

Vladimir Budalić - Budja: "The point of youth work is to be guided by the needs of young people"

Introduce yourself and your job

I work as youth programme coordinator and a youth worker at Pokret gorana Vojvodine (Vojvodina Environmental Movement) from Sremski Karlovci, Serbia. Our mission is creating local sustainable communities and we believe that active young people are one main elements of of such communities. Some of my daily tasks include direct work with young people through our local youth club programme, mentoring non-formal youth groups from Vojvodina (North Serbia region), co-managing youth center 'Eco Center Radulovački', implementing training courses on local, national and international level and many others.

What makes your job exciting?

What makes my job exciting is the fact that the work is always dynamic and there are always some new activities/topics popping up. Additionally, the job provides space to contribute to social changes in the local communities and to help out those that are in need.

What are your dreams as a youth worker?

My dream as a youth worker is to live and work in communities which fully recognise the work we are doing and to have youth work as a complementary profession in various institutions such as schools or sports clubs or even jails.

Why did you choose youth work?

I chose youth work because I know how much youth work programmes helped me in growing up and I wanted to be able to help other young people as well. Ever since high school I was interested in working with people and I really liked the non-formal and experiential approach to youth work and freedom to address the actual need of young people. I had the luck to start working at something that really motivates me and that is useful for the society. Those are some of the thing why I chose youth work.

What is your most memorable experience as a youth worker?

My most memorable experiences as youth worker would probably be all those times when the young person I was working with got the chance to experience something for the first time, like - travelling for an activity outside of the local community , getting local project approved, meeting people from cultures that are quite different from their own, organising an activity on their own,

etc. Also, the 'breakthrough' moments, when a young person starts thinking differently on some topic, especially when it comes to understanding and accepting people from different backgrounds.

How has your job affected you and what have you learned?

The job effected me in many ways. Working with young people means you have to constantly be open to new experiences and explore new methodologies and approaches. By mentoring young people I managed to understand myself and my past actions better. This jobs keeps me motivated to continue working towards positive changes in the society. I have also gained a lot of everyday and sometimes 'boring' knowledge, which is quite necessary to implement activities, ranging from writing projects and reports to 'do-it-yourself' fixing everyday things. Probably the most important thing that I have learned was that youth workers have to learn adapt on almost everyday level, since the point of youth work is to be guided by the needs of young people. This often means I need to get out of my comfort zone in order to make safe and learning space for youth where they will get competences which they need and are interested in.