

PODCAST



PODCAST 7 - FROM ERASMUS TO THE GLOBAL WORKPLACE: LEARNING TO WORK ACROSS CULTURES

“ERASMUS – MY FIRST EDUCATIONAL TRIP”

When I received the email saying I'd been accepted for an Erasmus exchange in Italy, I couldn't believe it. It felt like winning a ticket to another life. I imagined sun-filled squares, coffee breaks, and new friends. What I didn't imagine were the moments of confusion, loneliness, and discovery that would completely change how I see the world.

The first days were chaos. The language sounded like music - beautiful, expressive, and impossible to follow. I nodded in conversations, pretending I understood. Even simple things - buying a bus ticket, finding the right classroom - felt like adventures. But little by little, life began to unfold. My roommates were from Spain, Germany, and Greece. Our evenings became a mix of languages, laughter, and endless debates about food.

That's when I learned something unexpected: home can fit into one shared kitchen - where everyone brings a piece of their culture. A recipe. A playlist. A story.

At university, teamwork was the biggest challenge. We came from different educational systems, with different habits and expectations. At first, it felt like we

were working against each other, not with each other. I remember the moment that changed everything. We were arguing about how to divide tasks. Voices got tense. Frustration filled the room.



Then one person said: “Let’s stop arguing about who’s right and start talking about what we want to achieve.” That sentence changed the energy completely. From then on, we learned to listen. To compromise. To laugh at our mistakes. Sometimes we mixed languages mid-sentence. Sometimes gestures said more than words. By the end of the semester, we weren’t just a team. We were a community of learners who had built something bigger than a project.

Outside the classroom, everyday life kept teaching me. At the market, I learned to say grazie - and really mean it. In cafés, I realised conversation is an art: it needs time, rhythm, and interest. In museums, I saw how history looks different depending on who tells the story. Erasmus taught me that intercultural readiness isn’t something you memorise. It’s something you live. It’s choosing to ask rather than assume. Listening when communication fails. Starting again after misunderstandings.

When I returned home, I felt different. Not better. Not more “international.” Just more aware of myself, of others, and of how fragile and beautiful understanding can be. If I could speak to my younger self - the one packing a suitcase with excitement and fear - I’d say this: Don’t worry about fitting in. Worry about showing up. Don’t chase perfect words. Chase an honest connection. And when you feel lost, look around. You’re not alone. You’re surrounded by people who are just as new, just as curious, and just as human as you are.

When I look back now, I still remember that hesitation - the moment when I almost said nothing. I've learned that being neutral in the face of hate is also a choice. And it's a choice that supports the wrong side. Once I understood that, staying silent was no longer an option.

So when I see hate online today, I remind myself of this: Speaking up isn't just about defending someone else. It's about protecting the kind of world I want to live in. A world where people are brave enough to care. And kind enough to speak - even when it's not easy.

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