

Caterina Maccaferri

Liceo-Ginnasio Statale "G. Cevolani"

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ERASMUS +

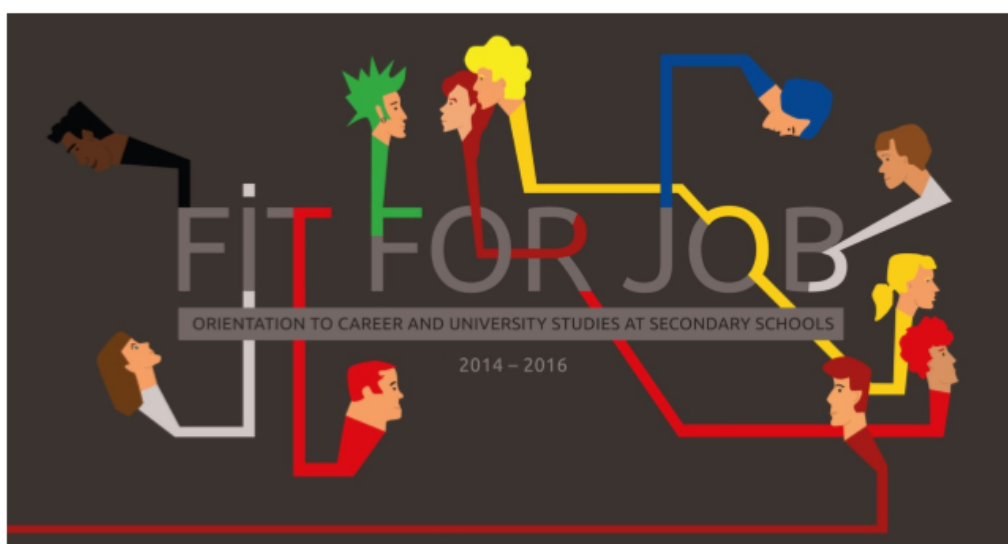
Strategic Partnerships for school education

"FIT FOR JOB: Orientation to Career and University Studies at Secondary Schools"

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3rd short-term exchange of groups of students of the project in Riga

from September 27th to October 3rd, 2015



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1. ABOUT MY-SELF

1.1. Introduction

My name is Caterina Maccaferri, I am seventeen years old and I have been attending the “Liceo Classico G. Cevolani” in Cento since 2012.

I study about five hours every afternoon and I think I am a diligent student, but I want to not focus only on school, because I believe that do for example sport activities and voluntary work are important too.

2.2. Studies

The main subjects of my study programme are Italian Literature (three hours per week), Latin language and culture (four hours per week) and Ancient Greek (three hours per week).

I have 31 hours per week of lessons.

I like the course I attend, but I do not know yet if I will continue the study of these kind of subjects. Anyway, it is sure that I need to attend an University because my programme do not offers me job opportunities.

I am interested in Archeology and Science, in particular Biology.

2.3. Projects

I decided to take part to “Fit for Job” programme because, first of all, I would put effort into the insertion of an useful orientation to career in our school. I believe that, even if the students of a school like mine have not so often the opportunity to work without a degree, it is essential to give advices and help them to find the best field of studies.

During the middle school, I took part to the exchange programme “Comenius”: I host during the meeting in Italy in 2011 and I went to Turkey in April 2012.

In the future, I would like to do a study holiday abroad to improve my English before the University.

Then, I am going to chose an University to get a degree and after that continue the studies until I will be specialized in the subject that will be my job.

The one I am attending is not the last year of high school, so I do not know how is the orientation to Universities. I hope i twill be as good as the one in middle school.

2.4. What helped me in the career orientation

I have not idea of what I am going to do after the graduation, so I hope the orientation programme of this and the next school year will be useful.

After visiting Riga Gymnasium, I think the shadowing days are a very good solutions because they are not difficult to organize and very useful, instead of ‘stages’. I never did a ‘stage’, but I think they do not really help the students to chose their future job and furthermore the pupils can not go to school during them and I think it is not good to loose so many lessons.

2. THE EXCHANGE WEEK IN RIGA

That was the first meeting of the project in which I took part. I do not hosted before going to Latvia.

There, I was hosted by Peteris Stepins' family. He is a 16-year-old boy living in Jurmala, a very nice city about 20 km far from Riga, between the river and the Baltic sea. He attends the Riga State Gymnasium No.3.

2.1. Day 1: September 27th

We went from Bologna to Riga by plane and we arrived there on September 27th about at 12:45pm (local hour).

German students were there since the day before.



Some pictures of the
seaside and the river of
Jurmala

2.2. Day 2: Sept. 28th

Guest students and host students had to meet in the library of the school to get acquainted. There, the teacher Zanda Medne organised an activity, a kind of a game, to make all the partners know what each other like or usually does.

Then we had been separated into three groups, each with two Latvians as “guides”, to go around the school for half an hour and to see all the spaces: the rooms, the one of the teachers and the one of the director too, the gym, the swimming pool, the canteen...

2.2.1. Lessons

Then we had career orientation lessons in four different groups.

My group had an English lesson with the teacher Sidija Kalnciema. It was an integrated career oriented lesson about the things each student is good at.

The first part had the aim to enrich students' vocabulary on compound personality adjectives related to the topic “career and self-development, professions”.

Then we had to find among those adjectives the ones which suited better to our personal strenghts and weaknesses and after that the job which was the best according to our personality.

The teacher said to imagine to be an employer and to write the qualities we would looking for in an ideal employee.

In the last part of the lesson, we watched a video of a girl who was talking about her studies and career and then the teacher showed us also a website which explain the differents professions to young people.

2.2.2. Presentation about the school

The last activity before the lunch was a presentation about the Riga State Gymnasium No.3 by the Latvian students Vilma Luize Gertane and Julija Popova.

It is one of the oldest school in Latvia and it was born as a German school for girls.

It is the first to offer education in Latvian language in 1919.

The name has been “Riga State Gymnasium No.3” since 2009 and the actual motto is “Life is work, responsibility and loyalty”, which is written on the flag.

There are many different programmes, called with letters, but all of the students have Maths and English lessons.

The school offers many project to its students, such as the week of career and a shadowing day every year, the organization of a Christmas market, the sport day and two trips every year.

2.2.3. Meetings at school

After having lunch in the school canteen, we met Zigrīda Lukša, who explained us what is the State Employment Agency. The aim of this organization is to find job for young people (15-29 years old). So they try to understand what is the best job for them, prepare the guys for the interview with an employer and look for the reasons why young people are unemployed (not enough places and they are without experience and money to go away to work), help to continue the studies, prepare documents...

So they, with the money sent by the European education ministry, can organize consultations and courses for every job of theory and practice (and also communication and business lessons or small work-shops to help to choose the job) and can pay the travel too to people who need to go to work away. Then, they offer also informal courses of two months of different levels of English and German, work experiences (not more than 12 months) to make own experience, activities to develop own skills and programmes for people with disabilities, in collaboration with psychologists and doctors.

The second meeting was with Liene Rubina; she introduced us a professional network for youth: prakse.lv (international name: PractiCan.com). It is made for two target groups: the students and the high school pupils and to two subgroups: the education institutions (such as schools or universities) and the employers.

This year, it has 78000 users and 3900 registered companies.

There are also additional projects, like tours to the companies, the magazine "Veiksmes formula" (translated: "Formula of success"), seminars in schools, employers school and study TOP (the companies suggest where and what to study, voting for the best schools and study programmes and showing which professions have more opportunities).

Another very good tool in PractiCan.com is the virtual internship: young people have to choose an answer to questions or situations among four possibilities or write the answer in free places, with the visual aid of photos and videos too. With this system, a person can reach a good score which companies can see. This is a good idea because usually companies receive just the CV, that shows only the experiences, not the skills and the personality.

Thanks this portal, young people can learn from real companies the daily lives, choose the best profession for them, understand what this job really means, prove their abilities to the companies, apply and test their skills. On the other hand, companies can use it to present themselves, find good employees, help to improve education and reduce unemployment of young people.

2.2.4. Riga

From 3:20pm to 16:30 pm we had an excursion around Riga. We saw the St. Peter's Church, just near the school, the Rātslaukums square, the House of Blackheads, the National opera, the Freedom monument... I really liked Riga and I think we should spend more time visiting the city.



2.3. Day 3: Sept. 29th

The third day was the Shadowing Day at the RIX airport. We had been divided into two groups: one smallest who was interested in the Air Navigation Services in the Riga Airport, and the other, the mine.

2.3.1. Meeting with Peteris

Peteris is an employee of the airport who works in the public relations sector.

Firstly, he present us the airport, built in 1974. It offers 89 destinations (83/84 in winter), 5.1 millions of passengers in 2015, 20 airlines (even if the 40,4% of the flights are of the AirBaltic). Two expansions

have recently been made: of the VIP center (for politicians) in 2013 and of the passenger terminal building during this year.

www.riga-airport.com

Then, we was our guide in a bus ride through the runaways.



2.3.2. Meeting with the airport administration director

She talked about her career: she started to work in the airport as interviewer, but then she made her own experience until become the director of the administration. In her opinion, her best qualities referring to her job, are the ability to understand employees and passengers needs and communication skills and a good employee should be communicable, hard-worker, have good presentation skills and speak other languages, in particular English, Russian and German.

The benefits of her job are health insurance (the Latvian medical assistance is private for adults), free parking, two weeks for holidays, the opportunity to do sports for free and paid phone bills (even in with limitations).

2.3.3. AirBaltic

After the lunch all together again, we met Janis Vanags, the vice president of the AirBaltic corporation.

The 20-year-old company is used by 3 millions of passengers every year, so it means by 150% compared with Latvian population. The most difficult task is to decide the destinations which worth it, the right day and hour for the flights and the size of the planes too.

There are two classes: the full business class and the low cost economy class.

It is considered among TOP 10 most innovative Airlines, for example because it was the first to accept Bitcoin as way of payment.

The employers come from 28 different countries and the AirBaltic offer more than 50 direct destinations and more than 200 European destinations if we consider that there are 8 strategic gateways (AMS, CPH, LGW, BRU, CDG, TXL, FCO, VIE) from where passengers can find other airlines.

Then, Evelina Miglane, junior account executive of Hill + Knowlton, presented her job. H+K takes part to WPP, the biggest communication group. It cares about the public relations (to gain positive reputation) and marketing communication (to popularize a company and to sell products).

AirBaltic has been one of their client since 2005.

She explained the main tasks of her groups: the process of press release dissemination, the press events organization, weekly meetings and, the most difficult and important, the crisis response.

Her team is composed by four members: two account directors, a junior account executive and an account assistant.

To reach her position, she got a degree in Public Relations.



The Riga Airport



AirBaltic



The plane simulator inside
"AirBaltic" for the staff training

2.3.4. Latvian cultural evening

In the evening, we enjoyed the cultural evening of Latvia, with a first part of presentation (through a game in which teams had to answer some questions), girls with typical dresses and one who played a typical instrument, and a second part which was the dinner with Latvian food.

2.4. Day 4: Sept. 30th

It was the Shadowing Day in the Universities.

In the morning, we went to the faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art of the University of Latvia, where we met the assistant to the Dean of the faculty, who spoke about it. Then we joined some activities: painting, making metal rings, lectures of different courses.



Then we moved to Riga Stradins University, Centre of Research & Organisation in Family Medicine Studies. There, we had lunch before having a shadowing of the study process with very realistic dummies.



We came back to school where we had the cultural evening of Germany and Italy and Italian food for dinner.

2.5. Day 5: October 1st

We did a trip to Sigulda, a castle of the 11th century, situated nearby in the Gauja Valley, and Cesis, another medieval castle of the 13th century.

In the evening we had a joint dinner in the restaurant “Lido”.



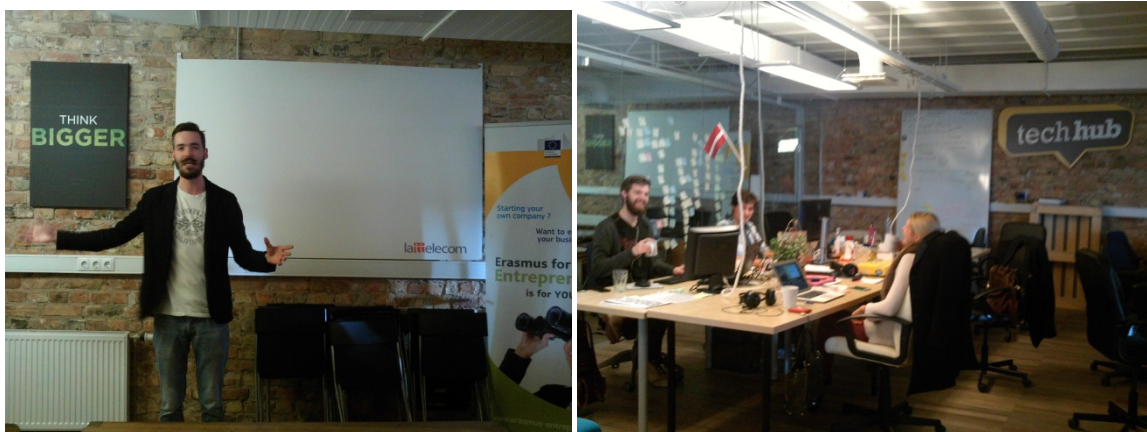
2.6. Day 6: Oct. 2nd

We had to prepare presentations about the shadowing day in small groups, each with people from the three different countries.

Before presenting them, we went to “Techhub Riga”, which helps the youth to achieve own projects, offering them a desk and the opportunity to work all together for a very little fee.

Then we discussed our presentations and the Job Shadowing Day model and we closed the meeting, receiving the certificates.

The German team left.



2.7. Day 7: Oct. 3rd

We leaved by plane at 2:15pm.

3. Evaluation

I think the week in Riga was a great experience and that it increased my cultural baggage.

Of course, I improved my English and I overcame my “fear” to speak a different language, but, in my opinion, the things I learnt about the Latvian culture and school are important too (or maybe more important?). Indeed, there are a lot of differences between Latvia and Italy, about the habits, the food, the daily life. I found Latvian people really kind and helpful!

About the school, it is a very nice building (and this is important because students should like the place where they have to stay every day) with useful facilities, such as the swimming pool, the canteen, the café, the big room for events or exhibitions, the gym, the room with sport machines, the library... Furthermore there are projectors and computers in the rooms. It's good too that pupils do not have to buy books, which are of the school.

I would not like to be at school during almost all the day because there are so long breaks between a lesson and the following one; I think it is better in Italy, where students have one short break but they have to stay at school just 4/5/6 hours.

As advice to the schools, I could say to do more oral tests (because they are mostly written) and to do activities like CLIL, so lessons in English but of other subjects.

4. Abstract

I really enjoyed this project because it was both very useful and funny!

First of all, the aim is to improve the career orientation in the partner schools and I think it is reached, because students and teachers exchanged their ideas and now all the participants can present new projects and ways to their own schools.

Then, it was a great experience for myself too: I improved my English and I overcame my “fear” to speak a different language, I learnt a lot of things about Latvian culture (and German too), I visited a place where I probably would never have gone without this opportunity and I knew new people.

I do not know yet what I am going to do after graduating, but I am sure that I will choose the best career for me thanks to the changes our school system could do by means of projects like this.

Pictures sources:

<http://www.fit-for-job.eu/>

My photos