



Co-funded by the
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Harmony Bootcamp

Varna University of Management, Bulgaria - 2nd to 21st July 2023

Project Report

Student Participant 1	Student Participant 2	Student Participant 3
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From living independently in a new country, to marketing for and organising an intercultural event, the three weeks spent at the Harmony Bootcamp, have been nothing less than an experience of a lifetime. A total of 21 students from India, Vietnam, and Bangladesh were invited to attend a fully funded student bootcamp of three weeks' duration, from 2nd to 21st July 2023, organized by Erasmus+ program of the European Union. These students were shortlisted in the Digital Storytelling Competition conducted at the university level.

Throughout the three weeks of the bootcamp, students were accommodated in the dormitory of Varna University of Management in Dobrich, Bulgaria, which is a small, calm, and peaceful city. The environment is completely opposite to what one would see in a fast-paced city like Mumbai. Wherever you looked, you would find people peacefully enjoying a cup of coffee at

a local coffee shop, reading a newspaper, cycling around, taking their pets on a walk, taking a stroll in the park, etc. There was no hurry, no urgency to reach places, no rush. This was largely because it was the time of summer holidays, when the number of people staying in the city is less, as most Bulgarians spend their time out of the country.



Classes conducted:

During the three weeks, several classes were conducted on the topics of (i) Event Management, (ii) Intercultural Communication and Competence, and (iii) Leadership, which were conducted by some of the top faculty of Varna University of Management, Bulgaria.

1. Event Management:

Conducted by Professor Irina Petkova, this was a 4-day module, where students learnt everything right from the basics of event planning (types, size, scale, roles, scope), to how marketing of an event takes place, pre and post event planning, and more.

Throughout the classes, students were given group assignments and presentations to work on. These team activities were a great way to interact with and get to know the fellow students. For most of the students, this was also the first time we were working with students from different countries.



2. Intercultural Communication and Competence:

Conducted by Dr. Nedka Dimitrova, this was a 5-day module that took place in the second week of the bootcamp. During the classes, students would engage in meaningful discussions surrounding the topics of elements of culture that shape people's thinking, behaviour, and actions. We touched upon the topics of stereotypes, norms, beliefs, attitudes of people across different cultures, and more.

At the end of the module, students were divided into groups of three for a group project and presentation, in which we recognised various cultural differences between different countries, which included cross-cultural communication barriers, auto and hetero-stereotypes, and so on.

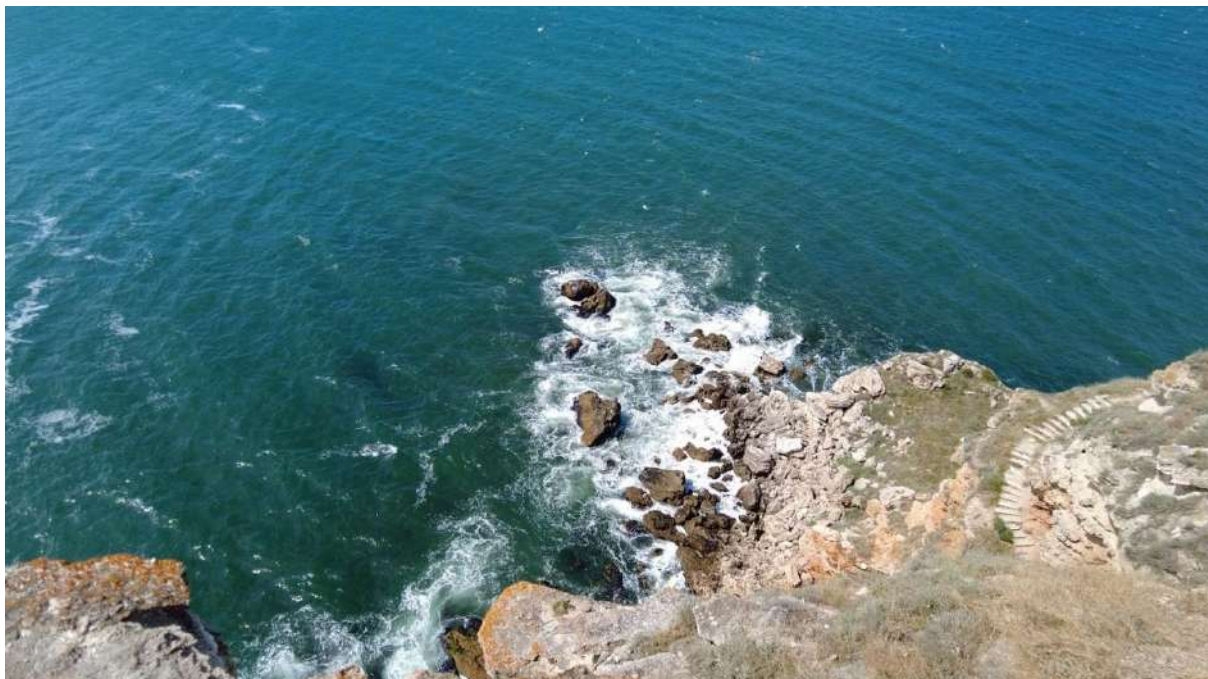


3. Leadership:

Conducted by Dr. Violina Ratcheva, this was a 4-day module conducted in the last week of the bootcamp. These classes were a culmination of learning different leadership styles, as well as gaining an understanding of how different people perceive leadership differently and the qualities that are envisioned in a leader

Study Trips:

On weekends, we were taken on study trips to beautiful locations in Bulgaria like Cape Kaliakra, Nessebar, Balchik, Castle Ravadinovo, Albena Beach, and more. Every place that we visited had a cultural significance and historical importance. We were accompanied by tour guides during these trips, who at every step of the way gave us insights and pieces of useful information about the places that we were visiting.



'Delight in Diversity' - intercultural event:

At the end of the bootcamp, the students organized an intercultural event called 'Delight in Diversity', at an open theatre in Dobrich, Bulgaria. In this event, we showcased the cultures of India, Vietnam, Bangladesh through interactive stalls and live performances.

1. Marketing and pre-event:

We were allocated a budget within which we had to ensure that we cover all the expenses of the event. We divided ourselves into broadly four teams- marketing, logistics, finance, arts and crafts. Information about this event was published in almost all local media in Dobrich:

[a] <https://www.focus-news.net/novini/regioni/Naslada-v-mnogoobraziето-e-finalut-v-Dobrich-na-Studentski-obuchitelen-lager-1755959>

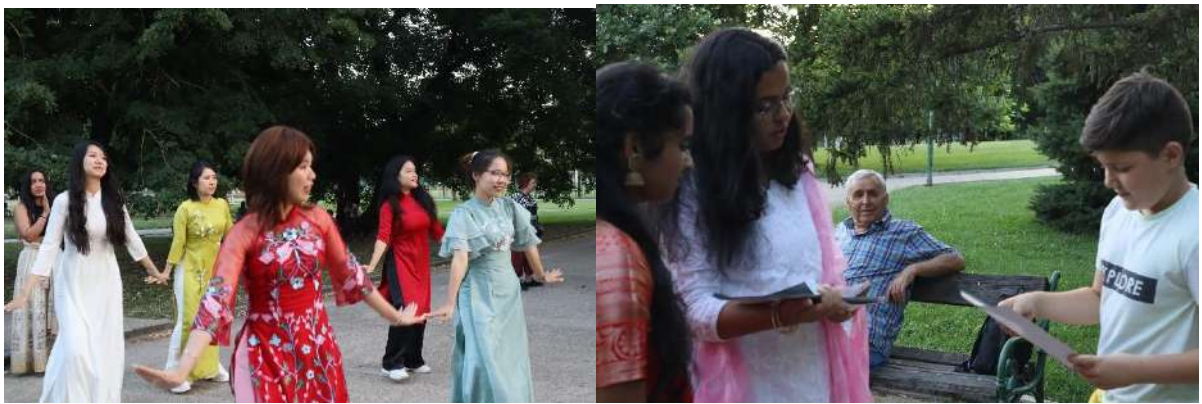
[b] https://novini247.com/novini/na-19-yuli-2023-sryada-v-leten-teatar-dobrich-shte_6585588.html

[c] <https://dobrudjabg.com/novina/mejdunaroden-festival-na-kulturite-naslada-v-mnogoobraziето-shte-provedat-chujdestranni-studenti-na-vum/89039>

[d] <https://darik.bg/mezdunaroden-festival-na-kulturite-naslada-v-mnogoobraziето-ste-se-provede-v-dobrich-na-19-uli>

In the final days leading up to the event, students dressed up in their traditional attires, handed out posters and flyers, and conducted a flashmob on the streets of Dobrich, which was watched and appreciated by many.





2. The event:

From interactive stalls showcasing the artefacts and traditions of the three countries, to spectacular live performances that made the audience immerse themselves in the cultures of Asia, the 'Delight in Diversity' event, staying true to its name, was a blend of delightful experiences and rich showcase of cultural diversity.



Key learnings and takeaways:

The kind of international and intercultural exposure that this bootcamp has given the students, is invaluable and one that we will treasure for the rest of our lives! This experience has not only made the students culturally more aware but has triggered an urge to continue learning and exploring different cultures. Living and studying with students from across the globe has been one of the best parts of this journey. We not only learned the nuances of event management and leadership in theory, but also practised and applied our learnings by organising the ‘Delight in Diversity’ event.

Each student brought with themselves a unique set of skills and values, and we are extremely grateful that we not only had the opportunity to interact with, but also learn from each one of

them. This experience has played a key role in contributing to our academic and personal growth. We are extremely grateful to Erasmus+ for organising this wonderful bootcamp, and to Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies for giving us the platform to be a part of this life-changing experience.

