



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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ERASMUS IN FINLAND, 18 - 24 FEBRUARY 2018

Political participation of young people

Diary of Sarah Gebhardt



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My project: Panel discussion about the political participation of young people

1. Short description of project (What? Where and when? Why? Who? ...)

We have to prepare one member of our team to participate in a panel discussion about the political participation of young people. Therefore we have to find possible answers to questions that might be asked during the discussion and research some background information about the situation of our panelist's country.

2. Main goal(s) and objectives (What do you want to achieve?)

- improve English skills
- show importance of being an active part of politics
- encourage others to participate in politics

3a. Project team (Who is part of the team?)

Eraldo (Italy), Mirja (Finland, teamleader), Anita (Estonia, panelist), Breagha (Scotland), Leonie (Germany), Sarah (Germany)

3b. Project plan (Who does what and when?) See *the project plan worksheet below.*

4. Resources (What do you need?)

- computer
- researches to have some background information about each country
- English skills
- courage and confidence to speak in front of an audience as a panelist

5. Constraints (Which obstacles might get in your way?)

misunderstandings, problems with the language

6. Evaluation (Did you achieve your main goal? What went well? What went wrong? Which difficulties did you encounter? How did you solve them? ...)

We achieved our main goal by preparing our panelist well for the panel discussion so she could explain in front of the audience (young people!) why political participation of young people is so important. Luckily, there weren't any problems during the preparation, not even with the language.

Project plan

Which steps do you have to take?	Until when?	Who is responsible?	√
Think about questions that might be asked during the panel discussion	Monday	everybody	X
Document everything and give everybody access to it		Mirja	X
Be the panelist of our team		Anita	X
Write a text about the Parliament House and the National Museum	Wednesday	Leonie	X
Find background information about politics in Estonia	Thursday	Anita, Leonie, Sarah	X
Find possible answers to the questions	Thursday	everybody	X

DOCUMENTING THE VISIT – THE BROCHURE

I Purpose

- Document the visit to Finland!
- To be done on Google Slides, the Finnish team leader Katja will create the slideshow and give all the other members editing rights!
- Include these points (plus others of your choice) in the brochure:
 - The topic for the visit
 - The task and assignments carried out in small groups (preparation for panel discussions, brochure) and individually (surveys travel log)
 - The dates and programme
 - Interviews and pictures of the students and teachers and visitors, see more below

II Contents

- What was done, when and by whom?
 - See above (“Document the visit, include these”)
- Pictures of different activities, visits, people?
 - **NB!** The groups will send your team leader Katja (katja.ruohonen@eduvammalanlukio.fi) as well as Antti (antti.vaisanen@eduvammalanlukio.fi) pictures and descriptions of the sights in Helsinki (ones with historical significance concerning the development of Finnish democracy) during/after the visit to Helsinki.
- Interviews!
 - Interview selected students while working on the panel discussion!
 - Interview the teachers taking part in the visit, both Finnish and foreign.
 - Interview the guests taking part in the panel discussion (during the coffee break prior to the discussion, between 8.30 - 9.30 on Friday 23)
 - You can do the interviews on paper or then film them & include the link to the video on the slides (video: upload it to Google Drive.
- Something else? Your call!

III Remember!

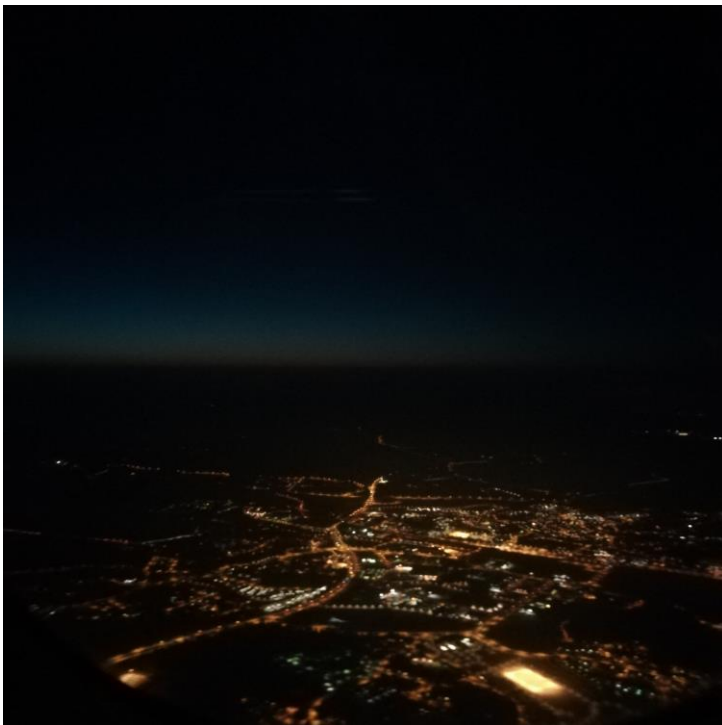
- Ask for people’s permission to be interviewed (and/or photographed!)
- Remember the deadline! You’ll be presenting the brochure **on Friday 23 around 1 PM** so you’ll need to add the final lines & pictures after the panel discussion!!
- Include the names of those who worked on the brochure!

Erasmus+ visit to Vammala, 18 - 24 February, 2018

Sunday, February 18th. Arrival.

Something about the trip? Observations about Helsinki (if you spent part of the day there)?

We met at the airport in Stuttgart at 11.15 am to check in and take the plane to Munich. Unfortunately, it was a little bit too late but we still got our connecting flight to Helsinki. In Helsinki we met the Estonians, Scots and Italians and took the bus to Sastamala where we arrived around 10 pm. Our hosts picked us up at school.



Helsinki from the window of our plane

Monday, 19th February. Day at school.

Questions concerning the Finnish lesson, the school and preliminary work for the panel discussions:

1) What are the most obvious/striking differences between Finnish and your mother tongue? What do you consider to be the most peculiar thing about our language?

2) What about the school (lessons, classroom equipment, staff etc.)?

3) What was beneficial/interesting about the survey? Could something have been improved - and if so, how? What about setting up the teams and instructing them? And the instructions for setting up a panel discussion / creating a brochure to document the visit?

1) German and Finnish have almost no similarities so you can't deduce words from German. The pronunciation also is very difficult because you have so many vocals and sometimes very, very long words that are like a sentence. In Finnish you have for example 7 different expressions for a hangover, depending on how strong it is.

2) For me, it was really surprising how much the students in Finland are working with computers. The food in the cafeteria was really good, especially for school lunch.

3) The survey was okay, there was nothing really good or really bad about it.

I think it is good that each team has at least one member of each nationality but I would have preferred to set up the teams by casting lots and not by counting.

The explanation of what a panel discussion is was quite good but I had the impression that not everybody understood what he/ she has to do research about.

Tuesday, 20 February. Trip to Helsinki.

The following tasks are to be completed during/after the trip to Helsinki

I During/after the trip: visit to the Parliament House

- Consider e.g. the following during the visit (and write about it in your travel journal, please):
 - What kind of history does the place have?
 - Where did you go during the tour?
 - What kind of things were surprising/particularly interesting to you?
- NB! Team 1: remember to take pictures and send them to the brochure team leader Katja (katja.ruohonen@eduvammalanlukio.fi) for the brochure! In addition, send them to Antti (antti.vaisanen@eduvammalanlukio.fi) too!

II During the trip: pictures and information of historical sights in Helsinki centre

- During/after the visit to Helsinki, each group will send the brochure team leader Katja pictures and descriptions of the sights in Helsinki that have historical significance concerning the development of Finnish democracy - at least two per each team!
- Add ...
 - The pictures (well, d'uh!)
 - If you wish, you can have some/all the group members in the picture, as long as you don't obstruct the sight itself.
 - Take a few pictures, let the brochure team choose what pleases them the most.
 - A short (max 100 words) description of the sights and what kind of role it has had in the development/history of democracy in Finland.
- Places to visit (consult Google Maps!), divided among the teams:
 - The Parliament House (team 1)
 - The National Museum of Finland (team 1)
 - The Statue of Mannerheim (team 2)
 - The House of the Estates (team 2)
 - The Senate Square - including the Government Palace, the statue of Alexander II (team 3)
 - The National Archives of Finland (team 4)
 - The Presidential Palace (team 4)

The visit to the Finnish Parliament House:

What did you think of the visit and the place? Did you find out anything interesting about the history of Finnish democracy and/or parliament?

The task:

What did you think of it? How does the history of Finland and its democracy show in Helsinki?

The capital of Finland, Finnish people, food & places?

What differences come to your mind when you think about the life in Helsinki? The streets, stores, people (behaviour, clothes etc. etc.)?

I really enjoyed the trip to Helsinki.

The tour through the Finnish Parliament House was so interesting, I never expected it to be like that. The meeting with Arto Satonen was really informing and it was obvious that he wanted to tell us a lot about Finnish politics (unfortunately, we didn't have enough time for that).

The assignments gave us the possibility to see some sights/ important places of Helsinki, but sadly not all of them. Helsinki has so many old and historical buildings and statues. For me, it was really fascinating to see the broken glass in the door of the National Museum which got there during the Civil War. Most of the museums offer free entrance for underaged people.

I think the biggest difference between Helsinki and Stuttgart are of course the temperature and the snow. More specifically, the fact that that they don't do salt on the streets in Helsinki to remove the ice. That is why it can be very slippery at some places and you need to be careful so you won't fall down. As there is less traffic than in Stuttgart the air is a lot cleaner.



The Parliament of Helsinki



In front of the National Museum of Finland



Wednesday 21 February. Winter fun at Ellivuori.

1) How was your day? Which on the activities did you enjoy the most? What was the best/most interesting/exciting think about a typical Finnish winter sports / activity day?

2) What about the evening at Levo hunting lodge? How was traditional Finnish sauna?

1) It was so amazing!! The weather was great, the landscape was beautiful and the activites were so much fun.

We did cross country skiing and were riding fat bikes and some kind of sleighs. We also were playing football in the snow and took photos while we were walking across a frozen lake. It was quite cold (between -15 and -20°C) but the sun was shining, there was no wind and we were moving all the time so I didn't freeze at all.

After being that active we ate frying sausages and pancakes in a little cottage. It was so wonderful! In Germany, we can't do most of these things because we never have that

much snow and such a beautiful landscape so it all was really special and exciting for me.

2) The evening also was really nice. I was so relieved that the sauna wasn't as hot as I expected it to be and it was quite funny to jump into the snow afterwards.

The Levo hunting lodge was great too. The atmosphere was relaxed and everybody was getting along with everybody. The buffet also was very delicious. The singing was so much fun although it was a little awkward.



Winter activities at Ellivuori



Singing in the evening at Levo hunting lodge

Thursday, 22 February. Working on the panel discussions.

The presentations:

1) What new did you find out the history of Finland? Anything the struck you as particularly interesting?

2) What about the interest in politics among young people in Finland? Does the situation differ from that in your country? If so, how?

The team work:

1) How did it go? Did all the members contribute equally?

2) Any problems along the way?

The presentations:

1) in my opinion it was really interesting to find out that Finland was the first country that granted women full political rights. During the Russian Revolution in 1917, Finland declared its independence (6th December 1917). In spring 1918, a civil war started in Finland.

2) the interest and participation in politics among young people is decreasing. Probable reasons for this aren't just a lack of interest and lazyness but especially that they don't have an own opinion about politics and think it's too complicated because they don't get informed enough. Suggestions to solve these problems are introducing online votings (so voting gets more comfortable) and lowering the voting age to 16 years.

In Germany, the situation is quite similiar, probably because the young people don't see the importance of their participation/ opinion.

The team work:

1)I think it went quite good. Because our panelist is from Estonia we did some research about politics and political participation of young people there. Afterwards, we were looking at the questions and tried to find some answers for them and wrote them down. Almost all the team members contributed equally, only the Italian boy didn't really participate in our discussion (maybe because he has some problems with the English language).

2) Now and then, we weren't sure what else we had to research and didn't know if we had informed and prepared ourselves well enough.

Questions.

- 1) What do you think will happen if nothing changes?
- 2) Why do you think young people aren't voting that much nowadays?
- 3) What methods do you think would be the most effective in increasing the participation?
- 4) Why is it important for young people to be interested in politics?

Background information relevant to the questions and notes to help your team's participant prepare:

- 1) Our democracy won't work anymore because it only works if young people participate and aren't a generation ignorant to politics. People need to bring awareness to their own issues. If there is only one specific group taking action in politics, then only their point of view is heard.
- 2) It is not only that young people are lazy and don't want to vote. Young people can be insecure about their political understanding and believe that nothing will change.
- 3) introducing the political parties and what they stand for because when young people reach the voting age they can be really confused on what/ who they should vote for; bringing political scene closer to young people; making sure that young people know what the parties represent
- 4) democracy should still be working in the future; different opinions; taking part in politics now will determine your future

background info about Estonia: in local elections you can already vote with 16 but in presidential or parliamentary elections you have to be 18; it was the first country that lowered the voting age to 16 and that introduced e-voting

Friday, 23 February. Panel discussion.

The panel discussion

1) How did your team's participant do? Think of staying in topic with their turns and responses, general fluency (pronunciation, intonation) and being an active participant (commenting on what others said etc.).

2) What about the discussion in general? How did the other participants perform? Did they manage to convey their thoughts well? Were they, in your opinion, well informed of the topic and able to present solutions and suggestions for making the young more interested in politics?

The panel discussion:

The panel discussion was really interesting. There were so many different opinions and ideas the panelists came up with. Everybody was prepared well, our panelist Anita (and the others of course too) did a great job. I really admire them for their courage to speak in front of such a big audience. What I missed during the panel discussion was the discussion itself because the moderators were only asking questions which were answered by each panelist but there was no real discussion. Anita sometimes tried to introduce a discussion but unfortunately, it didn't work out.

After the panel discussion:

After doing the evaluation of the project and listening to the presentation of the brochure team, the Scotts taught us some traditional Scottish dances. That was so much fun!

I spent the afternoon playing Skip-Bo with Salla's family and in the evening we went to the farewell dinner at Seurahuone.

Afterwards, we went to an Irish Pub to sing some karaoke. We really had a great time but were also very sad because we'll have to leave tomorrow.



Final preparations before the panel discussion



Farewell dinner at Seurahuone and karaoke in the Irish Pub

Saturday, 24 February. Returning home.

1) *What did you learn of the project countries and Finland during the visit in general (think about e.g. languages you heard/used, the country & its customs.)?*

2) *What kind of ideas/thoughts/information did you get concerning*

a) the political participation and interest in politics among people your age (e.g. the Erasmus+ group)

b) the ways and means of becoming a more active citizen?

1) Quite a lot I think, especially about Finland. Finland is such a beautiful country with so much nature and (at least in winter) a lot of snow. All the outdoor activities we did were so much fun and now I understand why there are more saunas than cars in Finland.

The most interesting country besides Finland was (in my opinion) Scotland especially their traditional dances were awesome.

2a) Political participation of young people is very important to make democracy work but unfortunately, the interest in politics and political participation have decreased during the last couple of years. That is a big problem because young people are the future. But most of them don't know how important it is to be an active part of politics.

2b) Every voice counts and it is important that every point of view is considered.

Otherwise democracy won't work anymore in a couple of years.

It is so easy to become a more active citizen and vote in elections but I think the biggest problem is that most of the young people don't feel well enough informed about politics and think it is too complicated.



Final photo before departure