

## INSPIRATIONAL STORY

*I came, I saw, I stayed.....thanks to my Youthpass competences!*

I'm Nastja from sLOVEnia. Before I went on my EVS, I was just an ordinary person. Working a job I didn't like, buying stuff I didn't need, complaining all the time, and most of all, living a life with no deeper meaning. My head was full of ideas with even more of the obstacles why they can't be implemented and with **fear for insufficiently developed informal competences, that prevents me for being a suitable candidate for a job market.** I felt that there must be a way that I could do what I love and would not need to struggle with costs of everyday life. Finding an EVS in Split (Croatia) was a breaking point in my life.

On the day of my arrival in Split, I felt like I belong here. I felt completely calm, the sea and climate really had a good effect on me. Split was a perfect place for my restless soul, to find its peace. I was the first EVS volunteer in **Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce.** I really wanted to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in Dalmatia and thus improve my informal competences. Most of my everyday tasks were focused around assisting in the eco-certification program for tourist accommodations. I was also cooperating with protected areas and promoted EVS volunteering programs. Fundraising and learning project management were as well among my priority activities. All of those tasks boosted my skills and **Youthpass helped me to reflect and understand what I have learned.**

I could describe much more in details my activities, but I want to emphasize **the facts I've learned during my EVS that could be beneficial for the new volunteers,** as this was also a year of my intensive personal development. Indeed, there were also a "rainy days a.k.a. troubles in paradise", but in those days, I've learned to **put the focus on the positive instead of the negative.** I always "went for an extra mile", meaning that I always did more than it was expected of me. I finally realized that **"if you do what you love, you won't work a day in your life"** and EVS is an incredible opportunity to find out what you really truly love to do, to find your mission in life! Youthpass helps you to measure your learning process. With a constant evaluation, you become aware of how much you have learned and how much you grow every day! **Youthpass makes subconscious conscious!**

Check EVS organizations that are active in the field of your desires, send them and incredible EVS motivation letter on **how you want to contribute to their work and how they can contribute to improve your Youthpass skills!** They won't be able to refuse your ideas and proactivity!

During my EVS I've met awesome people; some of them became my deepest friends. They motivate me, help me to grow mentally and integrate more easily into Dalmatian culture and language. But one person made a significant change in my life. My EVS supervisor really had a great influence on me. She saw "a sparkle in my eyes" for sustainable tourism and significantly helped me to develop more knowledge about this topic and meet key leaders working in this field. Most of all, she became a role model for me, who taught me that **if there's a will, mountains will move!**

And there was a will! I strongly believe that **when you find your purpose, everything will fit its place.** And it did. One day, a lady from our partner organization informed us that there is an open call for tourism projects and we should apply for it. You'll say...ok....so what?

There was one small requirement that gave me the sign that this is an opportunity for me! *”Organizations who will employ a long-term volunteer will get extra points for project funding.”*

After I finished with EVS, I stayed in Association Sunce, because the project we have applied was approved! **Without a Youthpass learning plan, constant measurement and evaluation of my knowledge, competences and results, I wouldn't have reached my desired level of success.**

Today I'm working as a junior project manager for the project “**Greening Dalmatian tourism offer**”. I'm also responsible for the **new EVS volunteers** as EVS program coordinator. I really love my job, and most of all, I love the fact that **I'm creating a new vision of a better future, in harmony with nature and local communities**. Coordinating new volunteers and members, that want to contribute, gives me an extra inspiration and motivation! What a wonderful life I live...all thanks to my EVS project, Youthpass learning plan and Association Sunce!

Nastja Logar