

From one YouthPass to one full time dream job

Going abroad to learn had always been my dream. Being 16, growing up in Bosnia and Herzegovina and facing a number of challenges imposed on youth, this dream seemed very distant, until...

Going abroad to learn suddenly became an option! Through the Youth In Action Programme, a youth center from my city invited me to participate in a training course on critical thinking, public speaking and media literacy. My family members didn't believe me at first when I said it was all funded. In spite of their skepticism, I made my decision, and a few months from there I was filling out my first self-reflection to receive my very own YouthPass. I then realized—there was so much more I could do for my community! So...

Going abroad took place again! Over next two years, I applied for two more training courses, learned how to navigate an airport, proved my English speaking skills to myself, and, what was even more important, I knew what I wanted to do with my three YouthPasses after I graduate high school.

I wanted to go abroad, and learn, of course. I applied for a college in Canada when YouthPasses played a big role as they proved my co-curricular engagement and backed up my CV and competence assessment. Although I was only 19 and travelling on my own, I did know how to speak English and navigate airports and unfamiliar situations, and that indeed mattered the most.

Living and studying abroad wasn't easy, as you might guess. I had several student jobs, which I again got thanks to all documentation I submitted as I applied. Yes, you are assuming correctly—even within Canada's labor market, YouthPasses were highly valued as an added asset of a good job candidate. I then applied for a few college scholarships, which I was granted on the basis of the same documentation proving my previous learning experiences. I graduated as my generation's valedictorian, but soon enough, I decided I should go abroad again.

In years that came, I completed my bachelor's studies and found employment in my field of interest and expertise. A dream job of mine, as I like to call it, still requires me to go abroad and learn while travelling—in the end, it was and still is a big dream of mine, which now seems very real.

What I tried to portray in this story is a path I took from gaining my first YouthPass to gaining a few more, learning and growing through non-formal education, being able to secure jobs and scholarships for myself and, finally, discover my inner passion and find my dream job. To everyone second guessing themselves: don't. Try! There is nothing to lose, and so, so much to gain. Thanks, YouthPass!

Nikolina Garaca

