

Come to Play!

### Start

Everything started the summer of 2017 when I met during a summer work camp an Italian boy who was doing his EVS project in Prague. He told me so many nice things about it and I considered it as a possibility after my studies. In October that same year I started my last year of University and already in January I was looking for something to do next year. I started my search in the EVS web site. My ideas were clear, I wanted to work away in a Slavic country. Among a few possibilities in Croatia, Slovenia and Poland I sent my application to the first two ones. The Slovenian organization answer back pretty quick saying they were interested in my profile. After a few mails and the final Skype interview, I was in.

Since they day they confirmed it, I could not stop thinking how would this experience be, but I decided to focus my mind elsewhere as it was too soon for that. I had finished my Translation and Interpreting studies and summer arrived, each time I was a little bit closer to the Playground. I have to say that from my sending organization I did not take any preparatory workshops, I just wrote them frequently so all the papers would be correct. I did have the chance to go to Slovenia a month or so before the project started and spend a couple of days there, will all the costs included. Finally I decided not to go as it was two days of travelling. I kept writing with my host organization to go through my contract and to sign it.

To be honest, I did not have high hopes about the project. My head was already too busy itself to think about how it would be, how I would feel, plus I like surprises and I like to get impressed. It was already mid-September when I started to feel the moment of leaving. I felt a little bit anxious about leaving my dear ones, but at the same time I wanted to go. So, the time came and I took a flight to Zagreb where a friend of mine was waiting for me and after a day in that beautiful city, I finally arrived to Maribor at night where Nina and Lili waited for me.

At the beginning my expectations were little but good ones. I just wanted to adapt to the playground environment soon so I could connect with the kids. I am very playful so On the other had I only felt a bit afraid that kids would not like me or they would be afraid of me, but I guess everyone has its own fears.

The year itself has been so long that I could be writing about it for a long time. I would like to be brief but deep.

### Duration

We started the project at the beginning of October and we had a month to adapt to the places we would like the most in the playground. We worked from 13 to 18 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. During this month we got to know the kids while baking chestnuts in the afternoon by the fire and we built our own pizza oven with the help of playworkers from

Graz. To conclude this month we had our Arrival training where we were able to meet nice people and volunteers from other parts of Europe. This month went pretty fast and we could notice how the cold days were coming. November was quite rainy and colourful, but the raking period started because the playground was covered in leaves. I spent this month together with December playing games by the fire, raking to get my body warm and preparing my survival experiments by the fire.

In January leaves stopped falling to leave time for the snow while I kept doing my experiments with fire and ovens before the watchful eyes of the kids and the white landscape around us. February was a little bit the same and I took some days to travel and meet my family and friends around Europe. I have to say that I never experienced boredom, especially while I was by the fire. March came and with it the first rays of sun and one of the biggest events in Slovenia, Carnival. I made the invitation for the Kurents to come to the playground. The scary Kurents came, we were on costumes, we had face painting and we had a great time. March was warmer and we had more kids and more things to do. At the beginning of April I had my Midterm training where I met old friend again and made new ones, very inspiring again. The day it finished I went to Ljubljana and met my girlfriend, she would spend one month with us helping on the playground. Maria got used to the dynamic of the playground very fast, it was good for all of us because she was playing and at the same time she helped us a lot. We celebrated the day of change and workers from Zavarovalnicacompany came to the playground to help with painting and raking. I was in charge of immortalizing that day. We also had the inauguration of our own official basketball court.

At the end of April I took a break and went to Spain for a short visit. Since 1st of April we were already working Wednesdays also (the playground was open but I was working at school) and we worked from 12.30 to 19.00. May was already a hectic month on the playground. A lot of kid a lot of games and always a lot of fun. We had one of the most magical nights of my stay in Slovenia, the night on the playground. That night we had the official opening of the oven, where we baked our homemade pizzas. The playground was full of lights and the temperature was surprisingly warm, so after dinner we could play games in the playground and finally we gathered around the fire before we went to sleep. I was the main photographer so I could immortalize some beautiful moments of that night. Next day we woke up, had breakfast together and played some games before we said goodbye. The last days of May we had rain so the playground was a bit more calm but still with kids full of energy.

June brought again warm temperatures and the Lent Festival. In the playground we put sprinkles so all of us could play with the water and kids really enjoyed and displayed their creativity of how to get us wet without being angry at them. During this time the visit period started and I combined the concerts in Lent with my friends with the games in the playground. At the beginning of July I had to replace one of our co-workers in the creative corner. We had two weeks of painting which I and the kids enjoyed a lot. I also made drawings of all our team and we hanged them by the "Lopa", all the members were really

happy with my work and laughed reading their descriptions. My friends from Spain came and we visited Slovenia and as they left, María was with the team again to help along the summer. She adopted again really fast and made really good friends who would never let her go away. Two weeks later we had our first part of Dozifratz exchange in Maribor, a survival weekend that the kids and the team of co-workers enjoyed a lot. After the exchange María and I took some well-deserved holidays in Bosnia and also in Slovenia and Croatia with my family.

After a very nice holidays we came back to the playground and at the end of the week we packed our sleeping bags again and we headed to Graz for the second part of the Dozifratz exchange. When we came back from the exchange we had to say goodbye to María because she had to go to Spain. Next weekend I had another exchange, this time in Hamburg with kids from the playground and from the school I used to work. The exchange lasted one week and it was one of the best experiences I ever had.

Back in Maribor it was time to enjoy the last days of sun and my last days in Maribor as well. The last shot of adrenaline came with the 9th birthday of the playground. During the day I was in charge of taking photos and short videos of the different activities among which were fencing, climbing, making badges, playing drums and much more. The day was great and a bit emotional as well. I think it was the perfect ending for an unforgettable year. Everything run as we pretended to be and we even had the visit of some important charge in the municipality which promised to help the playground in the future.

My last days were a bit harsh but the playground helped me to forget about everything. It was one farewell after another which concluded with one big personal party in the place that was home for this last year, the playground. I finally left the 28th of September heading Poland towards a new adventure.

## Conclusion

As I honestly said I did not have big expectations about the project. I was going through a tough time in Spain and I just wanted to change the environment and try to do my best in this new adventure. Not having expectations did not mean that I did not like the project just that I wanted to be surprised, and I did. Sometimes we feel disappointed because we make big expectations about things and this fake illusions become very strong in our minds.

At the beginning of the summer 2018 I had a strong panic attack and I suffered from anxiety all along that summer, it was an awful feeling. I needed to have my mind elsewhere so my family asked if I really wanted to come to the project or if I wanted to stay in Burgos I had no doubt I wanted to come here and free my mind from all the negative thoughts and the awkward feelings I had before. Coming here was like a therapy for all this problems, although I still experienced some bad moments, the good vibes and the positive energy that I felt was very inspiring and comforting for me. After a long time I finally found myself again.

All the things I can say about this year and this project are hard to describe with words. I am very thankful to all the members of the group that made it possible. I am thankful also to the other organisations that trusted me. Thanks also to the kids and their families who made this possible. I could write here a hundred names but these people know that I am very thankful to them too.

Sergio Urizarna Saiz

Pridi se igrati!

Začetek

Vse se je začelo poleti 2017, ko sem med poletnim delovnim kampom spoznal fanta iz Italije, ki je v Pragi delal svoj EVS projekt. O njem mi je povedal toliko lepih reči, da sem ga obravnaval kot možnost po študiju. Oktobra istega leta sem začel svoj zadnji letnik univerze in že januarja iskal nekaj kaj bi počel naslednje leto. Začel sem moje iskanje na spletni strani EVS. Moje ideje so bile jasne, želel sem delati drugje, v slovanski državi. Med nekaj možnostmi, na Hrvaškem, v Sloveniji in na Poljskem, sem poslal svojo prijavo prvima dvema. Slovenska organizacija je odgovorila precej hitro, češ da jih zanima moj profil. Po nekaj mailih in po končnem Skype intervjuju, sem bil noter.

Od dne, ko so potrdili, nisem mogel nehati razmišljati kakšna bo ta izkušnja, ampak sem se odločil preusmeriti svoje misli drugam, ker je bilo za to še prezgodaj. Zaključil sem svoj študij prevajanja in tolmačenja in prišlo je poletje, vsakič sem bil nekoliko bližje igrišču. Moram reči, da od moje pošiljajoče organizacije nisem sprejel nobenih pripravljalnih delavnic, samo pisal sem jim pogosto zato, da bi bili vsi dokumenti pravilni. Imel sem priložnost obiskati Slovenijo mesec ali več preden se je pričel projekt in tam preživeti nekaj dni z vsemi vključenimi stroški. Na koncu sem se odločil, da ne grem, saj sta bila dva dni potovanja. Še naprej sem si pisal z mojo gostiteljsko organizacijo, da smo šli skozi mojo pogodbo in jo podpisali.

Iskreno povedano, glede projekta nisem imel velikih upov. Moja glava je bila že prezaposlena, da bi še razmišljal, kako bo, kako se bom počutil, poleg tega imam rad presenečenja in sem rad navdušen. Bilo je že sredi septembra, ko sem začel čutiti trenutek odhoda. Malo sem bil zaskrbljen glede razhoda z bližnjimi, hkrati pa sem želel iti. Torej, prišel je čas in vzel sem polet do Zagreba, kjer me je čakal moj prijatelj in po dnevu v tem lepem mestu, sem ponoči končno prispel v Maribor, kjer sta me pričakali Nina in Lili.

Na začetku so bila moja pričakovanja majhna, ampak dobra. Želel sem se samo čimprej prilagoditi okolju igrišča, da bi se lahko povezal z otroki. Sem zelo igriv, tako da sem se po drugi strani malo bal, da me otroci ne bodo marali ali da se me bodo bali, ampak mislim, da ima vsak svoje strahove.

Samo leto je bilo tako dolgo, da bi lahko o njem še dolgo pisal. Rad bi bil kratek, vendar globok.

## Trajanje

S projektom smo pričeli v začetku oktobra in smo imeli mesec dni časa, da smo se prilagodili kotičkom, ki so nam bilina igrišču najljubši. Ob torkih, četrkih in petkih smo delali od 13. do 18. ure. V tem mesecu smo spoznavali otroke, medtem ko smo popoldne ob ognju pekli kostanje in s pomočjo delavcev iz Gradca zgradili lastno peč za peko pice. Za zaključek tega meseca smo imeli naš trening prihoda, kjer smo imeli priložnost spoznati prijetne ljudi in prostovoljce iz drugih delov Evrope. Ta mesec je minil precej hitro in opazili smo, kako prihajajo hladni dnevi. November je bil precej deževen in barvit, vendar se je začelo obdobje grabljenja, saj je bilo igrišče prekrito z listjem. Ta mesec, skupaj z decembrom, sem preživel z igranjem iger ob ognju, z grabljenjem, da sem ogrel svoje telo in s pripravljanjem svojih poskusov preživetja ob ognju.

Januarja je listje nehalo padati, da je pustilo čas za sneg, medtem ko sem jaz še naprej izvajal poskuse z ognjem in pečmi pred budnimi očmi otrok in bele pokrajine okoli nas. Februar je bil dokaj podoben, zato sem si vzel nekaj dni za potovanje in za druženje z mojo družino in prijatelji po Evropi. Moram reči, da nikoli nisem doživel dolgčasa, še posebej ko sem bil ob ognju. Prišel je marec in z njim prvisončni žarki in eden največjih dogodkov v Sloveniji, pust. Za kurente sem naredil vabilo, da obišejo na igrišče. Prišli so strašni kurenti, mi smo nosili kostume, imeli smo poslikavo obraza in se imeli odlično. Marec je bil toplejši in imeli smo več otrok ter več stvari za početi. Na začetku aprila sem imel vmesno usposabljanje, kjer sem ponovno srečal starega prijatelja in si ustvaril nove, ponovno zelo navdihujoče. Na dan, ko se je končalo, sem šel v Ljubljano in se srečal z mojo punco, ki je en mesec preživela z nami in pomagala na igrišču. Maria se je zelo hitro navadila na dinamiko igrišča, kar je bilo dobro za vse nas, ker se je igrala in nam hkrati zelo pomagala. Praznovali smo dan za spremembo in na igrišče so prišli zaposleni iz zavarovalnice, da so pomagali pri barvanju in grabljenju. Tisti dan sem bil zadolžen za ovekovečenje. Imeli smo tudi otvoritev lastnega uradnega košarkaškega igrišča.

Konec aprila sem si vzel dopust in šel na krajši obisk v Španijo. Od 1. aprila smo že delali tudi ob sredah (igrišče je bilo odprto, ampak jaz sem delal na šoli), delali smo od 12.30 do 19. ure.

Maj je bil že pester mesec na igrišču. Veliko otrok, veliko iger in vedno veliko zabave. Imeli smo eno najbolj čarobnih noči mojega bivanja v Sloveniji, noč na igrišču. Tisto noč smo imeli uradno odprtje peči, kjer smo spekli naše domače pice. Igrišče je bilo polno luči in temperatura je bila presenetljivo topla, zato smo po večerji lahko igrali igre na igrišču in se na koncu zbrali okoli ognja, preden smo se odpravili spat. Bil sem glavni fotograf, da sem lahko ovekovečil nekaj lepih trenutkov tiste noči. Naslednji dan smo se zbudili, zajtrkovali skupaj in igrali nekaj iger preden smo se poslovili. Zadnje dni v maju smo imeli dež, zato je bilo igrišče nekoliko bolj umirjeno, a vseeno z otroki, polnimi energije.

Junij je spet prinesel tople temperature in Festival Lent. Na igrišču smo postavili škropila, da smo se lahko vsi igrali z vodo in otroci so res uživali ter pokazali svojo ustvarjalnost, kako nas zmočiti, ne da bi se jezili na njih. V tem času se je začelo obdobje obiskov in koncerte s prijatelji na Lentu sem združil z igrani na igrišču. V začetku julija sem moral v ustvarjalnem kotičku zamenjati enega od naših sodelavcev. Imeli smo dva tedna slikanja, v katerem smo jaz in otroci zelo uživali. Naredil sem tudi risbe celotne naše ekipe, katere smo obesili pri "Lopi". Vsi člani so bili res zadovoljni z mojim delom in se smejali, ko so brali njihove opise.

Prišli so moji prijatelji iz Španije in obiskali Slovenijo in ko so odšli, je María ponovno ostala z ekipo, da je pomagala čez poletje. Znova se je zelo hitro privadila in ustvarila zelo dobre prijatelje, ki je nikoli ne bi pustili oditi stran. Dva tedna pozneje smo imeli v Mariboru svoj prvi del izmenjave Dozifratz, vikend preživetja, v katerem so otroci in ekipa sodelavcev zelo uživali. Po izmenjavi sva si z Marijo privoščila nekaj zasluženih počitnic v Bosni, pa tudi v Sloveniji in na Hrvaškem z mojo družino.

Po zelo lepih počitnicah sva se vrnila na igrišče in konec tedna smo spet spakirali spalne vreče in se odpravili proti Gradcu na drugi del izmenjave Dozifratz. Ko smo se vrnili z izmenjave, smo se morali posloviti od Marije, ker je morala v Španijo. Naslednji vikend sem imel še eno izmenjavo, tokrat v Hamburgu z otroki z igrišča in iz šole, v kateri sem včasih delal. Izmenjava je trajala en teden in je bila ena najboljših izkušenj, kar sem jih kdaj imel.

Nazaj v Mariboru je bil čas, da uživam v zadnjih sončnih dneh in tudi mojih zadnjih dneh v Mariboru. Zadnji strel adrenalina je prišel z 9. rojstnim dnevom igrišča. Čez dan sem bil zadolžen za fotografiranje in kratke video posnetke različnih dejavnosti, med katerimi so bilisabljanje, plezanje, izdelovanje značk, igranje na bobne in še veliko več. Dan je bil super in tudi nekoliko čustven. Mislim, da je bil to popoln zaključek za nepozabno leto. Vse je teklo, kot smo načrtovali, imeli smo celo obisk enega pomembnejšega predstavnika občine, ki je obljubil, da bo igrišču pomagal tudi v prihodnje.

Moji zadnji dnevi so bili nekoliko ostri, a igrišče mi je pomagalo, da sem pozabil na vse. Bilo je eno slovo za drugim, ki se je zaključilo z eno veliko osebno zabavo na prostoru, ki je bil dom za to zadnje leto, na igrišču. Končno sem 28. septembra odšel proti Poljskinaproti novi pustolovščini.

### Zaključek

Kot sem iskreno povedal, glede projekta nisem imel velikih pričakovanj. V Španiji sem šel skozi težek čas in želel sem le spremeniti okolje in se v tej novi pustolovščini potruditi po svojih najboljših močeh. To, da nisem imel pričakovanj, še ni pomenilo, da mi projekt ni bil všeč, samo da sem hotel biti presenečen, in to sem tudi bil. Včasih se počutimo razočarani, ker glede stvari veliko pričakujemo in te lažne iluzije postanejo v naših glavah zelo močne.

V začetku poletja 2018 sem imel močan napad panike in vso tisto poletje sem trpel zaradi tesnobe, občutek je bil grozen. Svoj um sem moral imeti drugje, zato me je družina vprašala, ali si res želim priti na projekt ali želim ostati v Burgosu. Brez dvoma sem hotel priti sem in se osvoboditi vseh negativnih misli in nerodnih občutkov, ki sem jih imel prej. Prihajati sem je bilo kot terapija za vse te težave, čeprav sem še vedno doživel nekaj slabih trenutkov, dobre vibracije in pozitivna energija, ki sem jih občutil so bile zame zelo navdihujoče in tolažljive. Po dolgem času sem se končno spet našel.

Vse, kar lahko povem o tem letu in tem projektu, je težko opisati z besedami. Zelo sem hvaležen Vsem članom skupine, ki so to omogočili, sem zelo hvaležen. Hvaležen sem tudi drugim organizacijam, ki so mi zaupale. Hvala tudi otrokom in njihovim družinam, ki so to omogočili. Tu bi lahko napisal sto imen, vendar ti ljudje vedo, da sem jim tudi jaz zelo hvaležen.

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