About my ESC experience

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Out of many skills I guess persistence and patience are the first skills I started developing by applying to the ESC project itself. It takes tens maybe hundreds of applications to write, rewrite, edit, edit again, submit, be contacted for an interview, not be contacted at all, do well in the interview, then get rejected and sit with a sullen face for the next few hours, change one's perspective, see growth in failure and start drafting the next application until you get a nice email about being approved for the project while you are sweating out on a treadmill in the gym (or not a treadmill). This is my story anyways, might be a little different from yours, however in the end we all end up in the same learning environment.

For me it is first and foremost a personal growth environment. I wanted to distance myself from my usual environment in my country and experience life outside my comfort zone. It started to stretch when I planned my first plane trip and was terrified not to miss the connecting flight or just wander off in the wrong direction in the airport (I even studied the airport plan, to get acquainted with the territory (don't laugh). Another learning experience was placing a roommate within my aforementioned comfort zone:). I am constantly learning to live with someone who is not my family and having to communicate with them every day. Also being an adult means having to plan your budget and take responsibility for your expenses.

Another thing that surprised me, (maybe not me as much as my family and friends) was that I didn't feel depressed when I moved to Lithuania. In fact, I didn't feel I changed countries, I felt calm and safe. But I definitely noticed a lot of differences. First, language. I tried to catch some familiar words, and learn basic ones. Now, when I am tired or frustrated with something I can say "Vargo vakarienė", which literally means poor man's supper.

While living here, also travelling to other European countries, I am trying to keep an open mind towards people and situations and be respectful.

In my workplace, the library, I spend a lot of time with kids. Although we don't speak the same language, we manage to understand each other somehow sometimes by asking one of the kids who speaks English or Russian to translate for us. I found out there are kids who learnt fluent English just by watching YouTube videos. Also I was surprised to learn that sometimes kids talk to you like adults, and sometimes I forget that I am an adult and behave like a kid. Sometimes I learn or re-learn things through kids again.

During these months in the library I made a lego robot for the first time and saw how a 3D printer works. Making the robot out of all the different parts and reading the manual seemed impossible, but armed with patience and curiosity I finally managed to get to the last step and make the robot move with a remote control. Besides, I learned how to use Xbox and dance like crazy with kids. I also did a lot of handmade and participated in English language club, so it was good for my creativity and language skills. I developed my organizational and communication skills and understood that I should take everything in my own hands if I want to do or organize something.

And one more thing. If you come from a southern country, when summers are very hot, don't underestimate Lithuanian sun. If you go to the seaside on a hot day, take a bottle of water, a straw hat and sunscreen, don't stay too long under direct sun and don't drink coffee on the beach, otherwise you'll end up just like me, with a sunstroke, in an ambulance heading to a hospital.