

# **EUTOPIA Certificate of Internationalisation (2021/2022) Reflective Portfolio**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since I was a teenager, I have always been involved in many international programmes, projects, and initiatives. In my early adolescent years, I joined several summer camps across England, Ireland, and Wales. Besides, I went to La Salle Horta during my high school years, and its solidarity NGO stuck on me inasmuch that I decided to dedicate myself to others. Not only by enrolling in volunteering activities but also by orienting my professional life towards the goal of “making the world a better place”, which is undoubtedly my forever life motive.

In the following sections, I’ll explain in as much detail as possible my personal experiences inside the internationalisation frame, expecting to share with you a summary of my international life, pointing out the four Learning Outcomes (LOs) of the EUCI programme.

## 2. LivBa: *LOI (Reflective)*

During my second year as a BA student of Political and Administration Science, I enrolled in the Glocal Challenges course; indeed, I took part in a social housing project named LivBa (which stands for Liveable Barcelona).

The team was undoubtedly transversal as was confirmed by the presence of law, economy and politics students, and the passion and aims of change were inherent in the project. Moreover, I must add that one of the team members was studying abroad in Cambridge, so our project got not only a worldwide scope but also a notably digital skills development as well as remarkable adaptability to the times. Besides, by the end of the course, we decided to rename the project, aiming to achieve a proper international scope. The result was *LivBa-LivEU*, a global network that connects people and cities around Europe to face the housing problem in the most sustainable and cooperative way: the co-housing system. So far, I learned that housing, which should be considered a basic right globally, is one of the main struggles for the whole society, no matter from which socioeconomic stratum you come or your personal background. This issue gets worse when young people try to become financially independent and so we considered co-housing as the best way to start building an autonomous life for the youth. Inasmuch as new generations grow learning that cooperation, sharing and fraternity are basic values for the forthcoming centuries, the mindset is already embedded in the youth perspective. Furthermore, cities are more and more crowded and, therefore, new construction of flats is becoming impossible over time.

Personally, I acted as a representative for our project, as my main role: throughout the project I started to develop some project management competitions, consensually agreed as a team. Thanks to that amazing opportunity, I found out that project management was a field which I may take into consideration for both my future studies and my incorporation into the work market. Hence, I decided to put all my effort into finding an internship related to project management, and so I got accepted by a Latvian start-up focused on cleaning the sea’s ground. Happily, I can confirm that my internship was not only oriented on developing my project management and partnership skills but also, it was international since I had to move to Riga for two months, thus I kept expanding my SGD-related knowledge. Indeed, these two opportunities linked perfectly together with the Events and Project Management course I’m currently taking during my Erasmus

in Sweden while upgrading my curriculum and improving my BA profile. Specifically, I'm able to organize, coordinate and perform both events and projects equally, from reaching partners and investors to planning a Business Model and successfully setting events and meetings. I got technical knowledge related to finance, management and digital skills, as well as developing my professional capabilities by creating my own templates, social media promotions and stakeholders' connections.

As aforementioned, I consider my EUTOPIA experience in the Glocal Challenge course the activity that most helped me develop reflective skills. Being able to reflect on a certain activity, or even activities, is equal to owning the metaphysical ability to find answers through a timeless intrapersonal perspective. In my case, project management is my unexplored but hugely promising area of interest, both in terms of my academic and professional paths.

### **3. AIESEC: LO2 (*Intercultural*) & LO3 (*Intersectoral*)**

Since I was a child, I have been enchanted by the idea of studying abroad, learning about other cultures and traditions, having the opportunity to live in my own skin in a range of diverse educational systems, and achieving what, personally, is the last step of the "adult life" in its early years: being resilient to live by your own.

Honestly, I first experimented with this scenario when I enrolled in a volunteering opportunity in Slovakia for six weeks last summer 2021. Thanks to AIESEC, I had the opportunity to cause a real positive impact on a multicultural environment under the framework of the "Agenda 2030", an experience I highly value towards the current world and the problems which ought to be faced. To be more precise, I volunteered for almost two months in Bratislava (Slovakia) working under the fourth SDG quality education. The project *Children's Intercultural Environment Advocate* was held by EDUCATE Slovakia and AIESEC and was integrated into the UN's "2030 Agenda" for Sustainable Development. Specifically, it aimed to provide children aged 1 to 5 from different prekindergarten schools with basic skills in a foreign language, grammar, and mathematics; through a non-formal education method based on the development of children's opinions and their personal growth in an intercultural environment. Thanks to both my previous experience as an English teacher in Barcelona and my volunteering in Bratislava, I could see how education is a real and worldwide key not only for the forthcoming generations but also for everyone. It is commonly said that knowledge is power, a weapon against ignorance, but I would restate the position by proposing that both the equation and knowledge are valuable tools to change the world and make it a better place, both locally and transnationally. Knowledge is a gift, perpetual and perennial through time, I hope that soon it can be available to everyone.

Regarding the transdisciplinarity of the experience, I may highlight that besides our formal role as kindergarten teachers, we had to face up to struggling quotidian situations and deal with several cultural shocks as a team, which to be honest we successfully overcame. Thanks to that enriching opportunity, I improved my teamwork and leadership skills; as well as realized how much I love and care about teaching, which can even be considered my second passion. Moreover, I might mention that not only the project by itself was intersectoral and intercultural, but also the experience overall. I was sharing my daily experiences with four other volunteers from Greece, Lithuania, Serbia, and Rumania, together with the Slovak AIESEC team, thus we had the chance to learn from each other's cultures and awareness of the world, while travelling across Central Europe. Digging deeply into the leadership and teamwork challenges we faced, I must mention

how we based and organized our daily life together, listening to one another's interests and worries and being by each other's sides while building our small but tight-knit family. In fact, I can proudly announce that we're still close friends, and we see each other as often as our schedules let us: for instance, my Lithuanian friend visited me during my internship, and I had the outstanding opportunity to have her as my personal guide in Vilnius (her natal city) for a few days. Furthermore, I am planning to visit my Greek friend both in the city where he did his Erasmus, Helsinki (Finland) and the town in which he's currently living, Poznan (Poland). We're a clear example that friendship has no borders, no nationality, other than patience, respect, and love for each other. For us, distance is not a fact of great matter.

To sum up, I consider an intersectoral experience the opportunity of facing different obstacles and dealing with a diverse range of situations in which you must combine a variety of personal skills, as well as cooperate with others to succeed. Personally, once I tried the intercultural experience, which is inherent in the action of travel, I couldn't get enough of it, so I didn't think twice when applying for a place at a European university for my Erasmus. Concretely, I started my last Bachelor's degree year at Södertörn University in Sweden being focused on my international relations path and the achievement of more technical knowledge concerning the project management field, thanks to my blossomed passion through the previously mentioned EUTOPIA course.

#### **4. PurOceans: LO4 (Challenge-based)**

My internship in the Latvian start-up *PurOceans Technology* is the perfect experience to end with, both in my BA final year and in addressing the last learning outcome about the challenge-based experience. Owing to the fact I've been involved in the direct promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals, and I'm living following a strict vegan lifestyle since I was twelve, I considered that *PurOceans* was the perfect option for me. Additionally, thanks to my EUTOPIA Glocal Challenge course, I had a solid basis in both global and local awareness as well as scopes and aims of solving current challenges we must face immediately as a global whole.

Moreover, I must mention that before my internship, I didn't focus extensively on the SDGs related to the environment. Hence, I decided to mix up my recent passion for project management and the chance to improve my lack of ecosystem knowledge, aiming to gain an enriching first university stage closure. *PurOceans* approach several Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 6 'Clean Water and Sanitation', SDG 13 'Climate Action', and SDG 14 'Life Below Water'.

When I first started my internship, the scope which was included was considerably new for me, however, both the team and the CEO integrated me into the company as one of their own and I could learn more than ever before. In fact, my management skills increased, and I could work on important and enriching partnerships with big corporations, communication with media businesses, and local companies always researching for an equal, balanced, and profitable deal, as genuine values are not only part of my personality but also my way of work. Furthermore, I discovered how urgent and essential it is to rehabilitate the watery zones while realizing that the climate solution is a cooperation between all the welfare and private companies, initiatives, and projects, since everyone has a role to play in reaching the ultimate goal: a sustainable and pollution-free planet.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Summing up the previous sections, I must define internationalisation as a relevant part of my life and personality: I think, I act, and I feel under an international scope which covers my whole daily life and holds my future. Consequently, from my point of view, being able to reflect globally yourself means having three essential qualities. First and foremost, a truly open-minded character; secondly, a resilient and empathic personality; and, last but not least, the status of “global citizen”, someone who cares about the worldwide scenario and works for improving it.

Hence, considering my previous, present, and future experiences, I am a proud global citizen who encourages anybody to share this international path with her. The international community is created by all of us, to a greater or lesser extent, and is changing as much as the seasons do. Let’s keep multicultural, let’s make it international!