

No. 4

15-21.08.2022

THE UNITED FITTERS

OF



1-30 AUGUST

*This is the magazine of **Youth Summer Fest**: an initiative in Youth Centres UP 2, an international project hosted by Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT), that brings together volunteers from the world, eager to create spaces and activities for the young people of Timisoara and Lugoj.*

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Designed by
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How to create fun?

by Inès Adnot

Generally, the days start with little games to provide a creative atmosphere and a good harmony between the different teams. Our role is not only to organize and promote events but also to listen to everyone, share ideas and find a way to apply them. To achieve/reach our goal, each member is given several responsibilities, from editing a magazine to scheduling sports and cultural activities.

The volunteers then gather to work together, to see which option is better, how they can implement their initial ideas, what equipment they will need and more. Through discussion, empathy, agreement and disagreement we always try to find the best way to make youth enjoy our event.



The particularity of the Youth Summer Fest lies in the mix and the heterogeneity of the volunteers involved; each of them brings something from their own culture and perspective.

An example among many others are the artistic workshops: Henna, learning how to write your name in Arabic or Chinese, mandala drawings, body paintings... Sports are also a big part of our programme. We had ping pong tournaments, outdoor team games or sumo fights (one of the funniest ideas).



The big question is: how to make these ideas real and doable for young people of Timisoara? Our job is to think about all probabilities: how many participants? What kind of participants? Do they speak English, Romanian, or both? How to be a good facilitator? What to do if the weather is not good? How many spaces do we have? Teamwork allows us to cover all these aspects, think about the materials and write them down for the team leaders and the logistics team.

It works like a chain where creativity, mutual aid and sharing are the priorities. Being a volunteer is not only about enjoying the final events but also the whole process which teaches us many things.

Towards youth integration and thought development

by Hany George



Youth integration stemming from a love of cooperation and innovative thought is the basis for the success of teamwork, based on looking at different cultures and learning new traditions and customs from different countries.

A human being that grew up in an environment different from another individual's environment in thought, traditions and customs, if he's being able to see the human soul in all its forms and deep details, then there will be understanding, cooperation, harmony.

Young people develop by taking the positives from the youth of the world and learn from them. For example: A young man from Europe learned how to make a meal from an Asian young man and vice versa. When they both return to their countries, they will re-cook it. We become cultures of the Continent of knowledge through interpersonal cooperation.

We must all set our eyes toward youth integration and thought development, from which we all benefit.

Discovery Through Traditional Food

by Binbin Li

As we all know, food is paramount to our existence as humans. Interestingly, the traditional food that is sold in the local stands and supermarkets may spoil my taste buds with an intense mix of flavors and show me a big surprise in whatever way. As the years have passed, **seeking traditional street food while traveling is a must for me** for its richness in terms of traditional cuisine and it will always keep my mouth watering!

Sometimes they are not available in every corner of a city, but as a sweet tooth, I'm so grateful for when I found papanași in Timisoara: a kind of fried cheese doughnuts best served hot, with sweet and sour cream, and preferably, blueberry jam. Maybe it doesn't sound pleasantly surprising but the taste and the gummy texture combined with the blueberries' sourness is absolutely divine and yummy!



What makes traditional food so unique is that they have always existed since they are the basis of nutrition in diverse cultures and societies. As such, traditional foods and food systems can vary greatly, based on factors such as geography, seasonality, and cultural group. For example, due to the long-term influence of the humid climate, people living in the basin are fond of spicy flavors.

Furthermore, the traditional cuisine is actually a mix of dishes and cooking techniques borrowed from neighboring cultures, but transformed with local herbs and spices. It is extremely common in the Middle East nowadays. That's why locals will be more willing to share and discuss food stories with me, which is a good way to get on well with them and broaden my horizons.

However, as a result of food industrialization, meaning the mass production that began in the mid-twentieth century, a clear distinction in quality was accentuated. According to a study from Canada, which explored the perceptions and experiences of traditional food and knowledge among First Nations Youth, it became evident that participants had diverse and conflicting understandings of what the term 'traditional foods' encompassed. Researchers have also reported that limited traditional knowledge has been widely cited as a significant barrier to traditional food access and consumption.

Grosso modo, traditional food is a real treasure as part of traditional culture, so it's a little bit of a pity to see it lost. As foodies, perhaps we can pay more attention to the heritage of traditional food - why not start with a local snack?



House of the traditions: Intercultural night

by Nisanur Epli

The intercultural night provides a wonderful platform for expressing one's traditional and cultural values. This week's intercultural night was a success. The sharing of cultural traditions was available between countries including Egypt, Georgia, Azerbaijan, China, and Tunis. Along with eating traditional foods, people also learnt about the traditional music and dances.

Egyptians dressed in their traditional "Galabia" costume and performed their "Nubian" dance. Furthermore, they made "Koshry," a type of pasta with a number of extra components like chickpeas, lentils, and their special sauce. I gave it a plus one because it was vegetarian. They also served "Mulikhia", which is a soup prepared from Mulikhia leaves and beef broth.

Georgia was enjoyable as well. They began by performing the "Ajaruli" Dance, which is a component of their traditional history. Food specialities were plentiful.

For instance, Khachapuri is an extremely delicious dough with a lot of cheese in it. After consuming Khachapuri, you experience immediate satiety. They also provided sweets like Churchkela and Tklapi.

I have familiarity with Azerbaijan because Turkey and Azerbaijan share many similarities. First of all, "Çolpali as/çolpali plov" was served. Although I didn't taste it, some of my friends did and praised about the fantastic seasoning. They also provided "Çoban salatası", a salad made of tomato, cucumber, pepper, and onion. The last dish was a sweet named "Helva". Although there are only two ingredients which are flour and sugar, it takes much time to cook it.





China is distinct from other countries in that it has a wide range of tastes. The meals they prepared for the intercultural night, on the other hand, were familiar to everyone. '番茄炒蛋 (Fan qie chao dan)' was one of them. Actually, it's fried eggs with tomatoes. There was also '蛋炒饭 (dan chao fan)', which was made with fried egg, rice, and a variety of vegetables. One of the Chinese girls (Zixin Zhao) wore the traditional '旗袍 (qi pao)' dress.



Tunis scorched us with its hot cuisine, like "Lablebi". Lablebi comprises flatbread, chickpeas, and its fiery "Harissa" sauce. Additionally, they served "Slata Mechwya" salad, "Major" biscuits, and "Harissa" red paste. Tunis was the destination for those who enjoy spicy food. I had a great time because of this.

Intercultural night was, in short, an occasion to taste, dance, and learn about cultures from all around the world. Everyone feels happier when they see a smile on others' faces. Despite the fact that everyone had unique lives, cultures, and traditions, we were all able to discover many things in common and easily enjoy ourselves under one roof.

Where there is Profi, there is me

by Firdaows Chesamae

My life in Timisoara so far is good, even though the city is quite tedious, but having other volunteers from different countries in this project and living together in this city make the environment more colourful and fun.

Since I have been living in this city for about a month, I noticed that there are convenient stores called Profi at every corner of the street, and I like that!

It might sound funny to write about Profi but this convenience store reminds me of 7-Eleven convenience stores in Thailand which you can also easily find everywhere.



Profi makes my life here easier because it helps me when I need something to eat for breakfast or lunch when I'm in a rush time or don't have time to cook.

I will miss this red colored convenient store when I go back to Thailand. When I think about Romania, Profi will definitely show up in my head. And of course, I will miss Timisoara and FITT. :)

Interviews with the volunteers

taken by Riyadh Aliyev

Mahmoud Attwany, Egypt

- It is my first time abroad, so it is an amazing opportunity for me to meet different people from all around the world, explore new cultures and this country.
- I was in Arad last week, and it was a very beautiful city. Timisoara is also beautiful, and as there were not many activities to do for young people like me, we tried to organize different events for local and international young people here in the city.
- The local people did not show as much interest as I expected, but I hope that in future more and more people will join our events and have fun with us.



Seren Emek, Turkey

- It is already 3 weeks that I am part of this project, and I enjoy my time here. Romania is a beautiful country and Timisoara is a chill city. I go to city center, have a cup of coffee, and visit different museums.
- Coming back to my volunteering, last week we had a paper making workshop and I learned how to make new papers from old ones. I will make papers at my home using the techniques I learned in the workshop.



FITT is a kind of happiness, you wish would never end

by Selwan Esmat

FUN! This word consists of three letters, but despite its small structure, it brings me back many happy memories.

• What do you think of when you read the word FUN?

In the words of Celia from Spain, „fun is when the time passes by and I do not notice, when I feel comfortable and do not get the notion of time". According to Abi Espada from Spain, „fun is being with people who are making me laugh".

Fun is different from one to another. Usually when we are having fun, we lose track of time and say „how fast the time has passed, and now I have to go do this or that”, but **FITT is different**: in this volunteering organization, they combine work with fun in an incredible way, so that you develop yourself and others, yet you do not feel that you were working.

The first time I met the volunteers here I found them greeting me with a warm smile after a busy volunteering day, and I wondered how they could smile after such a busy day, as they must have been tired. At the time, I could not understand them, but now I find myself do like them after a busy day. I must shower everyone with my laughter when I come back.



- **Collecting the best moments**

Asked about the funniest moment in FITT, Mohammed Abdulkareem from Iraq thought of "making the weekly report as a TEAM". Most people get bored of paperwork, but harmony with the team and a sense of fun during the activities is what they are working on, creating and developing the team spirit.

Siyu said that "The funniest moment was when I was planning with Annia what we would do tomorrow".

Even if you repeat this volunteering experience a hundred times, every time you will feel as if it is the first time. Exactly like love.



But what makes volunteering with FITT so special is the staff. Or maybe the activities they are providing. Or maybe it is the company and the friends that you will meet.

Anyway, the response that I find the best is Abi's, who, asked why would he re-experience this, said that "I get to know myself better".

You will never know if you don't try something new, so if you have the chance, don't miss tasting the happiness that I wish would never end.



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This magazine was created during
Youth Summer Fest. For more
information, please access

www.fitt.ro

Youth Summer Fest is part of the Youth Centres UP 2 project and is implemented with the support of the West University of Timișoara and with funding from the European Solidarity Corps and the Municipality of Timișoara through the Projects Centre.