



emanate

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January 2013

*The Magazine of the Erasmus Mundus
Students and Alumni Association*

- News from EMA
- Alchemy and
- Voluntreprenurism
-

- Your Say
- Sailing in the
- White Space



**The EMA
Photo Competition**
Impressions on
Engagement



Engagement



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Title photo by CAROLYN LEE LIAN YIN

Engagement

The broad theme for this edition of EMANATE is 'Engagement'. We've asked Erasmus Mundus students and alumni to submit articles discussing how they connect with other people and involve themselves in their surroundings. 'Engagement' can thus be interpreted as civic and political participation and community building, or more generally as relating to communication, expression and social relationships.

In this age of advanced communications technology and mass human mobility, the nature of engagement is dramatically changing. On the one hand, it is often lamented that community bonds are breaking down as the nature of government changes and as people leave home and develop a more cosmopolitan orientation. On the other hand, the technological revolution offers new opportunities for social engagement: for mass communication and organisation, spreading social awareness or just interacting with people previously out of reach.

As true 'global citizens', Erasmus Mundus students and alumni are well-positioned to grasp the nuances, implica-

tions and possibilities of the above trends. In this edition of EMANATE, we have articles about 'crowd-sourcing' initiatives, social media marketing, new forms of activism, and marriage engagements as practiced by different cultures. We have inspiring stories about a collective initiative to fight against global food (in)security and another to help people in India learn to read and write on their cellphones. We also have the personal accounts of alumni volunteering in rural villages in Nicaragua and undertaking scientific expeditions into the forests of Central Siberia!

As usual, we have a news section to bring you up to speed on developments in the EMA organisation and to fill you in about what our alumni have been doing. There is also a 'Your Say' section where students and alumni get to write pretty much whatever they like!

We hope you enjoy this edition of EMANATE and wish you all the best with your pursuits, wherever in the world you may be!



Nina Cherenkova,
Communications
coordinator,
Russia

THE EMA COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

THE EMA Communications Team



Amaranta Alfaro,
Chile



Shiella Balbutin, The
Philippines



Alex Bunten, USA



Cole Harry, USA



Dariya Gribanova,
Russia



Marta Moreno
Ibanez, Spain



Sayalee Karkare,
India



Luca Lo Re, Italy



Matthew Sharp,
South Africa



Brian Shaw, Ireland



Tarunjet Singh,
India



Kostya Vasilyev,
Russia

Meet the new *EMA Indian Chapter Board*



At the end of October 2012, a new Indian Chapter Board was elected. Thanks to all the candidates and all of those who voted. We would now like to present the new EMA Indian Chapter board to you.

PRESIDENT:

Pavan K Sriram

was born in Bangalore, located on the Deccan Plateau in the south-eastern part of Karnataka, India. He undertook the Erasmus Mundus masters in Computational Mechanics from 2008 to 2010. Pavan has been an active member of the EMA since 2008, currently holding the position of Coordinator for REALISE IT. He was previously a Course Representative (2009-2010 and 2010-2011), Working group leader of Promotion team EMAInd (2009-2010 and 2010-2011) and Vice President of EMAInd (2010-2012). Pavan now lives in Trondheim, Norway, where he works in the areas of production and project management in a company while pursuing further academic studies at NTNU. He is a regional winner in the British Council's International Student Awards 2011 and has a great passion for travelling around the world.



VICE PRESIDENT:

Ateendra Kumar Singh

is a researcher in the field of computer vision and machine learning. He has been associated with the EMA since 2009 in the roles of course representative and member of the Internal Affairs team. Post his Master Course in CIMET (Colors in Informatics and Media Technology), he moved to Bangalore. He has been educated in Spain, Finland, Norway and France and has worked with world class research labs of Technicolor, Hewlett Packard and presently he is working with IMEC. He is a big foodie and loves to do adventure sports like sky diving, deep sea diving, etc.



COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR:

Waiz Karim

holds a bachelor in Electronics and Communication Engineering from New Delhi and will graduate from the Erasmus Mundus EuroPhotonics Master program which he did in Marseille (France), Barcelona (Spain) and Karlsruhe (Germany) within the next few weeks. He has also lived in the Middle East, interned with several companies in four countries and recently performed a research stay at ICFO (Barcelona). He has been actively involved with the EMA: elected course representative in 2011, joined the EMA professional development team facilitating launch of professional networks and served as the EMA Day ambassador. He is an avid traveler, enjoys leveraging social media and promotes inter-cultural understanding.



PROMOTIONS COORDINATOR:

Sriya Mohanti

completed the Joint European Master in Environmental Studies in 2010 after having studied in Barcelona and Hamburg. Thereafter, she moved back home to Delhi and has since been working in a funding organisation that aids the design and implementation of policies, which encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy in India. If not this line of career in environment and development, Sriya would have liked to become a dancer. She has been trained in Odissi dance, an Indian classical dance form, since the age of seven. She is also an avid reader and traveller.



INDIAN REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:

NORTH:

Vikas Dalal

is from Haryana, India and he holds a dual master's degree in Space Science and Technology from the Julius-Maximilians University (Würzburg/ Germany) and the Luleå University of Technology (Kiruna/ Sweden), both absolved in the scope of a Erasmus Mundus Study Programme, as well as a bachelor's degree in Aerospace Engineering from the National Aerospace University (Kharkiv/Ukraine). In the course of his studies abroad, he did not only expand his skills in foreign languages (German, Russian, English), but also gained extensive experience in the field of intercultural communication. On this personal background, Vikas eventually got inspired and cofounded the organisation Eurosudygroup, which provides assistance to Indian students who intend to study in Europe.





<https://www.facebook.com/EMAIIndianChapter>



<https://twitter.com/ErasmusMundusIN>

CENTRAL:

Priyanka Banerjee

is from Kolkata, India and is currently in her third semester of Masters in Management and Engineering of Energy and Environment (ME3). The ME3 programme is fully sponsored by the European Commission (Category A) and includes course work at three different universities - Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Ecole des Mines de Nantes and KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. For Priyanka, the EM Master Course has not only equipped her with thorough knowledge about renewables and energy related issues, it has also provided her an opportunity to study in different European countries and learn about their culture and history. She says "Because of ME3, I now have over a year of experience with students composed of individuals from 22 different countries. I am very thankful to Erasmus Mundus for everything".



EAST:

Debajyoti Bhowmick

has been working in the field of Geomatics for more than ten years. He holds a double MSc with background in Remote Sensing, Image Processing, GIS and such. His research interest has been on Calibration of Sensors and Validation of Data Products (Cal-Val), based on which he has completed his GEM MSc thesis. He started his career as Project Associate at the Directorate of Forest, GoWB, remained associated with industry leaders, conducted training programmes in India and abroad, and has been invited as resource person by universities. Presently he is serving as Vice President (Geomatics) at Descon Ltd, Kolkata.



WEST:

Elsa Mathews

has done her European Master of Arts in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies at Université Stendhal, Grenoble, France and University of Aarhus, Aarhus Denmark (2008-2010). She is currently working with the Embassy of France in India. She has a huge interest in learning new languages; so far she is proficient in speaking English, Hindi, French and Malayalam. Her love for languages has made her learn Urdu script and she is currently learning Hungarian. Prior to this position, she has worked as a journalist in Delhi and has free-lanced for several other Indian and foreign publications. In her spare time she enjoys writing and has written a lot of poetry over the last few years that she came across at various public forums, including groups like Poetry across Cultures and more recently at the Indo-German Urban Mela held in Delhi.



The EMA's Steering Committee has a new Internal Affairs Coordinator

Congratulations to Shahiryar Khan and thanks to all the other candidates and all of those who have voted!

Shahiryar Khan is from Pakistan and currently based in the Netherlands working as Technical Project Lead in a telecom organisation.

He graduated from the EMMC in Economics and Management of Network Industries (EMIN) from TU Delft and UP Comillas de Madrid in 2011. Shahiryar has been actively involved with the EMA and has been one of the initiators and later on vice-president of the South Asian chapter. As IA team coordinator he focuses on ensuring the continued implementation of the statute across the EMA, policies and procedure development to make it more transparent, the enhancement of the EMA's official website and Community website to better facilitate the communication between students, alumni and prospective students.

You can email Shahiryar at internal.affairs@em-a.eu



SOUTH:

Prabhu Muthuganeisan

graduated from the Erasmus Mundus Masters in Computational Mechanics at Swansea University, Wales, UK and Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain (2007-2009). Prior to this, he has gained experiences in working at a Structural Engineering Research Centre and is currently pursuing a PhD at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras. In his spare time, he enjoys trekking and travelling.



An email can be sent simultaneously to President, Vice-President, Communications Coordinator and Promotions Coordinator by writing to:

board.indian.chapter@em-a.eu



EMA Charity FUNDRAISING COMPETITION

EMA is launching a charity fundraising competition open to all registered members. This is your chance to be creative, raise money to your favourite charity, and win a trip to our largest annual event, the General Assembly in June 2013 in Europe.



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Any registered EMA member can participate: Students and graduates wherever you live in the world.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE?

➡ STEP 1:

Choose your team members. Team size can vary from 1 to 4.

➡ STEP 2:

Decide on your fundraising idea. It could be anything from shaving your head or growing a mustache, to running a marathon or skydiving, or even giving up smoking, be inventive and creative as much as you feel like :-)

➡ STEP 3:

Choose a charity from the long list at JustGiving.com or a reputable charity that has an online fundraising platform.

➡ STEP 4:

Your JustGiving web address needs to be www.justgiving.com/EMA-<teamname> For

example, if your team name is Tigers, your JustGiving web address will be www.justgiving.com/EMA-Tigers

The name of your event should start with the words: EMA Fundraising: The fundraising currency should be EUR – Euros

You may choose any fundraising target.

➡ STEP 5:

Join the EMA Charity Fundraising Competition group on the EMA Community Site. Post your team's web page on the group's forum along with the names of all the team members and the contact person for the team. Please wait until your registration on the Fundraising group is acknowledged before you start your fundraising campaign.

➡ STEP 6:

Promote your page and start fundraising... :-)



WINNING:

On Saturday 16th March 2013 at 08:00 am GMT, the team with the most money raised is the winner. The amount of money raised

on your fundraising page is the only factor for winning this competition. Your creative fundraising ideas do not count ;-)

★ PRIZES:

FIRST PRIZE: TRIP TO THE EMA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2013 IN EUROPE

All team members of the winning team will be invited to our General Assembly. Accommodation and most meals provided, Flight/Train cost reimbursed up to a cap depending where you are travelling from. The regional cap is the same for the other General Assembly participants. The first prize is only given if the winning team raised more than 1000 €.

SECOND PRIZE: AMAZON VOUCHER OF 200 € SPLIT EQUALLY AMONG TEAM MEMBERS

The second prize is only given to one team provided that the team raised at least 400 €. All participants of every team that raised more than 80 € will receive a USB memory stick.



TERMS & CONDITIONS:

- ▷ Each team may only create one fundraising page regardless of the number of team members.
- ▷ On the day you register by submitting your fundraising page on the Fundraising group, the amount raised on your page should be 0 €. If the amount on your page on that day is more than 0 € the team is automatically disqualified from the competition.
- ▷ In case of a tie (i.e. two teams raised exactly the same amount of money by the deadline), the competition will be extended by one week only for the top two teams.
- ▷ The closing date of this competition is 08:00am GMT on Saturday 16th March 2013.
- ▷ Any team can join the competition anytime up to 28th February 2013.
- ▷ No cash equivalent is given for any of the prizes.
- ▷ Only online donations will be counted to declare the winner. Offline donations and text donations will not count for the purpose of this competition. The amount added by the UK Gift Aid scheme will not be counted in the competition.
- ▷ In order to have the amounts comparable, please change the currency of your fundraising page to Euros.
- ▷ At the closing of the competition, if your fundraising page does not support Euro as a currency, the amount you raised will be converted to Euros according to the European Central Bank currency converter.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- ▷ **Do team members have to be from the same Erasmus Mundus programme? Live in the same area?**
No, as long as everyone is an EMA member.
- ▷ **Can only EMA members donate?**
No, anyone can donate to your fundraising campaign, your friends, family, colleagues, anyone! Feel free to advertise your link in any way and on any platform, also feel free to find a company or organisation to sponsor you!
- ▷ **Can I advertise my fundraising page outside of the EMA website?**
Absolutely! You may promote your fundraising page anywhere you like, your Facebook profile, your company's intranet, your university department website, etc. You may even create your own blog or Facebook page!
- ▷ **I just found out about this, can I still participate?**
Yes, you may join anytime until 28th February 2013.
- ▷ **Am I allowed to donate to my own fundraising page?** Yes.
- ▷ **Can I choose any charity?**
Yes, you may choose any charity on JustGiving.com or a reputable charity with its own online fundraising platform. We strongly recommend you choose a reputable charity with an international reach (UNICEF, Red Cross, WaterAid, etc).
- ▷ **Can I choose the same charity that another team has already chosen?** Yes.
- ▷ **Is it possible to change the fundraising idea during the competition?**
Yes, though you may not change the charity you choose.
- ▷ **Is it possible for a team to choose more than one charity?** No.
- ▷ **What happens if the winning team did not manage to raise more than 1,000 € before the deadline of the competition?**
In this case, no one will win the first prize. The top team will receive the second prize instead (if the team raised more than 400 €)
- ▷ **I will be invited to the General Assembly regardless of the outcome of this competition because I am a Course Representative or Chapter President, etc. If I win, may I exchange the first prize for something else?**
No, however you are still encouraged to participate in this competition for fun and to help a charity.
- ▷ **I received some donations in cash, how can I make them count for this competition?**
If one of your friends would like to support your fundraising campaign but doesn't have a credit/debit card or PayPal account, they can use your own credit card and pay you in cash.
- ▷ **My question is not listed here, what shall I do?**
Please ask your question on the forum of the EMA Charity Fundraising Competition group on the EMA Community website.

The choice of charities is a personal choice of the participants of this competition. EMA does not necessarily endorse or support the ideology or activities of the charities chosen by the participants in this competition.

This Erasmus Mundus Fundraising Competition is organised by Hady Abi-Nader, the EMA's Vice-President.

HAPPY FUNDRAISING EVERYONE :-)

Alchemy and *Voluntrepreneurism*

A short reflection on his experience as Project Coordinator for the REALISE IT project, Human[i]ties Perspective 2012, at Roskilde University, Denmark, Alex Bunten offers some ideas on event planning, and discusses what being a "Voluntrepreneur" means.

Well, there you have it, the first generation of REALISE IT projects have either fizzled, finished up in style, or are striking their own way outside the initial EMA/OCEANS framework. Human[i]ties Perspective fortunately ended up as a bit of the last two. It was no small feat, but we did it. Blood, sweat, and emails. And as a result of this flurry of activity from the EMA humanist contingency, some EMA members (and the Steering Committee) are curious about our methods and how to possibly replicate them. Basically, it's a thinly veiled request for our alchemy recipe - how to turn a wild idea leaden with potential into a "noble metals" reality using a minimal amount of encouragement and seed funding?

Having been part of both REALISE IT conferences in Brussels and Delft, I understand what's on everyone's mind when they start an event or project with a group of disparate global volunteers: funds and time.

Regarding the first factor, big thanks goes to EMA, EMA-LA, OCEANS, and Roskilde University for their financial support. From the moral and logistical department, Martine Deré was always there for us at the European Commission. ICUnet was a huge help, especially getting the Open Conference Systems platform up and running. This will hopefully make it far easier for others to set up annual events like ours! Huge thanks.

How we got the funds was down to being clear in our objectives, having deliverable outcomes, but also being sure to relate how the funding body would benefit. Obvious, maybe, but the latter should be particularly highlighted in relation to events and projects from REALISE IT. There are tons of places to ask for funds, it just takes research and diligence to find them.

Also, never underestimate the power of drafting. Write and re-write. Hemingway is supposed to have said, "The first draft of anything is [crap]." True story.

Next on our list of hows - how much money? If someone asked me tomorrow, what amount should I shoot for to put on a modest two-day international conference in Denmark involving 50-60 delegates - PhD candidates, researchers, professors and professionals - from over 20 countries, plus about 10-15 speakers? I'd say, ballpark figure, €10-15K. That number would be giving all the services used, in-kind or pro-bono, a monetary value. Most expense comes under travel grants and the rest for on-site services. This depends on many factors (size of gifts to speakers, quality of lunches, quantity of coffee, etc), but how you negotiate and work

with your host university/venue is one of the most important aspects of running a conference of this variety. Think long and hard about who you choose to work with.

All that said, the Human[i]ties Perspective pilot conference in 2011 at the University of Hamburg was done with far less than €10-15K, so it's all possible. However, you'd have to accost our first project coordinator, Amaranta Alfaro, for that alchemy recipe.

The idea behind putting a number down is to clear the air a bit about how much it would take to run a conference for your university or for your Erasmus programme. Nudge, nudge, wink, wink.

Coming to the last point: time. For their dedication and patience, the HP12 team - Amaranta Alfaro, Leasa Weimer, Nataliya Matamoros, Paul Amanze Anumudu, Peggy Sue Ewanyshyn, Ya-Ting Yang, and Yan Cheng - can't be thanked enough. It was a huge effort on all sides. Amazing, really.

I'm reminded of a quote mentioned in Klaus Bondam's keynote address at HP12: "If politics are the art of the possible, the arts are the politics of the impossible."

We aren't artists per se - we didn't compose an overture or sculpt anything - but we

The Human[i]ties Perspective Conference in 2012 was a great success





Alex Bunten, project coordinator of Human[i]ties Perspective

certainly did something that was out of the ordinary and often felt impossible. Essentially, from nothing, we created a sustainable knowledge platform and event series for humanities students and professionals. How? In combination with our scientific methods, namely, alchemy, we also employed what I like to call, "Volntreprenuerism."

We aren't in this for the money as a social entrepreneur would be, and we certainly don't have pre-made or very prescriptive roles as a traditional volunteer might. We fall somewhere in the middle. We made the team, set our roles, set the agenda, and pushed it forward with all the faculties we had available to us. No one told us to create this event and network; we just did it because we thought it was a good idea and because we could. The spirit of Sir Edmund Hilary lives in us all, no doubt.

As a team of ardent humanists, but also voracious voluntreprenuers, what's next? First and foremost, we are trying to recruit the next batch of dedicated voluntreprenuers to the Humanities Professional Network. We are in constant development and need all the help we can get with our annual conference, Human[i]ties Perspective. We also are trying to get a book publication on Erasmus Mundus experiences together (editors and writers wanted). Only limited by our own imaginations in mild proportions with our free-time, we welcome suggestions about projects or collaborations. If you want to get a humanities project off the ground, get in touch.

The beauty of The Humanities Professional Network and our Volntreprenuerism mantra is that it isn't just about the money or a cause. It's about searching for partnership, sharing experience with others that have the equal passions, and building something in the framework of the humanities. Long may it continue.



by
ALEX BUNTEN

MA EUROCULTURE –
EUROPE IN THE
WIDER WORLD | 2011

NEWS FROM THE LGBT NETWORK:

What's going on with the "loud and proud"?



You may have asked yourself what happened with the LGBT Network. It seems it has been quiet for some time now... Shouldn't they be doing stuff after so much fuss about getting established? And YES, you are right! The LGBT Network should be loud and proud, and even if it seems we have been silent for a while – rest assured! There are things going on in our Bird Cage and we are preparing sweet actions for the EMA community.

For starters, there are two things you can get involved with at this moment: the Academic Database and the Awareness Project. As it is our policy for anything we do, you don't have to be gay or transgender to take part in our work. We appreciate everyone's point of view on the matter of LGBT issues and we are always happy to engage in a dialogue. So these two, what are they all about?

The EMA LGBT Academic Database is an online resource centre – or it will be – for everyone who needs and wants to read about academic work of our fellow EMA members on topics related to LGBT issues. We all write and read articles for our courses, and many of us like to read others' works for pure satisfaction, so this is how the Database came to be. Check our Facebook page or the EMA's website for more details on that, but we'll sure be happy to hear from you about your work.

The Awareness Project is an attempt to gather opinions from members of the EMA about some of the main stereotypical questions regarding the life of the LGBT population. With the submissions we get from you, we will compile a video that will give input of how the lesbians, gays, bi-



sexuals and transgender EMA people live and what they believe in, as well as how the heterosexual population understands those same questions and what is the difference. The point of this project is to raise awareness of the LGBT community within EMA, thus to reach out for understanding of how it is to be "different" in a "normal" setting. The questions we ask have derived from taboos most people have – so they might be very interesting for everyone. You can get details on questions and how you can answer them by visiting our Facebook page, or through the EMA community site.

And at the end, if you have any question or want to discuss your views you are very welcome to send an e-mail to Helena Kovac at president.lgbt@em-a.eu



By
HELENA KOVAC
EMA LGBT PRESIDENT

REALISE IT

Get engaged ... *GET REALISED!!*

The REALISE IT 2 kick-off event took place at the TU Delft, Netherlands on September 14th-15th, where the seven selected projects teams were invited. The event featured workshops and seminars as well as special working sessions for each project from the Sustainable Events Alliance, the European Commission, Prezi, ICUnet, and previous REALISE IT project leaders and many more.

There was a 40 % increase in the number of project applications from 2011, and a 45 % increase in the number of participants. This shows the popularity and increase in the awareness of REALISE IT.

So for those of you who have thought about an idea - most likely for a long time - and have weighed the risks and benefits, have visualised what things would look like if your idea/project is implemented, don't sit back, but utilise the REALISE IT platform to get the possibility to turn the dream into reality.



By
GULCIN
GUMUS
EMCL – EUROPEAN
MASTERS CLINICAL
LINGUISTICS | 2012



and
PAVAN
SRIRAM
MSCM – MASTER OF
SCIENCE IN
COMPUTATIONAL
MECHANICS | 2010

Here, you can get an idea about the projects selected for 2012!

WIN STUDIOZ: We help Start - Ups WIN... !



You dream. You work the dream. You realise your dream. Is that the final destination of your dream? If it is personal, maybe yes, but not if it is to awake and impress the world. Ideas worth making a difference should never die as an unsung story...

Win Studioz is a Promotion and Branding agency aspiring to fuel and accelerate the various projects' journeys into limelight by generating the best image and mileage. We focus on the Erasmus Mundus Association where brilliant projects shape up and we believe that we can be your best voice to bring the attention of the desired and deserved audience from all around the globe.

Win Studioz is catered into all the promotional and branding activities to outstand the expectations of our globalised world. We are into making concept videos, commercial videos, documentaries, promotional music, music videos, animations, audio teasers, product/business launch campaigns and promotional material like posters, logos, brochures and flyers. Win Studioz is a unison of diverse and versatile creative mind combinations visioning to visualise your ideas and open the world to welcome and embrace your ideas. For any discussions on your project promotions, please write to us at winstudioz@gmail.com



Lucky Locket – A whole new way to get ‘Lost and Found’

Lucky Locket is a not-for-profit social venture initiative which offers a unique 'Scan & Return' service to help find back your stuff if lost, anywhere in Europe and beyond!

For those amongst us who have lost something, we know the pain. Losing a laptop is hard, a lost wallet may mean losing some money, but losing a camera with all the memories and photos inside at the end of your holiday is painful. Umbrella/keys could be annoying, but imagine losing passport in a foreign country you went for an Erasmus exchange...

What we Offer: A unique customised QR-coded sticker that you can stick on your 'stuff'.

What we really offer: Peace of Mind. Stick them on your stuff, and be care-free (with a touch of luck, you are likely to get them back).

And, for our EMA community, it's all free. Really, it's free? Yes, we have been there and we want to solve this problem – once and for all! Check out our website, today! www.lucky-4.me Get Lucky, with Lucky-Locket!

International Network of Innovators in Education (INIE)



At last, EMA and OCEANS students and alumni with interests in education fields will unite across courses, thanks to a new network to be formally launched this December. The International Network of Innovators in Education (INIE) was established in September 2012 by the EMA and OCEANS Network in order to unite their students and alumni researchers and practitioners of education across all capacities, contexts and levels through collaborative learning, professional development, field engagement and international projects.

The first INIE initiative, an international conference on education to be held in the summer of 2013, was formally announced on the EMA and OCEANS communities on 1st December 2012. The anticipated audience for the conference will be practitioners and researchers within all education fields, with a strong commitment to the members of the EMA and the OCEANS Network as the conference's primary target audience. Those external to these organisations may register as attendees, but they will be unable to submit proposals in the Call for Presentations and Posters (to be announced by December 2012). Further information and calls for new team members, papers and poster contributions will be announced and made available through the network's website at <http://www.inie.eu>. The INIE 2013 Conference is being co-chaired by Marcela Chavez Ocampo (Euromime) and Stephanie Raible (MALLL) through the support of the REALISE IT 2 initiative.

WYRD IN



It's not a matter of having too much on one plate; it's a matter of not having enough hands to juggle the multiple plates. These metaphors could be used for anything that causes overload; however, they have been used and reused so often in English in reference to inability to manage one's time and projects that I'm certain that's what you thought of when I wrote them.

Thankfully, there are tools that help us deal with these problems: the most common being things like sticky notes, or calendars. Today, we're more likely to use iPhones, Google, or programs like Tasks or Things. With exceptions, there's a problem with these programs. They're not integrated. They deal with either just to-do lists, or just time management. They mostly don't work with you. They don't learn how you work, when

you are most productive, and they don't offer help with planning out your day, week, or month.

We're making an application that serves as both a time tracker and a task manager. You input your tasks you want to do, and when you want them done by; and you tell it when you are working, and when you stop. Over time, by being as minimally intrusive but maximally data-collective as possible, it will learn how you work, when you work best, and begin to suggest tasks at certain times, planning out your day and week with you. Most importantly, it'll take concerns off your plate – by offloading to a list that knows you, you won't have to constantly keep multiple concerns in mind. Wyrd In won't help you stop mixing your metaphors. But don't worry – that's on our to do list.



MY ERASMUS LIFE – the mobility students' platform

Think of a scenario: you are a month away of leaving to (yet) another country and another city. You have a load of your personal stuff all waiting to get packed and transported. You have a bike that you can't carry with you. You are anxious about visa issues and not quite sure about your future accommodation. You heard about three different websites that you can search to get to know the place, prices and social life but mainly in a language you still have no command of. And although it is exciting, you know that the same sweet headache awaits you in one semester time.

If at least one of these sounds familiar what would you say if you could have an interface, a simple and smart web-base where you could find the information you need and in the same time provide your fellow EMA mates with information and perhaps a cheap bike? Imagine if there was a web-based network platform that can help any student with those common mobility problems. Well, soon you will not have to imagine anymore! My Erasmus Life is a project that will exactly serve to these purposes.

The core main provisions of the project will focus to make your search experience as user friendly as possible, as easy as possible (the "3-click info" rule) and as beautiful as possible. So worry no more, the team of My Erasmus Life is working hard to make the first interface ready for several of the most frequent student mobility locations ready until Spring next year. We'd be happy to help you enjoy your Erasmus life with its best features!

SUST-EMA-BILITY

Every day we are bombarded with scary images of how rapidly our environment is changing. Islands and coastal regions disappearing under a rising sea level; a changing climate causing floods and droughts; millions of hectares of forest land lost to deforestation. The major cause? The big bad wolf that is the corporate world.

But have you ever thought how your seemingly innocuous everyday activities ultimately affect the planet? Imagine if all four million people living in Nairobi could turn their lights off whenever they left a room. Or simply closed their taps while soaping their hands. Imagine if you walked for 30 minutes to the shop instead of taking your car. Imagine a world where everybody recognised the

power they have to change the world. Now imagine if everybody exercised this power. Now imagine if that everybody was YOU.

We at sust-EMA-bility aim to help you unleash this power by fostering growth and prosperity in the EMA and the OCEANS Network by achieving sustainability throughout the associations and their activities. We will



The taste of Erasmus Mundus – our international cookbook

The main idea behind the project is to create an interactive and simple international cookbook 'from students to students'. The target audience is international, modern cosmopolitan young people, who came to study in Europe. In the book you will find cuisines from all around the world. All recipes are collected from the students and alumni. You will not see any "grandma's traditional cooking" that nobody really does anymore, neither complicated recipes with exclusive ingredients that you would never find in a normal European supermarket, but rather ordinary everyday food that can be prepared in student dormitories – the real international world on your plate.

Each recipe is unique and has its story; whether it is a story of the first international dinner in the student dormitory or the history of origin of the dish. Step by step and easy instructions allow even the most novice home cooks to prepare tasty and healthy food. And what's more important, the collected recipes will not take much time to prepare, so even during the most tense study or work stress you will have an opportunity to pamper yourself or friends with some tasty dish.

The e-book is going to appear by the fall 2013. If you are interested in pre-ordering the book and supporting the project, have any comments and suggestions, please feel free to contact the cookbook team at cookbook@em-a.eu.

make you realise that you as an individual, in your own little way, can make a difference in the world around you. We envision the EMA and OCEANS network working efficiently and collaboratively to provide a "green" future that promotes achievement in a social, environmental and economical environment supported by a partnership among all EMA members.

We aim to promote a culture that focuses on sustainable practices and create ethical and organisational values that cover the three pillars of sustainability – social, environment and economic (with particular interest in environmental issues). We will also create a network of environmentalist and environmentally oriented members under the umbrella of the EMA's Professional Networks (to serve as the "environmental arm" of EMA). Come join us, exercise your power.



Pacific Islands Students hosted by EU Delegation in Fiji

The 14 Pacific Islanders who have been selected to undertake Master's and Doctorate studies and staff mobility in European universities in 2012, were hosted to an awards ceremony by the Chargee d'Affaires of the European Union Delegation to the Pacific, Mr Alistair MacDonald at the delegation headquarters in Suva on the 23rd August. During the ceremony, Mr MacDonald congratulated all scholarship awardees for their success in passing a world-wide selection process. It was also a chance for the students to discuss future challenges and past experiences with each other and former Erasmus Mundus students.

This year, European Universities in Portugal, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy will receive students from Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati and Samoa. Out of the 14 awardees, two were selected under the Erasmus Mundus Masters Course Programme (EMMC), with the remainder having been selected as part of the Mundus ACP II (Africa, Caribbean & Pacific) programme, of which The University of the South Pacific is a partner institution.

The two EMMC awardees are Mrs Merelesita Qeleni, who will undertake an Erasmus

Mundus Masters in Special and Inclusive Education (EMSIE) in the United Kingdom, Norway, Czech Republic and South Africa, and Mr Richard Singh, who will study under the European Master of Science in Nematology (EUMAINE) in Belgium, Spain and Portugal.

Merelesita is from Nokonoko village, Saivou, Ra province in Fiji, and is currently the Head Teacher at the Hilton School for physically-challenged children in Suva. She said it would be difficult leaving her students behind, but knows it is for the better as she will return more qualified and knowledgeable to better provide for their special education and future. Her motivating factor for applying for her course was that she feels that inclusive education is needed in the Fijian education system. She believes that physically challenged children can do well like any normal child, but it is society that separates them because of what they are, and this needs to change.

The EMA welcomes all these new Pacific Island scholarship recipients to the community and wishes the very best in their future studies in Europe.



Merelesita Qeleni & Alistair MacDonald



By
BARAVI THAMAN

EMA FIJI REPRESENTATIVE

IMRCEES

International Masters in

A new Erasmus Mundus course is launched – and the EMA is there from powerpoint presentations to plentiful pints

It is Thursday the 12th of September and I have been asked to fly to Glasgow to represent the EMA at the launch of a new Erasmus Mundus masters degree in Glasgow. As I am still only halfway through my own Erasmus Mundus masters degree (Flood Risk Management), I leave the ‘exotic’ leg of my studies in Barcelona willingly. After all, it isn’t often that you get asked to do this sort of thing: talk about a subject you believe in to a crowd of like-minded and ambitious students.

The purpose of my talk is to demonstrate the work of the EMA to a group of new students. Through a trusty powerpoint presentation and a heavy sprinkling of personal tales from my own Erasmus studies, I aim to explain the values that underpin the whole Erasmus programme – academic and personal advancement through the sharing of academic and personal experiences – and how the EMA can facilitate this not just within a single course, but between courses, between nations and between current students and past alumni.

The launch event has been designed by Glasgow University to welcome the students of the newly-formed Erasmus Mundus International Master of Central, Russian and Eastern European Studies (IMCREES) and to let them know what is in store for them over the next two years. It begins with speeches from the Dean of graduate studies of Glasgow University and the head of the department.

And following on from me, the students are introduced to ten partner universities with whom they can study with in their second year of their degree – essentially, they are trying their hardest to smooth talk their way into the hearts and minds of these new, impressionable students. As for my presentation, it leaves me, a 23-year old giving his first EMA talk, sandwiched between some very important information from some very consummate professionals. Perfect.

Relying heavily on my native English-speaking abilities and personal tales of ‘won-

.....
At the launch event of IMCREES-Erasmus Mundus International Master of Central, Russian and Eastern European Studies



Russian, Central & East European Studies



der' from my own degree and EMA experiences, I am able to communicate the value of the EMA successfully enough. And the rest of the presentations are, predictably, fantastic. Despite being at the mid-point of my own Erasmus Mundus, living in Barcelona and about to enter the exciting next stage of my studies, I'm jealous of all these students starting this new adventure! I wish I could study Central, Russian and Eastern Europe, despite my distinct lack of academic credentials!

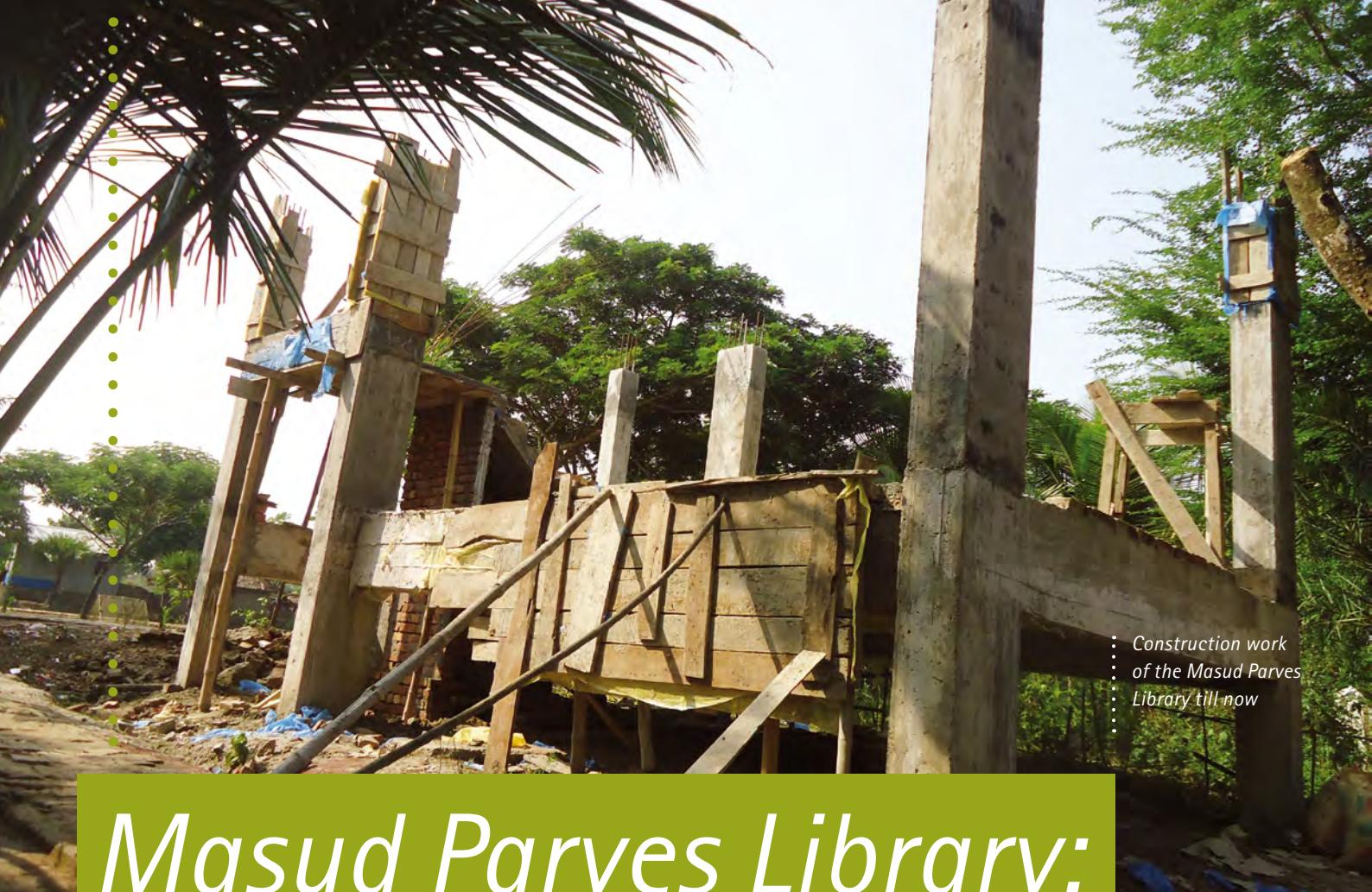
It's a fantastic day and I am left in no doubt that the students of the IMCREES are all set for a fantastic time with the University of Glasgow and that, despite being in its first year of existence, the Erasmus Mundus course will only grow and grow in stature and reputation.

In my talk, I urge the students to come and say "hi" during the course of the day and we can discuss less formally the role of the EMA, what it's like to be an Erasmus Mundus student and, as a former bachelor student just across Scotland in Edinburgh, what it is like to be a student in Scotland (deep-fried mars bars were definitely mentioned). These chats became more and more vibrant as the free bar flowed. By the end of the night myself and the new Erasmus Mundus students had slunk off to a nearby basement bar (taking off our name tags to go fully informal) and were discussing the ins and outs of international travel, European politics and everything else under the sun over numerous pints of Scottish Ale. And if that isn't showing a bunch of new students what Erasmus Mundus students is all about, then I don't know what is. And, quite frankly, I don't want to know.



By
RICHARD VAUSE

FLOODR – FLOOD RISK
MANAGEMENT | 2013



Masud Parves Library: Village, Knowledge and Information Center

Masud Parves Library is a heartfelt effort to help poor children and adolescent continue their education. My plan is to establish a library with modern facilities in my village as the nearest government facility is located about 60 km away. Moreover, this library addresses the difficulties that many students in this village face in continuing their education due to a lack of academic books.

The parents unable to manage the daily meals for their children are rather helpless in providing for the textbooks. Given that the world is moving fast while the digital divide and knowledge divide is expanding at an alarming rate, my intention is to facilitate access to information for these youngsters by arranging for as many academic books as would be possible into my library. Thus, I hope that lack of books will no longer be an excuse for the students' dropout in our village.

I also intend to appoint a librarian-teacher who will be responsible for helping the learning process of students unable

to afford private education. The library will be equipped with computers and an internet connection, opening the students to the new world of knowledge, which I think will interest them and facilitate student centered learning. This library will be operated by a committee of teachers from schools, and the class representative student from each class from VI to XII. Every position in this committee is changeable because teachers are transferrable from one school to another and the students' positions in each class can be changed every year. Since being the class representative usually requires to be the academically best, the library will spur academic

competition among the students nurturing the aim of becoming a committee member for the library. This committee will decide on the future activities of the library and they will be responsible for implementing all the library activities. This way, leadership capabilities will grow in the students from their childhood.

Again, this library will be used as a shelter centre during emergency time in this region, as disasters like floods and cyclones are very common here. Thousands of people remained water-clogged in Shyamnagar Upazilla of Satkhira in the aftermath of Cyclone Aila's rampage through Bangladesh. Several thousand homes were washed away while numerous agricultural lands. Crops were damaged by the tidal surges in low-lying coastal areas and on offshore islands in the Bay of Bengal. Many donor organisations and local NGOs are working for those affected by the disaster by providing shelter, food, relief, etc. However, none of them are working for education.

Now, what motivated me to establish a library in my village? I am from a remote village of Bangladesh. Most of the villagers in

this village are illiterate. One fine morning back in 2005, I was sitting in a small grocery shop in my village enjoying a chat with the shop-keeper. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the rather funny shop-keeper startled me with a question that forced me into instant contemplation: "What is my benefit if you become educated and earn a lot of money?" Actually, by his "my" he represented the poor population, though subconsciously. The owner knew that I was studying in a renowned public university of Bangladesh, and in his mind he saw me as someone earning a lot of money in the future. I reverted back to him questioning his motive for such a question. The shop-owner replied referring to a poor student's story from the past, who had been helped by the poor villagers. The brilliant but poor student finally managed to successfully finish his studies with very good results and made it to the USA under a scholarship. A fifteen-year stay in the USA finally brought him back to his parents for a casual visit. Going back, now, he is a permanent resident in USA. To the utmost of dissatisfaction, the shop-keeper exclaimed with another question: "What have we got from him, when we did so much?"

Truly, what is the poor's benefit from someone living and studying in a developed country? At that time, I was really astonished thinking about the shop-keeper. I felt really ashamed thinking about him, the ground under my feet shook for that moment. I got a new insight about the man, who people usually deem as funny. He asked me the serious-most question of my life. This man was successful in changing my way of thinking. This man forced me, and I felt pushed to think for the poor villager. From that day, I have been contemplating on possible ways I can be of help to the poor population of my village.

Again, on 23rd January, 2008; I lost my cousin named Masud Parves, who was a popular boy in my village. He was a student trying to get admission in a public university of Bangladesh. One day after Masud's premature demise, his mother was asking me about what she should do with Masud's books. I told her that she can give these books to a poor student from our village. She replied that she does not see any student who can use these books properly. At that time, I noticed her voice and realised that, yes, I have got something to do for the poor students of my village. I can start working for the villagers by establishing a library in our village. I told her to keep the books safe thinking one day I will take them from her for a better

purpose. Later, I thought that, yes, if I really wanted to do something better for my villagers, I needed to create some good mentality among the people who will work or at least will think for the betterment of the villagers. And this library can be a good starting point to create those people. After that, I have been thinking to establish a library in his village.

In 2010, during my study in the Joint European Master in Comparative Local Development in the University of Trento, Italy, I started working hard to collect money from my friends. I shared my idea about the library with my friends and they cordially extended their hands by donating money. After finishing my Master, I came back to my country with a donation of 1414.30 Euro from my friends, and, I started the construction work of the library. The land for the library was donated by Masud's father with a condition that "Masud Parves Library" has to be the name of the library. From the starting day of the construction work of the library, religious leaders, primary and high school teachers, local government representatives, community people and students have been voluntarily working to build this library for our village. I managed them to work together for the library as they will be the direct beneficiaries of it. I made them understand that establishing this library by involving all

representatives from society can sustain the library and trigger education, which, eventually, would promote local development in the region. Till now, I have a collection of an amount of 235170 Taka (around 2350 Euro) from which I have spent 215457 Taka (approximately 2154 Euro) for the construction of the basement of the library. Although still I need around 2500 euro to complete the building, I am hopeful as before that money would never be a problem. Thank you so much for your anticipated cooperation to make my effort real!

Thank you!

If you are interested and would like to know more about the Masud Parves Library, please visit the Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Masud-Parves-Library/331567526863770>
or e-mail Abu Sayed:
mparveslibrary@yahoo.com and
sayed_ku@yahoo.com



By
ABU SAYED

CODE - JOINT EUROPEAN
MASTER IN COMPARATIVE
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT | 2012

Students are working voluntarily to build this library



Social Media: *the new ······ participatory arena*

Recently the International Communication Association (ICA) celebrated its first regional conference for the Latin American research community. The conference was organised in the context of increasing ICT access, where countries such as Uruguay have successfully adopted the One Laptop per Child project (Ceibal Plan), and great research and investment has been targeted to close the digital gap and encouraging e-government tools.

Along this, interesting activism scenarios and engagement waves are taking place in the region, where education, indigenous and environmental issues mobilise masses in the streets. Therefore, it seems noteworthy to reflect on the relationship between social media usage and political or social activism, a topic which seemed to cut across various sessions and panels in the conference.

One interesting perspective of the issue is focused on the new media role among the indigenous inhabitants of Latin America. Paulette Desmormeaux (Chile), a former Mundus Journalism student, emphasised the importance of the grassroots online media among the Mapuche community. In this respect the Mapuche's newspapers Azkintuwe and MapucheExpress play a central role opposing the representation power of mainstream media, which reflect and reproduce Mapuche's negative stereotypes (characterised as lazy, slow and even stupid). "In this panorama the social media platforms increase visibility and strength inclusion, contributing to democracy reinforcement", she said.

On the same line, Karina García-Ruano from Michigan State University (USA) spoke about the Guatemalan struggle, where a group of Mayas mobilises demanding the



By

AMARANTA ALFARO
MUIRHEAD

COMUNDUS - EUROPEAN MASTER OF ARTS IN
MEDIA, COMMUNICATION AND
CULTURAL STUDIES | 2010

closure of the Marlin mine in San Marcos. The social media offer them two types of power: one inwards, empowering the community, strengthening collective efficacy, and social cohesion; and one outwards, increasing solidarity with the movement, generating visibility in mainstream media, and incidence in decision making. "New media platforms allow this group to expand their voices, fighting locally with global impact", said the researcher.

The conference also offered some interesting lessons on the gender issue, like the paper presented by Graciela Natansohn from the Universidad de Buenos Aires (Argentina), where she approached the digital gap from a gender perspective, questioning the media and their capacity to include women in several levels, from content and design to us-

ability. "Gender plays a role in technology appropriation, and if our countries want to overcome the digital divide, the gender issue should be at the centre of the discussion", as the post-doc researcher emphasised.

Other members of the Erasmus Mundus community participated as speakers in the conference: the Mundus Journalism lecturer Kathrin Voss from the University of Hamburg (Germany), who spoke about how the Internet changed grassroots campaigning, and the former CoMundus student Amaranta Alfaro Muirhead (Chile), who presented citizen participation and inclusion through social networks sites.

The closing key note talk was in charge of Henry Jenkins from the University of Southern California (USA), with the presentation "From Participatory Culture to Participatory





Lively discussions during the coffee break at the first regional conference of the ICA



From left to right: Henry Jenkins, University of Southern California. María Elena Gronemeyer, Chair ICA, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Rayén Condeza, Executive Secretary, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Sasha Costanza-Shock, MIT

From left to right: Larry Gross, President of ICA 2011–2012, Humberto Maturana, Chilean Professor, Ignacio Sanchez, Rector of Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Picture credits: Luis Barriga



Politics by Way of Participatory Learning". He elaborated on the new kinds of politics, which include a sort of cultural play by performing, collaborating, creating, connecting and circulating, and lead to participatory democracy. Jenkins stated that these new forms of participation are "lowering the engagement barriers, because of their informal membership, the strong sharing creation with others and the value of the members' contributions, opinions and work".

The reflections regarding indigenous empowerment in the media and participation

should be taken into account when thinking about the numerous indigenous groups in Latin America, which remain in conflict with countries like Colombia and Mexico. On the other hand, the gender issue crosses many of the developing countries, and many times both factors are combined, so these perspectives offer a great potential to include in the national discussion on excluded groups. This can help to minimise not only the digital gap, but also the social and participatory divide, leading to Jenkins participatory culture and democracy.

Interesting Links:

Conference Link in English:

→ <http://ica2012uc.wordpress.com/english/>

Henry Jenkins (papers to download):

→ <http://henryjenkins.org/>

The Mapuche's newspapers:

→ <http://www.azkintuwe.org/> &

→ <http://www.mapuexpress.net/>

CLUB INFANTIL IN NICARAGUA

An example of fostering the *engagement of youngsters*

After having finished my Erasmus Mundus Master of Arts in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies (COMUNDUS) in February 2010, I wanted to pass on some of my acquired knowledge via a social project. So I went to Nicaragua and volunteered for two months for the Club Infantil Tuktan Sirpi (Tuktan Sirpi Children's Association) in Jinotega, a valley town of 55.000 inhabitants in the north-western mountains of the country.

The organisation was founded in 1994 in order to offer assistance and education for working kids as well as for drug-addicted and abused children. A further goal of Club Infantil is the promotion of the rights of kids and the struggle against their exploitation by adults. The centre offers a wide range of free educational courses, from hair stylist to dancing courses, literacy programmes to self-defence, and theatre to journalism classes. Most of the participating children often have to work in the morning at the market in order to contribute to their family income. Because of their work, they cannot attend school, so the classes at Club Infantil are a means to provide them with knowledge and skills and thus, to prepare them for more complex work. Each year, Club Infantil receives a total of around 400 children.

The organisation also gives the youngsters an opportunity to make their voice heard. One of my main activities as a volunteer was advising and assisting the teachers of the journalism class. The teach-

Jinotega from above





Young journalists of Club Infantil

ers themselves were only 20 years old and had received education in the association when they were younger.

The course is a strong example of stimulating the engagement and participation of young citizens. The kids, also called niños comunicadores ("communicator kids"), are between 10 and 16 years old and do not only learn the basics of journalistic work, but also use the acquired skills in producing a half-hour weekly TV show that airs on the local TV station. The programme contains news, reports, and documentaries, in which the participants, for example, point out the shortcomings in the city's investment in its youth, a good example being the ramshackle playgrounds. Therefore, they interview other kids as well as parents and city officials. They would also report about a boy who lives in the slums of the town and suffers violent treatment by their parents.

Furthermore, the young nascent journalists hold press conferences about different subjects, which are attended by representatives of the local media.

In addition, a radio station is also integrated in the association: Radio Estereo Libre 95.3 (Free Stereo Radio). Apart from mu-

sic, religious, or news programmes, there are several programmes, in which children and adolescents talk about their problems and claims for their rights in order to inform and sensitise the population.

I was part of the team of Hola Juventud (Hello Youth), a daily radio show that combines music with youth related social matters such as the "sexual relations between adults and teenagers" or "exploitative domestic children's work". The moderators of the show were 17 and 23 years old at that time and often invited other youngsters or experts on the subjects.

Overall, my voluntary work at Club Infantil was a great experience for me and while I could help the teachers and radio broadcasters with their daily work, I also received many interesting insights into the situation of children in developing countries and about the actions that can be undertaken to improve their lives.

If you want to learn more about Club Infantil Tuktansirpi and Radio Estereo Libre, visit <http://tuktansirpi.org/> and <http://www.stereolibre.tuktansirpi.org/> (both websites are available only in Spanish).

*Niños comunicadores
at work*



*By
ANDREAS MÜLLER*



COMUNDUS – EUROPEAN MASTER OF
ARTS IN MEDIA, COMMUNICATION
AND CULTURAL STUDIES | 2010

Civic engagement awareness

A view on engagement in the context of *multifaceted crisis*

Shaken up by the 2011 Arab Spring, the world has consequently witnessed a significant increase in the number and intensity of social movements, from the renowned 15-M and Occupy, to the anti-ACTA demonstrations, to smaller-scale revolts. Considering the hard-not-to-mention economic crisis and the accompanying austerity measures such as the dreaded European Fiscal Compact, in parallel to the continually growing “precariat” (see Guy Standing) and NEET population (i.e. not in education, employment or training), the acts of protest for the democratisation of the political institutions, and in defence of the common goods are not only understandable, but they are indeed expected, especially since Hessel’s call for outrage.

Civic engagement should not, however, be seen only in terms of massive dissent. Nor should it be about defending a single cause, according to one’s personal interests, as was partly the case of the anti-Forest Act demonstration in Sofia. It was driven to a large extent by middle-class citizens who protested against the privatisation of protected mountainous areas more out of concern for their leisure options than out of the necessity to put limits on privatisation per se. Hence, I suggest that regardless of the form it takes, genuine civic engagement is founded upon

the acknowledgement of the connections between the economic, social and political aspects of a given issue, and upon the understanding of public interests at large, necessary for comprehending the bigger picture. That is to say, I see awareness as the primary requirement to be met, but of course, not relying exclusively on whatever the media feeds us with; after all, the “bread and circuses” phase of the decaying Roman Republic is long gone and since then we must have undergone at least a partial intellectual evolution?

Nevertheless, we cannot deny certain achievements of our predecessors and could therefore still rely on the forum (characteristic of the Roman civitas) or agora (Ancient Greek equivalent) even in present-day, fast-paced, modern political life. Indeed, this is what happened at the Transeuropa Agora, which was the official closure of the Transeuropa Festival 2012 of culture, arts and politics. The final forum brought together members of civil society organisations, social movements, activists and artists from all parts of Europe to the Teatro Valle Occupato, Rome’s first public theatre and pioneer in the protection of common goods. A number of practical proposals were explored, among which a campaign for access to detention



centres, a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) on media pluralism and one on basic income, but possibly like in ancient times, some of the presentations and follow-up debates were rather theoretical and lengthy. Being part of that truly democratic, yet overly idealistic environment, I felt both further enthusiastic about the social causes that I was (and continue to be) committed to, and sceptical about achieving results. Who were we, those hundred or so people from a few Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) exchanging brilliant ideas in an occupied theatre in Rome, to think that we could change Europe?!

Indeed, at the more recent Europe, Crisis, Democracy forum in Bucharest, organised by European Alternatives, a CSO devoted to exploring the potential for transnational politics and culture, there was a discussion about various challenges associated with the functioning and effectiveness of CSOs, particularly in the context of post-socialist Central-Eastern Europe, where the problematic relation to the old Left and the dependence on foreign funding further exacerbates the situation. But let's imagine for a moment that all CSOs functioned in a vacuum, uninfluenced by political or economic interests; would we then be able to observe a correlation between, on one hand the international multiplication of CSOs, and on the other a substantial socio-economic development, along with the establishment of a world-wide democracy? Such a hypothesis is by no means informative, but it helps me to illustrate my perception that, in general (and I avoid generalisations whenever possible), the activities of many CSOs are

Rome-Teatro Valle: Basic income debate with Guy Standing



rather limited to altruistic consultations or debates, which do not necessarily lead to actual changes in the community. As one of the participants in the Bucharest forum suggested, at a certain point, in order to achieve results, civic engagement would have to give into state agency.

Don't get me wrong: I am not claiming that the role of CSOs is not significant; on the contrary, they serve as important platforms for forming valuable alliances among different actors, for expressing opinions and exchanging ideas. In fact, I believe that people should not only be active members of civil society and engage in various discussions, but as a precondition for the desired development, they should even be idealists when it comes to their aspirations. All the great scientists and reformers have been idealists, thinking outside of the box and remaining unsusceptible to the constraints of their realities.

I have to admit that back in June at the Transeuropa Agora I did not fully submit to the – what I perceived to be – idealistic visions of those who surrounded me, but luckily the majority did, evidenced by the now registered ECIs on media pluralism and on basic income, in addition to the arranged large-scale forum Firenze 10+10 (8-11 November 2012). Marking the 10th anniversary of the first European Social Forum, the city of Florence is expected to unite over 3000 people around the topics of austerity measures, democracy, political mobilisations, common goods, and civil liberties, with the aim of developing concrete proposals for campaigns in each of the fields. For instance, as part of the democracy agenda, one of the scheduled assemblies, drawing upon the collective intelligence of the participants, is to serve as a vehicle for converging different European struggles in an attempt to agree on a common Citizens Pact. The latter is to include proposals for reforms of the EU institutions and decision-making processes, which shall then be presented at the European Parliament.

This brings me back to the point that whenever there is dedication to a cause and desire to be engaged, the "idealistic" visions have the potential to turn into reality. For the rest of us, who initially find it hard to buy into those visions, there is still sufficient room for engagement by participating in forums such as Firenze 10+10, Banlieues d'Europe and Brussels Conversations 2012 to name a few, in local campaigns, or in global initiatives like the UN-supported World We



Sofia-Red House: Franco Berardi lecture on economic collapse



Sofia Social Center Xaspel: Common goods forum

Want 2015. I wouldn't deny that voting, paying taxes, testifying in court, recycling and donating blood are all important aspects of active citizenship, but in view of the socio-economic context that we are faced with, we should not hold back on being political. Undoubtedly, it might sometimes be inconvenient to become associated with certain grassroots initiatives or organisations, or to participate in demonstrations, be it for fear of undermined physical safety or of potential social exclusion. However, if we are not aware of our rights and if we do not stand up for them by exhausting all available democratic resources, we do not have the right to complain. Thus, my humble call upon you is to be courageous only if necessary, but first and foremost—to be aware.



*By
BORISLAVA MITEVA
MA EUROCULTURE –
EUROPE IN THE WIDER WORLD
2011*

Geo-Wiki.org

When I was a child growing up in Ireland, my siblings and I would be dragged down to the village church once a year by our mother to help rattle collection boxes. We offered small lapel stickers and a sense of goodwill in exchange for church-goers' pounds and pence, which would then be carted home and counted that evening. The next morning, the money would be deposited into the bank account of a charitable organisation, and from there channelled into emergency aid programs in response to drought and famine around the world.

These days, it is often lamented that this sort of social engagement is in decline, that communities less often rally to a cause. In this age of communications technology and mass human mobility, the concept of 'community' is perhaps far from that which passed through the church gates on a Sunday morning. We are now too busy, too global, too caught up in our own whirlwind worlds to engage with this sort of altruism, and often the most many can muster is some form of armchair activism – tweeting our outrage, posting our displeasure, moving on quickly.

Despite the advances of technology, drought and famine are still very real issues in some parts of the world. However, in a small castle near Vienna, a team of scientists from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), have developed a novel tool, called Geo-Wiki, that crowdsources social engagement, pulling a global community together who then work on solving problems that stand in the way of better food security.

It works like this: IIASA use cropland maps in conjunction with climate, population, and economic data to feed into models that produce spatial forecasts for crop production. These forecasts are important in some parts of the world when addressing the issue of food security – what are the areas and populations that would be hit hard by future droughts?

These cropland maps are derived from global land-cover maps, which, without getting too technical about it, tend to contradict each other as to the land cover classification in some areas. One global land cover map may say a parcel of land is barren, while another might classify it as arable cropland. In the Central African Republic for example, land-cover maps disagree almost across the board about where cropland occurs.

At IIASA, what the Geo-Wiki team has done is to make the best available data better, by overlaying land cover maps in a way that highlights their disagreements, then developing a programme that uses a Google Earth API to allow users to zoom to conflict hot-spots and select one of eight land-cover classifications for the area, based on the high-resolution imagery that Google Earth provides.

Geo-Wiki.org is simple to use; it requires no expertise other than being able to describe what you see. The interface is intuitive, yet yields valuable, useable data with every few clicks of the mouse. A community has developed around Geo-Wiki.org, with regular competitions run with prizes for top validations, and a Facebook page where users post and discuss screenshots of interesting or challenging hot spots.

The community has recently gotten involved with 'hackathons', in the spirit of Random Hacks of Kindness, whereby intense



crowd-sourcing sessions are used to address specific global problems. The Central African Republic was recently the focus of one such hackathon, and there is now a refined cropland map for the country.

The technology has also been used outside the food security field, and a series of offshoots have been developed to address other questions. How much wilderness is left on the planet? There's a Geo-Wiki for that. How much of the Earth's surface is urbanised? There's a Geo-Wiki for that too.

A collaborative hackathon between US-AID and the Geo-Wiki team focused on land grabbing and population displacement in Ethiopia. Due to the perceived availability of land there, Ethiopia has been a target for large-scale land acquisitions for biofuel production. Volunteers used Geo-Wiki to accurately identify land use and occupation in the country, and then cross-referenced this dataset with one which shows where land acquisitions are currently happening, thereby highlighting areas where acquisitions displace people and their agriculture, and weaken the food security of the region. Their findings were presented at the Iowa Hunger Summit in October 2012, and will be a valuable tool in the fight against forced population displacement.

So, with a few clicks of a mouse, through micro-tasks repeated by hundreds or thousands of socially engaged people around the world, questions of food security, population displacement and urbanisation are being incrementally answered. Geo-Wiki collects valuable data created by a global, plugged-in community; it doesn't collect pennies and it doesn't offer lapel stickers, but for those that are involved, the sense of goodwill remains.



By
BRIAN SHAW

MSCEF - MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN EUROPEAN FORESTRY | 2013

By
CAROLINE
D'ESSEN



EMMA - ERASMUS MUNDUS
MASTER IN JOURNALISM
AND MEDIA WITHIN GLO-
BALISATION: THE EUROPEAN
PERSPECTIVE | 2011

New Social Movements: *in the streets or on the sofa?*

The recent years have been peculiar when it comes to the engagement of social movements. In December of 2010 in Tunisia, the world witnessed the first of many upcoming events that took place in the Arabic world during the first semester of 2011 that adopted the name of the "Arab Spring". The reasons that took people to the streets were diverse, but one common denominator was evident with regard to these movements: they felt inspired by each other. An inspiration that crossed borders with an unbelievable speed and reached a number of individuals that the social movements of the 1960's couldn't have imagined, left me wondering: how different is the current engagement of social movements from the old ones?

The answer to this question is related to another revolution; the technological one. From the 1990's onwards, our lives have been more often led and shaped by technological devices. Internet, laptops, smart phones and tablets, have become an essential part of people's daily routines, connecting the world in an unprecedented global dimension, and offering the people many ways to access information and contact each other.

This means that the way social movements are organised is also benefiting from this technological evolution. Some extremists would even say that modern social movements simply turned into a "clicktivism" or "slacktivism", where people can fight for a cause without leaving their sofas. However, before falling into the trap of labelling current online movements under these categories, there are some issues we should consider.

There are different ways of conducting activism: going to the streets, lobbying, calling a politician or sending him/her messages, debating and discussing the themes of interest, organising petitions, pitching the media, etc. In each of these categories, traditional and new activism can be mastered to the optimisation of the movement. People can organise themselves faster and wider, overtake the imperialism of mass media through social media, and mobilise people sympathetic to their cause in ways that could never have been reached without the current technology. Thus, it is not about a simple click to add



AAAZ.ORG THE VOICE OF THE PLANET

Malala's hope

To Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, PM Raja Pervaiz Ahmed and KP Province Governor Syed Munawar Haider:
We call on Pakistan to agree to a plan to deliver education for every child through building schools, training teachers and funding families whose daughters regularly attend school. All governments and international organisations must play their part to ensure that the millions of children who are currently out of school, get an education.

831,048 people signed. Help us get to 1,000,000!

Posted: 16 October 2012

Malala has dedicated her childhood to championing education for girls like her in Pakistan. As she lies in a hospital bed, a tragic victim of Taliban gunmen, let's help make her dream come true.

One part of Pakistan has already started a successful programme of paying families which send their girls to school regularly. But in Malala's part of the country, the government is dragging its feet. Several politicians have offered Malala help, and if we act now we can get them to commit to rolling this out nationwide.

Refuse the martial law that rules in Swat, which raises no voices to demand

SIGN THE PETITION

Already an Avaz member? Enter your email address and hit "Send".

Email **SEND**

Firsttime here? Please fill out the form below.

Name
Email
Country Postcode
Cellphone
I'm 13 or older. By clicking "Send", you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Use](#). **SEND**

one's voice to a movement, but is the contribution that your voice will have by increasing, spreading and bringing the specific cause into the spotlight. It is the combination of both strategies that nowadays can lead a movement to its success. One can't live without the other any longer.

The "Occupy" movement could have happened without the help of Internet, but it would have never had the strength it had to spread so fast all over the globe. The same would be valid if it was only an online movement and people had not gone to the streets. The Tunisian demonstrations could have been an isolated movement if images, tweets or videos would not have leaked to the world so quickly, inspiring other countries in the region.

It seems that, rather than competing with each other, the combination of both strategies, online and offline with the support of both traditional and new media, are the key ingredients of modern social movements and the achievement of their goals.

Use Your Gifts, Be Creative and Meet a Challenge ...

Put Simply: *ENGAGE!*

Traditionally, engagement is connected with a promise between a man and a woman with a common aim - to marry. This period of time is also when the relationship gets "serious", full of learning about each other and tough work on a wedding preparation.

The same word, engagement, can be also understood as an involvement in a voluntary activity, charity or community with many similarities to the engagement between two persons. In other words, people engaged with their associations are those freaks caring about what is their role and who work hard to reach common goals.

I would like to tell you how I got "serious" with the EMA on my example of a Country Representative and a PR & Event Coordinator at my Master Programme.

The Reason Why

When talking about volunteering in associations such as the EMA there may be many motivations and not necessarily your personal happiness. Promotion and a good name of the programme you follow should be enough for you to become its active ambassador. Besides building a brand of Erasmus Mundus with an impact on employability, benefits such as learning new things, personal development and career connections also play a significant role when considering your participation in the EMA or your Master Course. The mentioned motivations were also my main expectations when I became a Country Representative for the EMA in 2010. I

wanted to share my own experience of being an Erasmus Mundus student with the entire world; however, our programmes give us some special skills that we should promote besides the nice stories and friendships.

Flexibility, openness to new things, adaptability, intercultural awareness and language proficiency are some of the skills we gain and which distinguish our graduates from the majority of those from other

programmes. But you know what? Our future employers or prospective students cannot know this if we do not tell. Therefore, I started promoting Erasmus Mundus and my Master Course, European Master in Tourism Management (EMTM), and I want to say that I have learned and experienced a lot in these last two years.

As a general truth, whatever you do, the best is always to use your special gifts and de-

Members of the EMA and the ESN during the promo tour in Slovakia





The EMTM Movies Awards

velop them by learning new things. This may be challenging but it is the way to build your skills and become professional in something you like. For your inspiration, I will talk about those things I did and I feel it gave me an idea of what I would like to do in my future career.

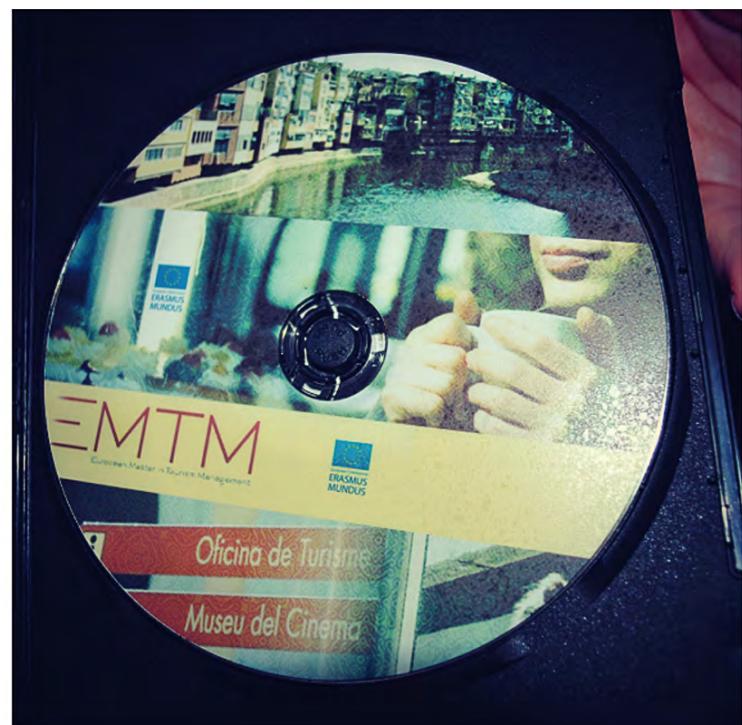
Social Media or Show Your Creativity

One of the challenges that I had to meet as a Country Representative was the distance between myself and the public I wanted to target with the promotional activities. Luckily, there was a thing called "social media" so I created a Facebook page for the EMA in Slovakia and started a group where EM alumni from Slovakia could network.

In my Master Course, the communication with the prospective students was not working when I started my first semester in Denmark. I took the initiative, or engaged if you prefer this word, and took over the PR activities starting with social media management.

Social media is a great means of getting your message out there and you can be as creative as you like by sharing videos, pictures or poems of your colleagues, creating events and easily communicating with everyone.

In the case of my Master Course promotion and after revitalising the Facebook page, we also created a Flickr account (EMTM in



Pictures) to student photo contests, our bloggers contributed to our student magazine on Wordpress (EMTM Life Magazine) and recently we have introduced channels on Vimeo (EMTMovies) and YouTube (TheEMTMovies), all connected to our website.

Networking and Collaboration is the Essence

However, all that work could not be done without the help of some other people. What I found extremely helpful in overcoming different challenges is networking and collaboration not only within the EMA community but also with the outside world.

Networking and collaboration were the key elements that allowed me to become a film producer for the first time in my life. Eva Duran (www.evaduran.es), a young filmmaker who I met through a common friend was passionate about the idea of recording a short documentary about our students since she has never done it and took it as a challenge. The release of two short videos is a proof of her talent and the power of networking and collaboration in practice.

The cherry on the top of all my activities was the first graduation ceremony of EMTM. The event brought together two generations from our programme and many families from as far as Uganda or Taiwan. Moreover, we managed to stream this event on-line for all our prospective students and families far away and serve the international cuisine brought by our students.

Furthermore, collaboration with student organisations such as the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) or national agencies responsible for Erasmus Mundus proved crucial when planning promotional activities. Up to date, the EMA Slovakia collaborated with the ESN Slovakia on a promo tour in five different cities, discussions, press releases and participated in the largest music festival in Slovakia. I have to admit, that thanks to ESN Slovakia I was able to organise the promotion of Erasmus Mundus much easier than if I were left alone.

A Cup of Tea and a Good Bye

All in all, there are different benefits from engaging with the EMA. Being a country representative, I can sum up that I have significantly improved my organisational, managerial and presentation skills. I could try in real life how it is like to be an event coordinator or a film producer by being proactive in my Master Course. Looking into the future, I hope I have contributed to the whole EMA community by taking a step forward in promoting my own Master Programme and Erasmus Mundus.



By
LUCIA LOPOSOVA
EUROPEAN MASTER IN TOURISM
MANAGEMENT | 2012

Into the wild:

Forestry engagement through my Erasmus Mundus final field work



I have recently handed in my Master Thesis for the degree in Sustainable Forest and Nature Management or as called in short – SUFONAMA. I would probably run out of patience to note down all the various engagements and adventures, possibilities and encounters this Master Programme has brought into my life; places, people, and societies that I explored while living in Wales and Germany. Here, in a short form I want to share the last phase of my programme through the field work in Russia, which was everything one could possibly put under the word 'engagement': from a social purpose to lengthy periods of work. In a way it nicely summed up the background idea and character of the SUFONAMA programme – essentially it is all about sustainable, thoughtful resource management with forests particularly in mind.

When I had to come up with an idea for my thesis paper, I was in despair- sat in the library of the University of Göttingen and gazed at the world map. After unsuccessful chats with a couple of possible advisors, I realised that I was on the off chance getting funds for an exciting, adventurous thesis field work, preferably in a region other than tropics, or to be involved in any other bigger project. As it sometimes happens, things (un)expectedly arrange themselves. Here I want to say – never ever give up on yourselves! I found a simple ad the very next day in my faculty offering to survey Siberian land from steppe zone in the South of Central Siberia to all the way up in swampy tundra on the Taymyr peninsula. I immediately mailed the expedition organiser and got accepted shortly thereafter. I think I started to read

and watch everything I could get my hands on about Siberian forests and people, and was even taking Russian language classes to remind myself of the language I had happily forgotten after finishing secondary school. And good for me, because it turned out that to speak and communicate in the local language (wherever we go, I suppose) is the key for having things done and friendships made!

The project our mixed group of German and Russian scientists started this summer is about the Krasnojarsk Krai's landscape, the second largest administrative region in the Russian Federation. It is also about bringing Western expertise to Russian higher educational institutions, to engage in discussion and try to mutually describe processes going on at the moment in that part of the wild world. With the current global change in



mind, we want to see and quantify the cover of the land surface as precisely as possible, which is sometimes hard to interpret from satellite images and to survey forests, soils and vegetation. With enough data, scientists would further look how much carbon is stored in trees, soils and even water. With that in mind, we would know how to go about land management, policies, to model advancing or retreating vegetation zones and investigate effects of soils. It is a very exciting description, you all will agree, but the work to be done can only be comprehended when one glances at the map – staggering vastness, with roaming wolves, bears and ground licking wildfires, and the inaccessible forests- bewildering and challenging to survey.

Field work in Taiga

Such a project is all about one big engagement, what's more, on different levels- two countries, government funding bodies, involved universities, administration teams, and us, individuals – on a personal level with each other and with nature. With my previous experience, I was assigned to do forest inventory together with both Russian and German students. We were lucky to have such a mixed and diverse team as who would better know the nature than those who have been living with it (and from it) since childhood. It was great to learn Russian plant, soil and place names, see the differences in soil classification systems, perceptions about land inventory methods, to learn to shoot with a rifle and experience the Siberian lifestyle. I believe we learned a lot from our col-



By
MARA KOZULINA

SUFONAMA - SUSTAINABLE
FOREST AND NATURE
MANAGEMENT | 2012



leagues in Russia as they surely did from us! We went through some tough times as well, mainly due to work styles and language barriers, coupled with swamps and occasional mosquito hordes, wildfire warnings and not to mention the mythical bear fear in Russia (which turned out is very real). We had to test our patience, physical strength and deal with our misconceptions, which was the case on both sides.

If I learned only one thing, then it would be the importance of timely communication. To be clear, honest, sometimes frank and straight forward if necessary is the best way to go about such international engagement adventures! My previous Erasmus Mundus experience had helped me in this a great deal as well. And, after a hard day's work, what can better bind people than a campfire, card game and a shot of something strong from a dented metal mug. Here's to us, SUFONAMA! Cheers!



The Rules of Engagement

The theme of this issue of the Emanate offers a broad spectrum for creative interpretation. Thank you, dear homonyms in English language. Oxford dictionary suggests a few definitions of "engagement":

- an arrangement to do something or go somewhere at a fixed time: a dinner engagement
- the action of engaging or being engaged: Britain's continued engagement in open trading
- a fight or battle between armed forces: the war's most significant engagements were fought to keep these sea lanes open
- a formal agreement to get married: she'd broken off her engagement to Paul
- the duration of an agreement to get married: a good long engagement to give you time to be sure

The recent Erasmus Mundus Graduate Impact survey reveals that 63% percent of those participants of the programme, who found their partner during Erasmus Mundus, are still together. So it might be exciting to take a closer look at the last two definitions from the Oxford dictionary and explore the romantic meaning of engagement around the world.

Hollywood films most definitely have contributed to the "American dream" tradition when a man presents the future bride a diamond engagement ring.



In fact, it was not until the 1940s when diamond rings became the symbol of a declaration of love and commitment in the Western civilisation. Smart marketing of De Beers Diamond Jewellers¹ in 1947 with the slogan "A diamond is forever" worked on millions of young men, whoever since are under the impression that a diamond engagement ring is equal to the marriage proposal.

In Ancient Rome, an engagement ring symbolised the contract of both families bringing their children together and often featured two hands coming together. This has probably further led to the Celtic traditional symbol – two hands holding a crowned heart.



In Irish heritage, it is still often used as a traditional engagement ring. The tradition of engagement rings as such dates back to Ancient Egypt, where rings were placed on the fourth finger (now called "ring finger") of the left hand believing that the vein went from the fourth finger straight to the heart.

The "ring-rules" and the "rules of engagement" themselves differ around the world. In Chile, a couple exchanges rings when the engagement is announced. Both wear the rings on the left hand and then switch the rings to the right hand when they marry.

In some tribes in Kenya, a man wishing to marry a woman sends her beads. Keeping them is a sign of acceptance of the proposal and the couple is engaged.

The traditional Chinese families might ask for a recommendation from a fortune-teller to make sure that the couple's dates of birth are in harmony before the proposal is approved. When the decision has been made, the relatives of the groom-to-be send gifts,

including tea and special cakes to the future bride's family, who sends presents in return.

In Turkey, the parents of the couple meet to discuss the engagement. Upon the consent of the bride's parents, the engagement party takes place. The newly engaged couple is presented with a set of engagement rings. The couple actually stays joined together almost the whole evening because the rings are tied together on a red ribbon. This serves as a sign of long-lasting marriage ties. The ribbon may be cut in the end of the party by an older relative, symbolising the new life together. Some romantic couples do keep the cut ribbons long after they are married.

In most countries it is the men who ask women to marry them. But there is one day every four years... On the 29th of February at least British and American women take the bull by the horns and pop the question. Ladies, you still have time to think about it until the next leap year in 2016.



By
NATALIA SPARTAKOVA

MA EUROCULTURE -
EUROPE IN THE WIDER
WORLD | 2008



It's time to give back to the community

Get Engaged, Get Committed



By

PAVAN K SRIRAM

MSCM - MASTER OF
SCIENCE IN COMPUTATIONAL
MECHANICS | 2010

Whether we have the idea of giving back to our community from a place of personal fulfillment or because we want to take advantage of the benefits involved in charitable work, the important thing is that we get started as soon as possible! Giving back to the people and organisations in our life doesn't have to be a time-consuming, all-efforts-required thing – in fact, there are plenty of different ways we can give back using whatever amount of time or money we're able to spare. So, for Prashanth Pattabiraman (an EMA alumni from India) the inspiration has been through his Erasmus Mundus experiences, currently he is on a journey to turn a dream into reality!!

His mission has begun with setting and running two organisations:

1. MixORG:

MixORG is into delivering digital solutions for brands. Our services span across digital marketing to building enterprise mobile applications. In the last year and a half, MixORG has grown to service over 30+ mid and large scale enterprises in India. Sopra, the Indian Government, the Aaditya Birla Group,

The MixORG Team



MIOT Hospitals and SBJ are some of our notable clients. Social media marketing (SMM) is MixORG's forte and the company offers its clients an end to end solution. With a highly creative team, that has a vast experience in marketing, branding, advertising and community building, the company aims to exploit the nuances of different online platforms to bring the most relevant stakeholders together and engage them effectively. In addition, to formulating digital strategies for organisations, MixORG also holds corporate SMM trainings and workshops for university students.



MixORG at the UN Women RCoE Launch

2. Mobile Harvest solution:

Mobile Harvest is an attempt to bring the benefits of social media to people who are not comfortable with reading or writing. Mobile phones have become ubiquitous enough to be an integral part of the Indian landscape – rural or urban. For many Indians, their mobile phone is their first window to the world of internet and social interactions. At the same time, they are not very comfortable with using text on their phones. Mobile Harvest seeks to leverage these insights into its solution. The journey of Mobile Harvest was made into a documentary by TVE and was one of the six projects selected across the world (and the only one from India) to be aired in the Rio Earth summit and BBC. Mobile Harvest signed up the UN Women organisation as their first client and built the Wi-Net mobile app that was piloted in selected villages of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The application has been received well by its users at the grass root level and several organisations abroad have come forward to partner with us to extend the reach of the solution.

Hope more Erasmus Mundus students and alumni will get inspired and get engaged!



Success Stories

How the Number Three Worked Wonders: Launching an Online Magazine in MA Euroculture

Three is a very special number to me. It has often brought me luck especially in situations when I needed to persuade somebody.

About five months ago, I had an occasion when I had to convince somebody to make an important decision. And that somebody was me. As a current Euroculture student, launching an online magazine in the MA Euroculture community had been on my list of goals from the day on which I realised Euroculture hadn't had one already. I felt like most of our experiences of Euroculture had vanished because there was no place for us to archive our student lives. I thought it was such a waste because our experiences, had they been collected properly, could have benefitted other Euroculture students, especially those who came after us. I wanted an online magazine in which students could freely write about their Euroculture experiences. Besides, I aspired to provide a platform for talented young writers from Euroculture to practice their writing skills. A desire to bring dedicated Euroculture alumni back to Euroculture for contribution was another important goal.

From the beginning, I wanted the project to be supported by the Euroculture Consortium consisting of twelve partner universities. I believed that the support and recognition from the Consortium would make students want to contribute more. Alumni were especially encouraged to contribute because their active engagement could inspire current students to come back after graduation, thus, forming a wider network of Euroculture students. Targeted authors were Euroculturers from twelve Euroculture partner universities throughout the world including staff and teachers. It was not a small initiative, I knew,



sent my proposal to Marloes, the Euroculture secretary in Groningen, I paused, took a deep breath, and rather solemnly asked these three questions to myself. **Do I truly want it? Do we really need it? And can we make it work?** When the answers for the questions were all yes, I took another deep breath and pressed 'send'. A few days later, I heard a hopeful message that they would support me once I tackled some concerns that they had such as sustainability, amount of budget, and privacy issues which I successfully resolved without difficulty.

So did everything go smoothly from then on? No, not at all. The Consortium did let me do whatever I needed to do. Nevertheless, the awaited answer from the Consortium 'We fully support you. Go ahead!' did not come right away even after they witnessed surprisingly positive reactions from other Euroculture colleagues when I officially announced the plan in front of all Euroculture students gathered for a conference called Intensive Program (IP). In other words, there was still hesitation. It took me another three months to finally get official approval and funding. Those months haven't been easy for me. Uncertainty disguised in the words such as 'summer vacation' and 'bureaucracy' definitely played hard on me. One interesting thing I found out, however, was that despite all these unfavorable situations, I never gave up on the



» Success Stories Online

<http://www.em-a.eu/en/erasmus-mundus/success-stories.html>

magazine and kept working on it as if the magazine already existed. I could only do it thanks to the three questions that I asked before I started. I knew with certainty that I truly wanted it, we really needed it, and finally, we could make it work.

And voilà, the **number three worked wonders again**. *The Euroculturer* is now being officially acknowledged by the Euroculture Consortium which provides financial support for the web-managing. Also, like-minded Euroculture students crowded my email account during those three months of waiting and as a result, the magazine currently has a devoted editorial board, many contributors, and the best web-designer from Euroculture staff. They all volunteered to be actively engaged in the magazine to benefit our beloved community, which is MA Euroculture. The magazine is issued twice a semester and our first edition was published on 17th of October 2012. We have already prepared a second edition which came out in December 2012 under the theme "Christmas in Euroculture universities". The exciting stories of Euroculturers will be chronicled from now on until, perhaps, forever.

If you are interested, please visit www.euroculturer.eu



By
EUNJIN JEONG

MA EUROCULTURE –
EUROPE IN THE WIDER WORLD | 2013

Tell us your success story!

EMA would love to know about the achievements of Erasmus Mundus students and alumni! Found a new dream-job? Got accepted into a prestigious PhD programme? Your essay was published in a famous journal? You met your boyfriend/girlfriend on Erasmus Mundus course and you are now getting married?

Share your success stories with the Erasmus Mundus Community! Just send us a few lines telling about your accomplishments and a photo of yours to service@em-a.eu and you will become a success face of Erasmus Mundus.

Your success is a motivation to all Erasmus Mundus students and a source of pride for the European Commission.

EMA Success Stories online:
www.em-a.eu/en/success-stories.html



Almudena Garcia i Sastre, Spain

JEMES - JOINT EUROPEAN MASTER PROGRAMME IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES | 2009

...has written her master thesis in Cuba working with the National Institute of Tropical Agriculture. Almudena became part of the Organic Farming Unit at the Directorate General of Agriculture in the European Commission. She has recently received a Marie Curie fellowship to develop a PhD thesis on political ecology of land use change in Latin America.



Anisur Rahman, Bangladesh

DILL - ERASMUS MUNDUS INTERNATIONAL MASTER IN DIGITAL LIBRARY LEARNING | 2011

has published a book titled "International Students' Perceptions of & Attitudes Towards E-Resources: A Case of Oslo University College".



Bakhodir Mirzaev, Uzbekistan

AGRIS MUNDUS - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURE MASTERS COURSE | 2009

works at the United Nations Development Programme in Uzbekistan as a Water Resources Management Specialist at IWRM Planning for Zarafshan River Basin Project and has co-published the paper: "Growing more with less".



Izni Zahidi, Malaysia

EUROAQUAE - EURO HYDRO-INFORMATICS & WATER MANAGEMENT MASTERS COURSE | 2011

...published a book about her experiences while studying in Europe for two years. The book, entitled "The Longest Honeymoon" is available on Amazon.



Monika Koperska, Poland

ASC - ERASMUS MUNDUS MASTER OF SCIENCE: ADVANCED SPECTROSCOPY IN CHEMISTRY | 2010

...a PhD candidate from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, is the winner of FameLab 2012- one of the world's most prestigious science engagement competitions.



Raj Sark, India

GIM - ERASMUS MUNDUS MSC IN GLOBAL INNOVATION MANAGEMENT

...has founded SmartTag - devices to help you not lose things. Raj has been among the semi-finalists at NYC Next Idea business plans competition for New York City business plan challenge. His project SmartTag is among the finalists of the Venture Cup, Denmark - an entrepreneurship event at Copenhagen. Moreover, Raj has received a fellowship to be part of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's prestigious annual entrepreneurship summit, to be held at Istanbul, Turkey in March 2012.

THE EMA PHOTO COMPETITION

We invite you to select the winner of the photo competition online - just go to EMA's facebook page via [www.facebook.com/
ErasmusMundusAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/ErasmusMundusAssociation)

find and album called "Engagement Photo Competition", and click "Like" for the photo that you think most reflects the theme of this edition. The winner will receive an online bookstore voucher.



RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT?

by DARIYA GRIBANOVA

NATIONALITY: UKRAINE

Erasmus Mundus Course: CLE - Master/Laurea Specialistica en Cultures Littéraires Européennes

Description: The picture was taken in the churchyard of one of the old churches of Lvov, Ukraine...if it is an example of religious engagement or not, everyone decides their own.

ENGAGEMENT

by SULABHA KARUNANIDHI

NATIONALITY: INDIA

Erasmus Mundus Course: MASEN - Erasmus Mundus Masters in Special Needs and Inclusive Education | 2007

Description: In India, toe rings and anklets depict that the female is engaged.





HELLO LITTLE FRIEND

by GULCIN GUMUS

NATIONALITY: TURKEY

Erasmus Mundus Course: EMCL
- European Masters Clinical Linguistics | 2012

Description: This picture was taken at Schiermonnikoog, the smallest West Frisian island in the north of the Netherlands. The island as a whole is a national park. Walking along the island, discovering its natural beauties and wide sandy beaches, I had the impression that I was in a "far, far away land where time stands still". As a person who has always lived in big cities, I can say that experiencing these special places where you can truly connect with nature feels amazing!

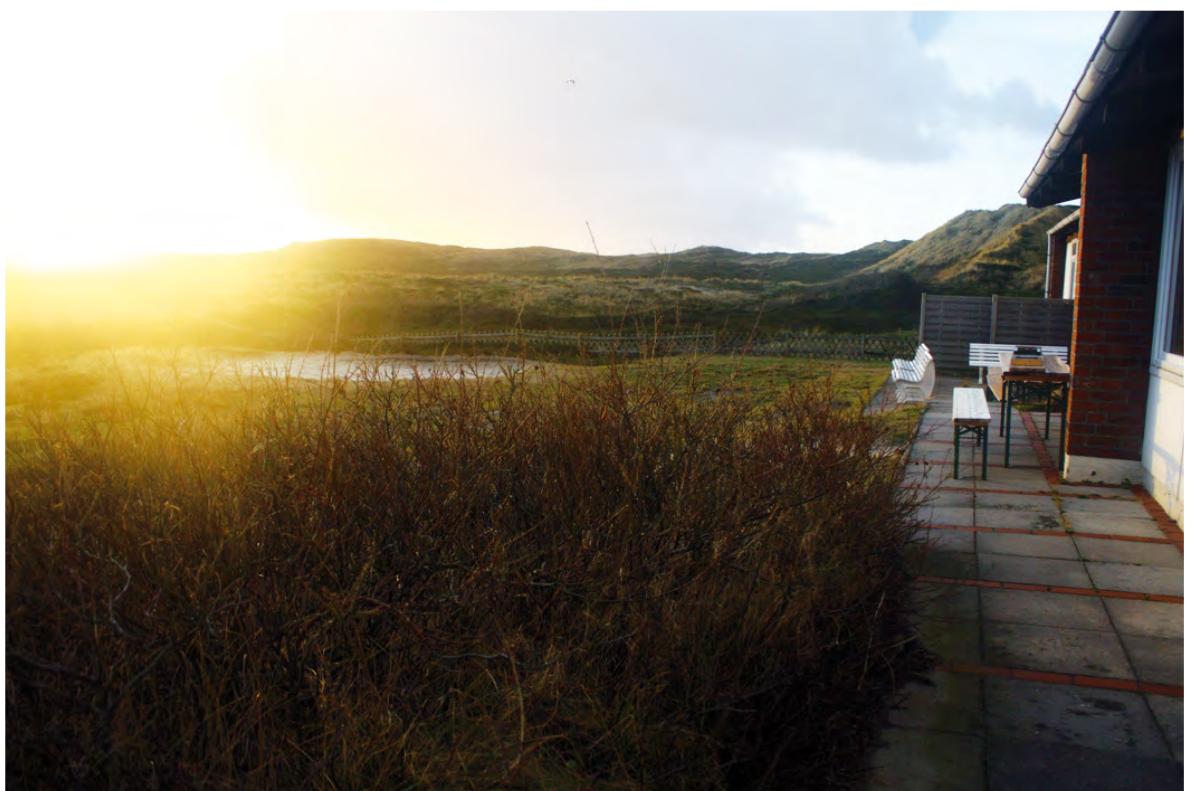
SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

by ABU SAYED NATIONALITY: BANGLADESH

Erasmus Mundus Course:
CoDe - Joint European Master in Comparative Local Development | 2012

Description: Religious leaders, primary and high school teachers, local government representatives, community people and students are working voluntarily and collectively to build a library in a village of Bangladesh. They all believe that establishing this library by involving all representatives from society can trigger education which, eventually, would promote local development in the region.





ENGAGEMENT WITH NATURE, SYLT ISLAND, HAMBURG, GERMANY

by NILAY DOGULU NATIONALITY: TURKEY

Erasmus Mundus Course: FloodR - Flood Risk Management | 2013

Description: Feeling the warmth of the sun in the mornings when you look outside from your window is precious, right? People are growing away from nature in today's urban life. Besides, the rush in our daily routines prevents our eyes from seeing nature's beauties. However, the colour of our hopes can be vivid only if we realise those beauties - look at the sky, see the clouds moving and hear the raindrops falling on green... The lost essence of serenity can be found only if we engage ourselves with nature. That's why I owe my engagement with the world to the things that remind me presence and power of Nature.

THE ENGAGEMENT

by KREANGCHAI
RUNGFAMAI

NATIONALITY: THAILAND

Erasmus Mundus Course: HEEM
- European Masters Degree in
Higher Education/2008

Description: see picture.

What does engagement mean from a Thai student's experience (HEEM 2006-2008)?



What my Thai friends think engagement means



What my parents think engagement means



what my supervisors think engagement means



What my foreign friends think engagement means



What I think engagement means (in my fantasy)



What I think engagement really means

Under the Blue Sky:

"How does it feel to live in a new country?"

Blue sky with the puff of clouds and endless continuous white trails made by all those jet-planes; this is what I first noticed on my very first day here in Darmstadt, Germany.

I was tired – cumulative effect of jet-lag and time-lag. And I remember when my friend had asked me that very day how I felt on my first day in a place out of my country, I only smiled (people smile when they don't have good answers). Wait until this headache is over, I had told myself, and then I'll observe (not see) things in this new city and will tell them how I feel. From August 29 to October 14, it's now been exactly 47 days, and yes, I now have a good answer to my friend's question.

"So, how do you feel here in a new country?" This is what my friend had asked me that day. A simple question, I know. My friend has a knack of asking simple questions, to which the answers are not that simple. And I've realised that you get struck with this question every once in a while especially if you, like me, are from a developing country. And every time my eardrums got hit by this question, I tried to remember all those adjectives I had read in school – good, wonderful, awesome (adjectives that explain how 'good' things are) and lonesome, shocking, anxious (bad ones that explain how 'bad' things are). I erased all those bad adjectives, fumbled with the good ones and finally ended up with one simple adjective from my bucket of good adjectives – GOOD. Good choice, right? I never used the words like 'awesome' or even 'wonderful' as people expected me to. If you're still not bored with this write-up, I'll explain why.

For the first few days after I came to this new city, I was hit hard by the fact that I was virtually miles and miles away from my family I had practically stayed with all my life. The silence of my new room, unlike the echo of the rumbles of vehicles and laughter of kids playing, which continuously filled the air of my tiny room in my home country, taunted me. But as I looked outside the window, I could see a whole new world ('a whole new world', I love this song, and Aladdin, of course). I could see different building facades (I'm sorry, I'm an architect so building facades is the first thing I notice), high-pitched roofs (another thing I notice), trees that undergo different colouring of leaves, and of course, those white trails which for a moment made me think of UFOs. And then I felt wonderful. A whole new world indeed, I told myself, a dream come true. The 'bad/lonesome/taunting' feeling I had before would then be somehow overcome by the latter 'wonderful' feeling. And if you are any good in mathematics, then

you'll understand that what would be left out of 'wonderful' minus 'bad' is 'good'; and hence my answer. Not that I explained all these pure mathematics to whoever asked me that simple question. All I answered was that one-word 'good' with a smile and they figured it out, well, some did.

47 days, and now things are changing. I'm now taking in the air of everything new here – the places – Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Paris (yes, I'm only a little updated version of your small-town-girl, so all these big cities are huge for me), the people (I'm now culturally drenched in this multi-national/cultural environment which Darmstadt in general, and my Masters programme in particular has to offer), delicious bakery items (buns, biscuits, you name it), and beautifully made boots (boots aren't much of a fashion-style in my country since we don't have severe winter, so shopping for boots is new for me). The 18 degrees Celsius in the temperature measuring instrument when I first arrived here has now dropped down to 8, the warm breeze is now being replaced by cold winds, and the blue sky is all but grey now. On the cheerful side, the cold, taunting room of mine now feels and smells warm; random talks with my newly-made friends are full of gossips and laughs now; and since one-week after the official start of the programme, I have assignments, submissions and deadlines. And that one-word answer 'good' of mine has now changed to 'great'. Changes; it's amazing how things change. I'm sure there are still many changes in store for me. So you see, I now have a 'great' answer to my friend's simple question.

It's raining and cold now; my room is warm though. I can hear bells ringing in the nearby church, raindrops hitting my window-panes, sounds of an airplane up in the sky, and footsteps of my housemates. Sounds that now make me feel at ease, like home. The sky is grey today, not a beautiful day unlike yesterday. But as I sit in a revolving chair in a warm room of a cosy house by the pine trees under the grey sky (that's too many prepositions there), writing this write-up which, for all I know, might never get published, I feel happy; I feel happy to be where I am and what I'm doing today!



By
BARSHA CHITRAKAR

MUNDUS URBANO – MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT | 2014

Engagement!?

Yes, the LGBT also get engaged in all the same and different ways!

Engagement! Who would have thought that this word would be such an inspiration within the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community; it means so many things: appointment, commitment, marriage proposal, betrothal and rendezvous, being part of something and taking part in something.

Whatever the meaning, it resonates loud within the community and the main reason for that is probably because in some cases the LGBT people have been restricted to engage because of their sexual orientation. And similarly to the other neglected groups, this is how the movement started, with the engagement for respecting and accepting that those "different" can take part in everything the "normal" and the "majority" can.

So, where do the LGBT engage? With an interesting word play we can talk about two very important things – one would mean which jobs and activities people take part

in and the other is most certainly where, in which countries and regions, the LGBT can get engaged to be married. Both are very simple, even though sometimes it seems there is a secret formula on how the non-heterosexuals work, play, live and what makes them laugh.

Myth or fact – are there more homosexuals and bisexuals in countries which allow gay marriages? This is probably a myth. Truth is that in places that are open-minded to different sexual orientation, people are more open to say, express and experiment with their identities because they don't feel restricted or abnormal if they do so. In countries which are heavily hetero-normative, less people would say they're gay and less of them will try something that is not considered normal.

Well, the first and the main thing to acknowledge here is the mere fact that sexual orientation and who attracts us usually has very little to do with what we want to do in our lives and where we want to engage ourselves. One may say that lots of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people become very committed to advocating human rights and equality and that is true. However, this comes along the lines of usually being socially repressed and wanting to do something for the community. If we imagine that freedoms and equality was not an issue any more, the LGBT activist would probably work and become active in all the

same places as heterosexuals. Fact is that only a small number of non-hetero-oriented people engage in LGBT activism in the first place. Gays and lesbians work in all regular places and get excited by all the same regular stuff as any of their heterosexual peers. Simply said, the interests for engagement can be anything: riding bikes, taking walks, being romantic or adventurous, making jokes, working at offices, doing researches, developing new software, studying physics, biology or social sciences, making bread, cookies, being a dog or cat owner... So the conclusion is that engagement usually is a matter of person and personality, interest and ambition, and almost nothing to do with who we intimately engage with.

On the other hand, the sad reality is that not all countries allow free expression and comfortable living for the LGBT. Within the LGBT community, people exactly know those places and if you're anything different from heterosexual and ever lived in a close-minded country, you must have at least once thought of a better and at least a bit more relaxed life in one of those dream countries for gay couples. Actually, only a couple of countries in the world allow full equality regardless of sexual orientation, including same-sex marriage and absolute partnership rights: The Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2003), Spain and Canada (2005), South Africa (2006), Norway and Sweden (2009), Portugal, Iceland and Argentina (2010), Denmark (2012), and some of the US and Mexican states and parts. Of course, there are other places where civil partnerships are an option, as well as those where being different is not as uncomfortable, and from a personal perspective – it are usually the warmth and kindness of people who surround you that makes it nice and cosy.

So, in the end, even though gays and lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders can't freely engage and get married everywhere in the world, there is no lack of engagement in everything else – and especially not in sharing a laugh and some good time with friends.



by
HELENA KOVAC
EMA LGBT PRESIDENT

Sailing in the White Space

The very wind in the sails is a mental wind. The physical nature of air moving has little influence on the idea of sailing. For the sailor, the wind is a desire, like a dream of flying, winds spread wide as the dress on the belle of the ball.

On land, the fingers of the wind grasp and stretch the skin, pulling and pushing. On the sea, as the boat moves beneath you, the wind is perceptively mutable. 'Apparent wind', it is called, and on calm days, the hull may glide past waves at four Gordian knots an hour, and the sailor may feel as if he was on a breeze-



less picnic, the sheet laid soft and low on the rippling lawn of the sea.

Just as the winds are mental, so is it that the more abstraction one pulls in with the nets, the less physical the act of voyaging seems. There are 27 books in the New Testament, with 260 chapters; only two of them mention Malta. Reading the narrative in Acts, the island rises from the surrounding sea like a player entering the stage, accompanied by the fanfare of the booming horns and traffic roars of the Biblical storm. It washes itself upon the edge of that mythos, and then turns and flows in the wake, as Paul leaves again for Rome. As I read the chapter on the sea-road, it was easy to imagine that the writing was almost a creation, a filling, a shovelling of dirt into the sea 70 nautical miles south of Sicily.

But before St. Paul's Island, crowned on top with marble laurels weaved by a stone

mason, tucked next to Mistra Bay off the headland, with the boats going through the channel to the mainland - before that island ever heard a breath of Greek or Aramaic bubble from Paul's lips as he rose to the surface of the waters, there was solid stone and tilled earth. When the walls of Valletta fall, there will still be granite rock beneath them, still be a harbour on both sides (for a while.) The island remains, and it is not a difficult switch to imagine that the entrance of the island in its first act on our literary stage was not the entrance, but an exit. Malta left behind the memories of olive trees before the Neolithic temples, left behind the older memories of being part of Tunisia. It dipped its toes into the story, and then pulled them out again, sparkling from the salted film of the reader's eyes.

Sailing is the same. A landed person thinks of time in terms of bus numbers, kilos of petrol, miles walked, revolutions per minute (or, perhaps, per century). Sailing exists in the empty spaces where these machines cannot go. It is an art, like painting, but the paint-brush moves only outside the edges, only in the background. It exists in the blank space on the edge of the map; what maps sailors make create blanks out of the land, leaving only shells on the shore. Distances are measured in wavelengths, in discordant knots, in the influence of forces. Distance is measured in the height of an island on the edge of the sea: 10mm at arm's length, 10 miles. 20mm, maybe 15. And the sailor, seeing the world through the empty spaces, raises the islands from the ocean like a reader, hollows out of the horizontal chink in the blue wall before him a space to put a mountain in. But inevi-



„While sailing, distances are measured in wavelengths, in discordant knots, in the influence of forces.“

tably, when the sailor lands, the foot upon the first rock redefines the reading of the island - the island is more real than any wave upon the shore, than any dreams the sailor might have had during the voyage.

I knew I would, too, come to Malta on a ship; unlike Paul, I planned to land there beforehand. And running before the winds of this idea, I bought a boat in Sicily, hitched five hundred miles to Genoa, and then took a motor-ferry that skimmed the water like it was a movie on fast forward. I dropped the boat in the water, taught her how to handle my inexperienced skill, and stayed with her for a fortnight, until I was ready. Raising anchor in the pre-dawn, slipping off like Odysseus from the blinding night of the Cyclops, we set the sails and harnessed the wind. In a nod to the computer science degree I was bearing for, we set the GPS too, and let the compass turn what way she would. After some hours, Sicily fell behind in the wake, written now only in the trailing ink of the ship's log. Tankers passed. Malta rose up, as if for the first time. And it was then, in the afternoon sun, surrounded by blue ocean and blue sky, that these themes first began to engage my mind, that I first knew that the wind in the white sails was imagined. Malta bore towards us, on her own winds, pulling my fresh eyes in.



by
RICHARD LITTAUER

LCT - EUROPEAN MASTERS PROGRAM
IN LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGIES | 2013



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