

# Study Visit in Western Georgia

Georgia, July 11 - July 15, 2023



The Europe Goes Local study visit in Western Georgia took place from 11 to 15 July 2023. The study visit tried to bring the perspective of the reality of local youth work in Western Georgia, share knowledge and experiences, talk about participatory events, and let participants learn from each other through the best practices.

There were eight mentees from Armenia and Azerbaijan, and representatives of municipalities from Spain, Portugal, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Poland, Moldova and Georgia. These participants took part in the study visit in the municipalities of Zugdidi, Chokhatauri, and Zestaphoni. They also joined educational sessions which covered the topics of enhancing the participation of local youth in municipalities, networking, sharing best practices, and evaluation.

Moreover, the participants met young people of Georgia. The participants talked and listened about the development of local youth work policies first hand from Georgian young people themselves. This was a strong additional priority for the study visit.

## Diary

The trainers wrote a short diary of what happened during the study visit.

## 11th of July

On the first day the participants followed an integration and introduction session. They also learned about the plans for the following days.

## 12th of July

The participants went to their first study visit in the Zugdidi municipality. The municipality shared their experiences about youth involvement and participatory events.

Later that day, the participants had a meeting in the Youth Centre of Zugdidi. The Youth Center talked about their activities. They also noted that the video about the EGL municipalities brought new international partners.

The cherry on the top for the day was visiting the library. Young people from the B126 club told the participants how they create engaging activities for the local youth in order to interest them to read. They explained how they evolved from a small group of young people going to the library, into the group of youngsters who want to bring change. Thanks to the so called “self-made” youth worker and the director of the library, young people aren’t only happy to have their place, but are also ready to act in the life of local community.

The other half of the day was devoted to the best practices session. The participants presented activities in their municipalities and organizations to develop local youth work. After a small fair session where they got to know each other’s organizations, they established questions and ideas which seemed interesting and inspiring to be presented.

## 13th of July

The next day combined outdoor activities with educational sessions. The participants got to know each other more and learn about each other’s best practices and talk about cooperation of NGO’s and municipalities.

They had a walk-talk session close to the Papantskvili lake where the participants shared good practices of their municipalities. They also talked about their work-life balance and professional dreams.



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After a short break and swim, they continued with the session on best practices. Participants tried to adopt the practices into their country's realities, and gave each other feedback and useful information how to enhance the cooperation between NGO's and municipalities. Furthermore, there was a competition to reward the best good practice. Congratulations to the team from Rasulzadeh municipality!

After that, a small community-based organization of T'orsa village gathered the participants in their area to talk about their plans and activities. The participants also talked with young volunteers from the village. The discussion on how to bring international aspect into the village aroused and brought hope for future cooperation. The meeting ended with a workshop on drying fruit, which the participants could eat the next day.

To end the day the participants met a local family who covered the table with the traditional Georgian food and welcomed them in their house. A bit of a cultural aspect is always a nice addition to the whole experience of Georgia!



## 14th of July

Today the participants traveled. of Zestaphoni and Chokhatauri were expecting them! The participants discovered how youth work is developing in these small cities in the mountains.

They heard about the struggles of youth work in Zestaphoni. How young people leave for Tbilisi and bigger cities and the lack of youth NGO's. But there is also life! Various activities are organized in cooperation with schools and libraries, such as drawing competitions and youth colour festivals.



After one and a half hour ride on the curvy mountain road and the participants arrive in Chokhatauri. Young people from the local club were waiting to explain in flawless English about their activities and engagement into local work. The participants enjoyed the day and talked with the youngsters after, as this is how you can actually see the level of development of youth work in the city and the engagement of young people.

As the final spot of the day was the follow-up session where participants summed up the study visits outcomes and impressions of those packed days, full of new information, and sharing the realities of youth work in Western Georgia.

## 15th July

On the last day was the middle evaluation session.

During the educational session, the mentors of the regions took over and analyzed the development of the participants, how they can improve their plans, and what their learning needs are. It was also the day to reflect on what the participants have learned, what they will take home with them, and how to develop the new knowledge into tangible results.

Let's hope the study visit will bring more local aspect of youth work as well as international cooperation!

Photos by: Marcin Idźkowski

You can find the training on SALTO [here](#).