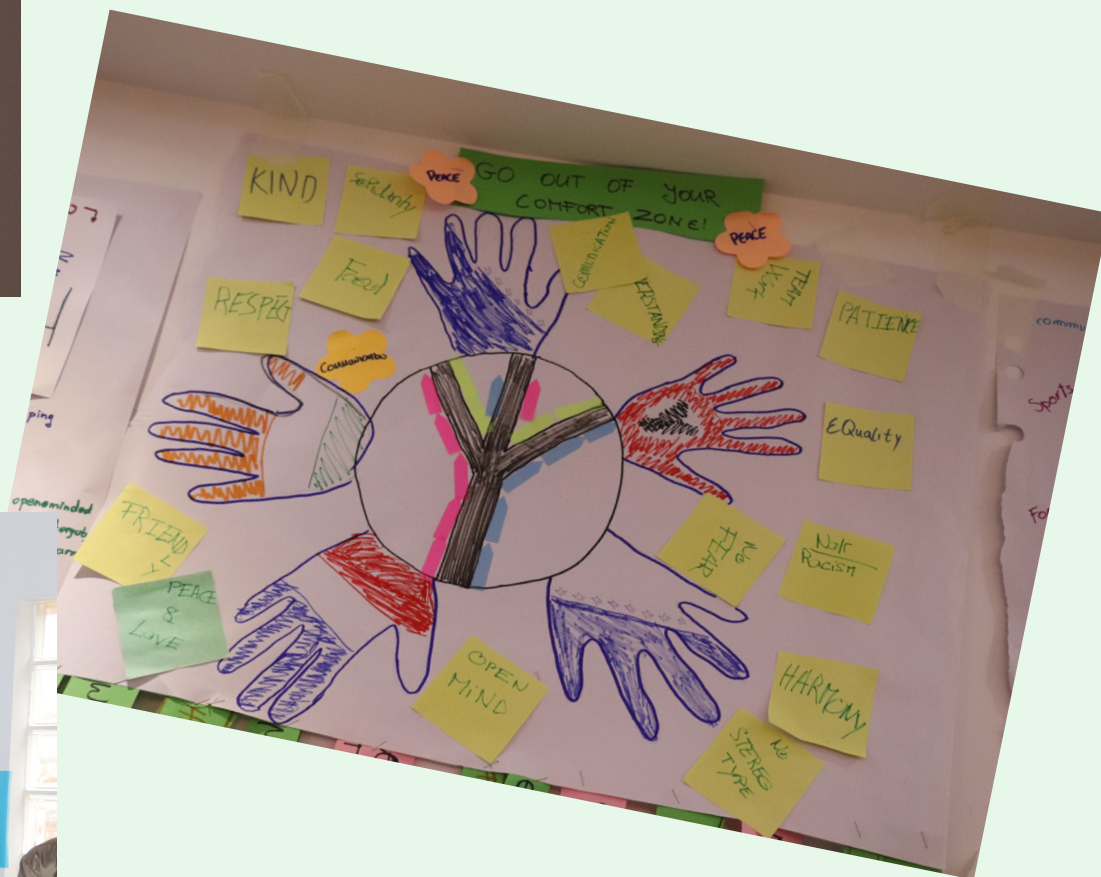
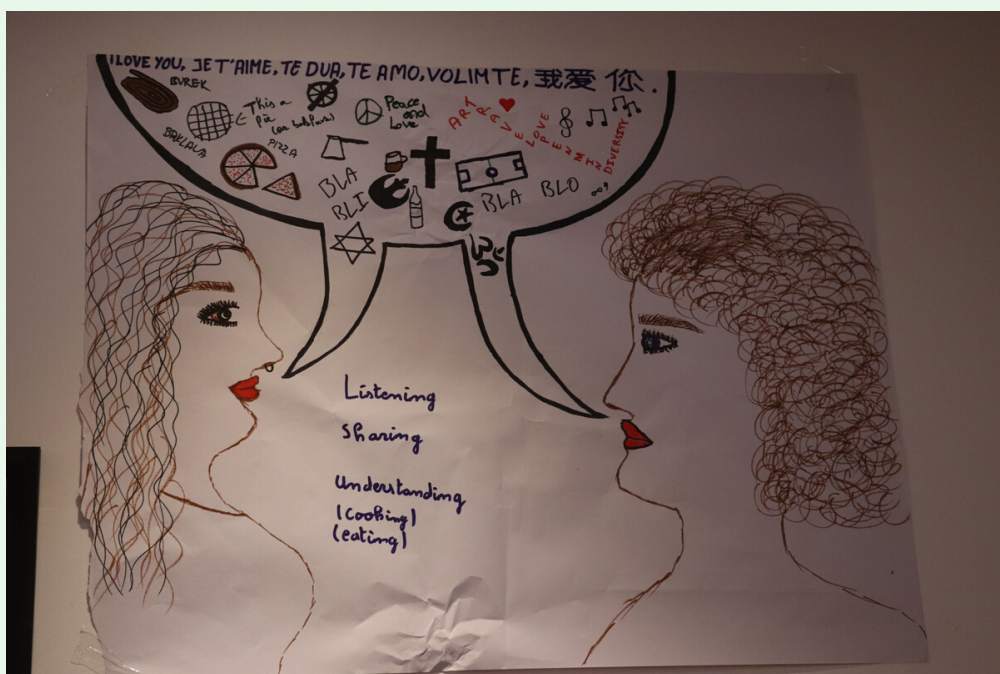
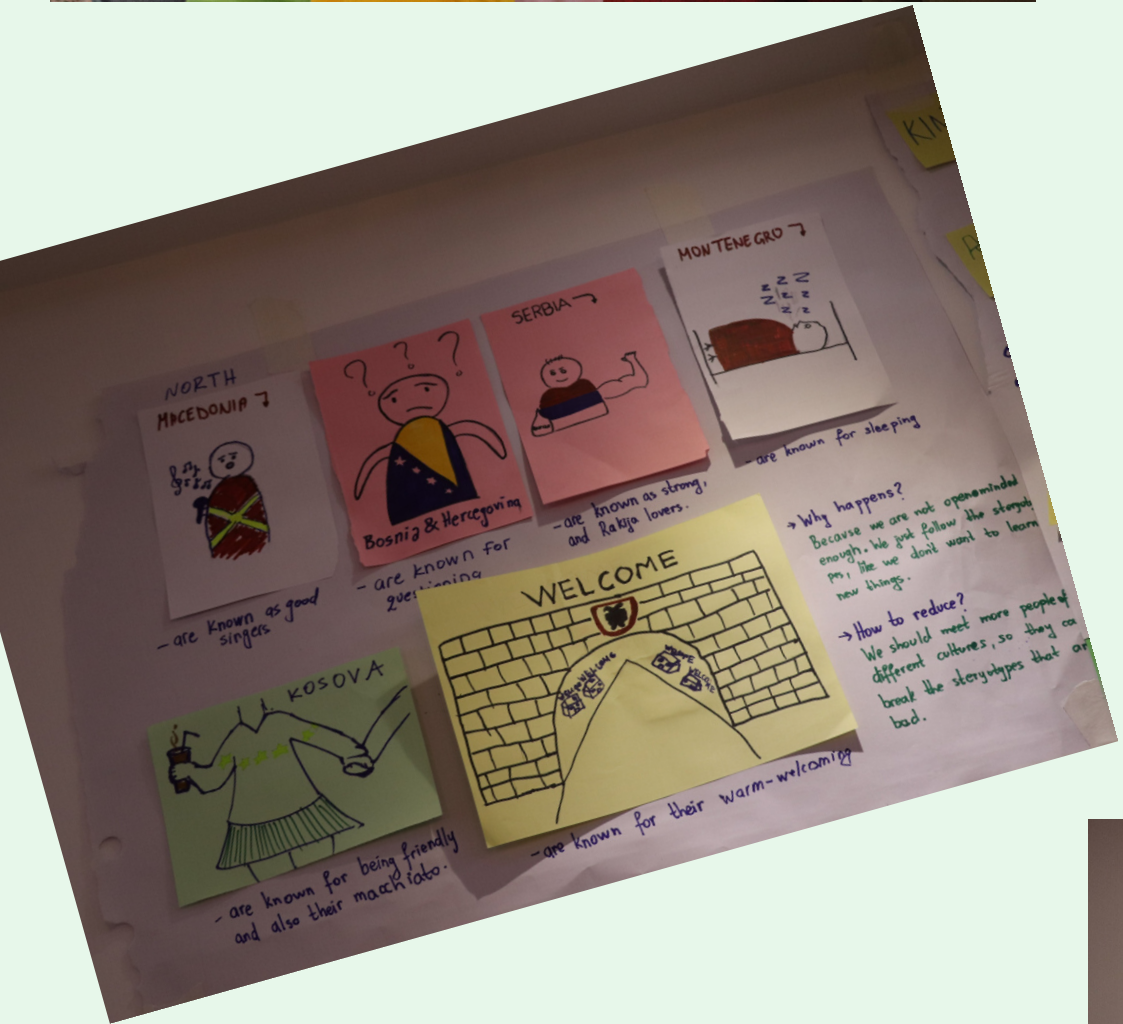
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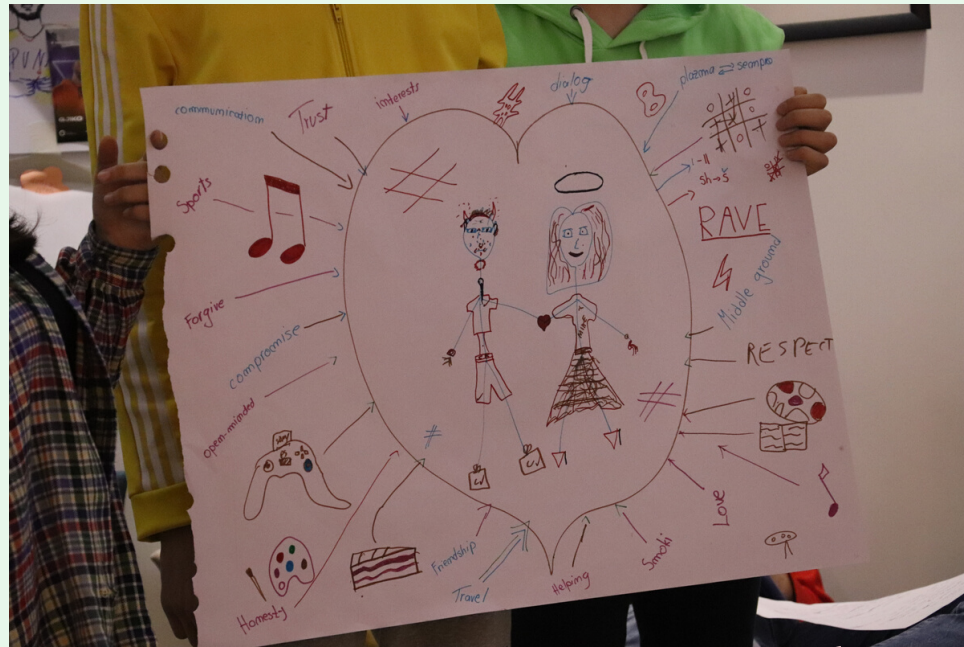
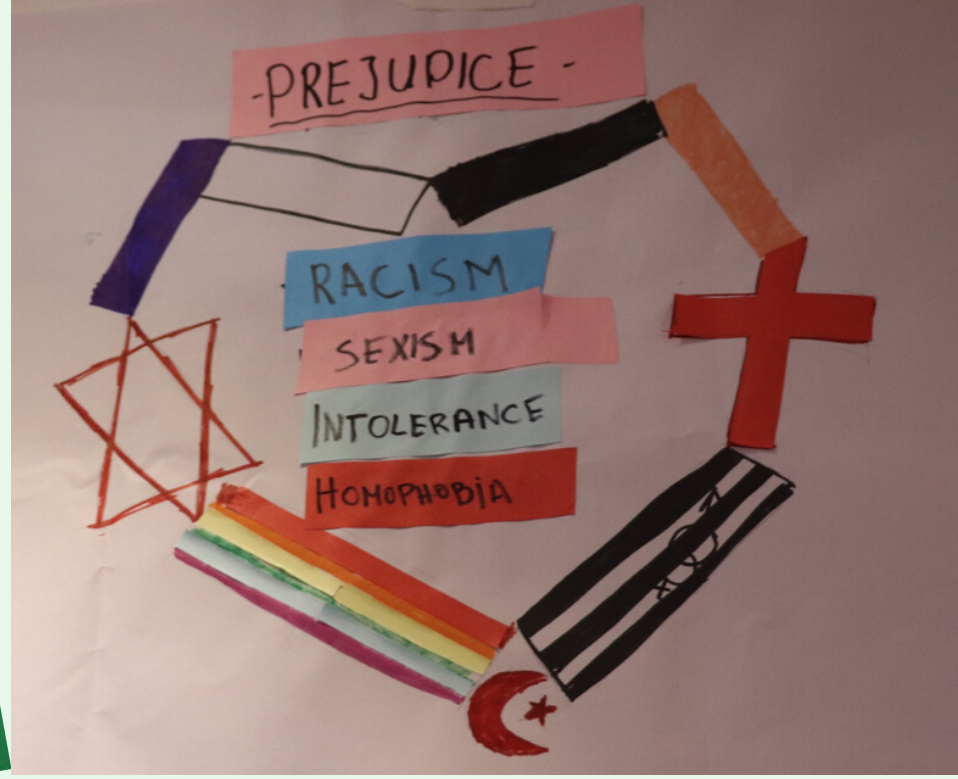
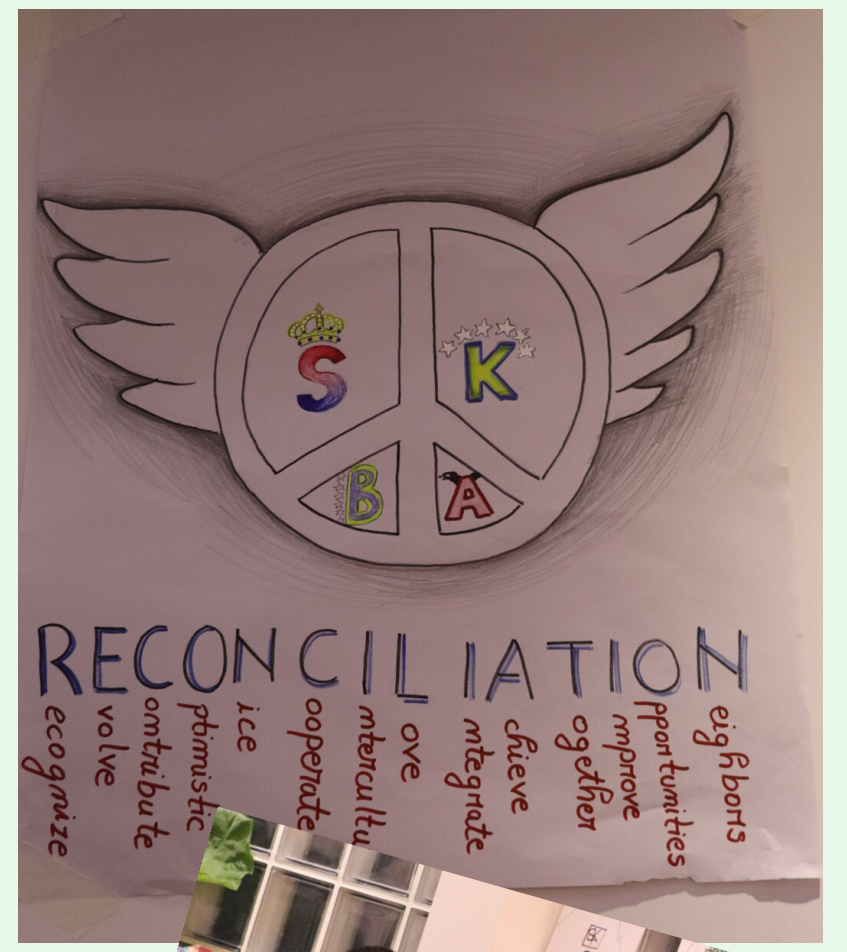
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I would firstly like to thank RYCO, all the volunteers, trainers, and teachers, who made this activity, take place. As a student, I had great time learning about new things in the Balkans, whereas as a person, I had a fantastic unforgettable time. I have created a new friendship, which I believe will last, despite the circumstances or the distance.

I liked everything: I liked the hostel because it was a comfortable place and gave us the impression of a family environment; I liked all the meals; I liked the interaction between the countries; I liked the love that all the volunteers gave to us, but also the trainers, the teachers, and all the participants of this event. I want to thank you for having this event take place, and I wish and hope to gather all once again in a big family table, even if that is for a day only.





You(th) Up for Intercultural Dialogue and Learning



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