

Enriching Erasmus+ programme through Social Inclusion Days

For the second time this academic year, the **Erasmus Student Network (ESN)** is organising **Social Inclusion Days initiative**, where local ESN associations host activities that through volunteering bring together international students and local communities and advocate for inclusive mobility programmes.

In the last edition more than **12.145** international students joined as volunteers and engaged with more than **26.000** members of their local communities, while promoting diversity, inclusion and the Erasmus+ programme.

All of this was coordinated by a team of **1.447** volunteers of the Erasmus Student Network. The two-week initiative is **running from 29th of April until 12th of May 2019**, with a focus on the **learning experience of international students during their volunteering activity and internationalization at home for local students**.

In the framework of the SocialErasmus+ project, Erasmus students will have the opportunity to hold classes on various topics to local schools during Erasmus in Schools visits. Through their engagement, students enrich their curricula, gain competences and learn how one can contribute to the improvement of society as European citizens.

“Studying abroad is more than what happens during classes on campus. To achieve its full potential, the experience must give students the opportunity to grow as individuals. Throughout the year, and especially during the Social Inclusion Days, ESN volunteers create the space for exchange students to get that extra layer of living abroad. They get to interact and influence positively each community they contact with, understanding how we, as citizens of the XXI century, have the duty to make our society progress as a whole. Over the next days, thousands of students and ESN volunteers will share the transformative power of studying abroad with each person they contact. Schools, associations, many institutions in our cities, and many more, will all integrate the Erasmus movement. These days and initiatives are part of **ESN's effort to bring universities closer to their cities, helping them to achieve their true universal role**. When these days are over, no one will be left unchanged”. - **João Pinto**, President of the Erasmus Student Network

While celebrating and enjoying their Erasmus+ experience, young people will have a chance to take part in volunteering activities organised by ESN volunteers such as food drives and donations, educational workshops in schools or kindergartens, conferences and seminars, mapping universities for accessibility, raising awareness about disabilities and many more events that promote active citizenship and social inclusion.

“**During my Erasmus exchange was the first time I participated in volunteering activities**, and while I always associated it with something that would require the right skills, it turned out that to help the local community you only need willingness, an open mind and a positive attitude. What we get in return is life experience, new friendships and the knowledge that every person in the world is struggling with same problems and in the end, the only thing that sometimes separates us is the language.” - **Jakub Wardziński**, Erasmus student in Rijeka, Croatia.

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the **biggest student association in Europe**. Present at **over 1000 Higher Education Institutions**, it unites over 500 local associations in **39 countries**. More than 15,000 volunteers take care of international colleagues under the motto “**Students helping students**”. ESN works for the creation of a more mobile and flexible education environment by supporting and developing the student exchange from different levels and providing an intercultural experience.

For more information, contact at communication@esn.org and visit www.esn.org.