My EVS experience in Finland

My name is Sara Redaelli, I am 20 years old and I was born in Carate Brianza (close to Milan) in the north of Italy.  
In December i started my E.V.S. project, since that moment I have lived in Kaustinen, in center-Finland.  
During my experience here in Kaustinen (and also in Veteli) I have always worked in contact with the youngest.  
I work as teacher assistant in the schools of Veteli and Kaustinen but in particular my project involves me participating in the 4H club's afternoon activities.

E.V.S is an European project that is part of the Erasmus+ experience which offers to European citizens between 18 and 30 years old to take part in voluntary activities in other European countries.  
I decided to take part to this kind of project because I wanted test myself.  
I needed time for myself (for understand better what I wanted and work on myself) and I wanted to spend this sabbatical year for improve myself, my skills and knowledge and for feel me an European citizen.  
Finland (Kaustinen in particular) has been my shelter.  
Here I have had the possibility to focus on myself, to travel, meet a lot of people from all over the world and so enter in contact with more cultures, languages, traditions, point of view etc. and to experiment.

My project here in Finland is based essentially on my participation during the 4H club´s activities: cooking activities, excursions activities, sports activities spent playing floorball, recreation clubs spent playing together, music activities etc.  
My project is not based solely on spending time with the kids; staying here I started to feel that my presence had also the purpose to teach another culture, another life style, another language and open their mind not only working on my project.  
I have worked as assistant in the elementary and secondary school of Veteli: I have helped during the lessons as i could and sometimes I have also kept some lessons (general presentation of Italy, Italian music, geography of Italy, Italian culture, tradition and food, Colosseum and gladiators…).  
Thanks some local people I was also involved as assistant in some italian language lessons for a specific group of students and I was also involved in a local initiative were me and other foreigners had the task to show and teach in different schools our language and culture and show them how many different culture can you find even in a small place as Kaustinen.

Both the jobs have been interesting for many different reasons.  
In each situation the kids, even if they didn´t know very good English, they have never feel the language as a stumbling block.  
In particular, during the activities of 4H club, the most enterprising have always tried to talk with me using the no verbal communication or, in the most difficult situation, asking o my coworker to translate.  
In the school environment the majority of kids were quiet shy but even in that situation all of them did their best to don´t create any stumbling block accepting and trying to ask me help for the book exercises or for the practical activities.

Also my colleague (in both the jobs), with who I was able to talk, they have always encourage me and help me to get in confidence with the kids, to never discourage me and to translate their questions for me when language became a too big obstacle.

Kaustinen, even being a small city and quite isolated, is possible to go to Kokkola almost quickly and travel is easy.  
Thanks the small dimension of Kaustinen I have had the possibility to feel more involved in the local life, local activities and project, events, schools and perfectly integrate.

Thanks this project I am become more responsible, mature and independent.  
I´ve improve myself, my English, my skills and knowledge ( as I wanted and needed); I strengthened my national pride and right now I can say that I am proud to be italian and that I am here in Finland to meet and know a new culture so far away from mine.

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