

## EUROPE'S VOLUNTEERS CHOOSE PIEBALGA!

This year during July and August foundation „Added Value” (Latvia) in cooperation with partner organizations *Proyecto Kieu ONGD* (Spain), *Associazione Cultural Link* (Italy), *Jaunpiebalga municipality* (Latvia), *Jaunpiebalgas Children and Youth Initiative Centre "Now"* (Latvia) and *Jaunpiebalgas Environment creative workshop* (Latvia) implemented European Voluntary Service project „*Eiropas Brīvprātīgie izvēlas Piebalgu!*”/Europe's Volunteers choose Piebalga!” within programme „Youth in Action”.

The aim of the project was working together as an international voluntary youth group, plan and organize non-formal education activities for yearly exhibition's - fair "Choose Piebalga" participants, emphasizing added value of volunteering and non-formal education in different social processes.



In the project there were two volunteers from Spain and two from Italy. Donatella, Rosalba, Daniel and Sofia daily worked together with local young people. Two days a week in cooperation with local volunteers from Jaunpiebalgas Children and Youth Initiative Centre and their leader they planned non-formal intergenerational learning activities for every participant of exhibition-fair. As a result, each visitor of exhibition-fair was welcomed to

participate in various activities organized by volunteers: build musical instruments from a variety of recyclable materials, make theater puppets and a variety of jewelry from natural materials, participating in the traditional story writing, engage in an improvised theater plays under the guidance of youth from Gulbenes Youth Centre "Base" and enjoy real European tucker.

Besides activities mentioned, volunteers were also involved working together with Jaunpiebalgas environment creative workshop, where volunteers cleaned up and refurbished the resting - place near river Gauja, establishing it as "The Gauja's dreaming place" - a permanent place for inhabitants and visitors of Jaunpiebalgas county. It is made up of hammocks, created by young people, a variety of outdoor games etc. as well with environmental installation, which encourages everyone to think about the values of nature and its added value in our daily lives.



After implementation of activities for the exhibition - fair and recreation area improvement measures, young volunteers evaluated the experience, together with

Jaunpiebalgas young people developing photo - video material about their experiences and planned follow-up activities, which will be implemented in their home countries.

To complete the project activities, we were inviting everyone, who was involved in the project as a volunteer to share their experiences and summarizing the volunteers thoughts on the experience gained, it can be concluded that doing voluntary work young people have many gains:

- ⇒ sincere thanks for work;
- ⇒ sense, that you are useful;
- ⇒ the opportunity to develop;
- ⇒ review of own values;
- ⇒ appropriate spend of their free time;
- ⇒ experience, knowledge and information;
- ⇒ to support the objectives in which he believes;
- ⇒ broadens the horizons;
- ⇒ pride in the progress made and of oneself;
- ⇒ new friends and acquaintances.

People decide to become volunteers for various reasons. For some people motivation is the ability to give to those, who have hard life, others want to achieve social justice, still others want to develop their skills and broaden their horizons. This is an opportunity not only to help, but also to prove yourself and gain new skills, experience and friends with similar interests. Anyone, regardless of their knowledge can become a volunteer. The key is to be motivated and willing to learn!!!

**Volunteering is an experience, an adventure and an opportunity to improve quality of life!**

Information prepared by:  
representatives of foundation "Added Value"  
[pievienotavertiba@gmail.com](mailto:pievienotavertiba@gmail.com)



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