

01/08/2013 – 01/11/2013

# GLEN INTERNSHIP: GEORGIA FINAL REPORT

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## Support to Youth Personal Development through Non Formal Education

Number of the internship:	5000300609
Place and country of the internship:	Koda, Georgia
Period of the internship:	August – October 2014
Hosting organization:	Koda Community Education Center
Home organization:	INEX-SDA



**SUMMARY**

GLEN internship took place in Koda, small village in Kvemo Kartli, not far from capital city Tbilisi. This village is specific, because almost half of the inhabitants are IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) from South Ossetia. Those people left their homes because of the war in 2010 and were moved to former military settlement in Koda. Koda Community Education Center was established in 2010 to help with socio-economic integration of new coming inhabitants. Nowadays it offers vocational education and personal development programs for whole community. The GLEN tandem composed of German volunteer Danny and Czech volunteer Lenka, worked mainly with youth club, but helped also with some regular activities of the center and tried to implement their own projects.



Youth club Koda CEC

**INTRODUCTION**

Sometimes a person finds himself at a crossroads and needs to decide where will go his next steps. I stayed at that type of crossroad at the beginning of the last year and I had the feeling that it is time to change my direction. After going through several possibilities I came up with GLEN program and I signed up. Perhaps it was the way I should go, because I was lucky enough to be selected. Although I applied for internships in Africa, during the weekend assessment centre everything changed and my skills fit better to the internship in Georgia. I attended two preparation seminars in Germany and the Czech Republic, met my tandem partner Danny from Germany, quit my job and started a three-month internship. My steps lead to Sakartvelo that is how Georgians call Georgia.

**KODA 2 IN 1**

Koda is a small village placed 25 km southern from Tbilisi. During the Soviet era it was famous because of the eggs production, but nowadays just one poultry farm works there and its glory disappeared. If you go to Koda today, you will find non-homogenise village consisting of two parts: "old village" with family houses surrounded by gardens and high fences and "small town" that is settlement full of block of flats.

Since 2008 this settlement has been full of immigrants from South Ossetia (IPDs = Internally Displaced Persons = people who have been forced to leave their homes as a result or to avoid results of armed conflict, violence, or natural or human made disasters, but still live inside their country). This settlement wasn't built as other ones (e.g. "famous" Cerovany close to Tbilisi); it is former military settlement for Soviet army, which was rebuilt.

About 450 families live in basic conditions in IPD settlement. There are over 265,000 IDPs in Georgia (total population is 4,486,000). After the military aggression in 2008 more than 26,000 people became IDPs and almost 2,000 of them live in Koda. Total population of Koda is about 5,000 inhabitants. You can feel the diversification there. For me IDPs are somehow labelled and they live mainly within the settlement.

Koda lies on the main road to Armenia and it's close to the capital. Directly from the Koda CEC marshrutka (Georgian minibus) goes every 30 minutes to Tbilisi and on the main road you can catch marshrutkas going from Marneuli. Even though IDPs rarely go to the main road and rather take marshrutka directly from the settlement.

There are many small shops in Koda, even though it's not easy to buy fresh fruits and vegetables there. There is no pub, bar or restaurant, but you can find there a place where pirozki are sold. There is one church and one school where both locals and IDPs meet each other. There use to be one kindergarten, but because of the growing number of children the second one was established. Unfortunately it's placed in the IDP settlement and IDPs' children attend this kindergarten, while children of locals attend the village kindergarten. It just deepens the gap inside Koda community.

**IDP SETTLEMENT AND WATER TIMES**

We also stayed in "gorodok" as the locals call IDP settlement, so we have the same conditions as IDPs. It is such a "small town" in the village, whose unofficial but visible boundary consists from the brook, roads and the ruins of the original walls. We stayed in a small flat on the fifth floor in a block of flats with many parabolas. It suppose to be a two-room flat but, the second room is just a little space partially separated by a wall, in which is just a bed and window, the doors are missing. Another speciality is the water regime. Spoiled Europeans could surprise that water flows only four times a day at certain times. So every morning at half past seven I ran into the bathroom fill all of our buckets of water to have enough water for the toilet flushing, cooking and drinking.

**NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN AND KODA CEC**

Koda Community Education Centre (Koda CEC) is a non-profit organization, which was established in 2010 by The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (dvv-international). The main goal was to help with socio-economic integration of IPDs. Nowadays Koda CEC provides lifelong learning opportunities for the community and its main goals are to develop and enhance the growth of community members through education; encourage community members' active participation in decision-making process; and provide a meeting place for community members with a warm, relaxed, and friendly atmosphere.

Koda CEC implements vocational education and personal development programs. You can find there about 26 different workshops and programs (English and computer classes, personal development trainings, accountancy course, business plan writing and business management training course, enamel and sewing, knitting, embroidery and patchwork, furniture making, shoe making, plumber, house painting and others). Social enterprise ART-KODA, which employs IDP women, was established in 2012.

We started our internship on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. Because of the reason that most of the youngsters are out of Koda during their holidays and the centre is also more in the vacation mode, we had some time to discover our new home, get in contact with the inhabitants of this village and start working in the center. We were lucky to have a possibility to spend a nice weekend with English Club members and also great supra with Koda CEC team. During the first week we had our first meeting with the Koda CEC director Khatia and prepared a concrete action plan for our internship. In September we started activities with the Youth Club members, such as first meeting and trainings preparations. There were several trainings and one trip. Three days festival took place on the last September weekend and it was great! During October we continued with regular youth programme and we successfully finished short documentary about Koda CEC. We had also one documentary screening with interesting discussion. Last action with youth club was in Koda playground and in our flat, because we couldn't be in the center during the presidential elections, and it was great.



Our team 😊

**YOUTH CLUB, YOUNG ENERGY AND OUR WORK**

There are many clubs within the Koda CEC, such as Youth club, Volunteers Club and English club. There is also Active Citizens club, which deals with the serious topics and problems of IDP settlement and Koda and consists mainly from older people. We worked almost with all of them, because they are connected. Members of one club are often members of other one

**English Club**

During the first holiday month we lead the English Club lesson in cooperation with American Peace Corp volunteer Elizabeth. The aim of the club is to improve club members English communication skills. The topics of our meetings were: camping and trips, littering, environment and pollution and university and carrier. It was set up because of preparation for the university exams and the participants were future university students.

**Volunteers club**

Volunteers club is a group of youngsters, who helped us with preparation and organisation all issues concerning trainings and festival and they also lead first trainings. The youngsters from youth club and volunteers club are interconnected, and most of the youngsters are volunteers. But there are 5 main volunteers who helped with trainings and youth club programme preparation.

**Youth club**

It's a group of youngsters from Koda, there are mainly IDPs, but also local youths. Its aim is to activate youths and involve them into community life. It prepares youth program that consists from regular trainings, trips, sport and intellectual competitions. It's open for youngsters from 12 to 25, but most of the participants are in the age from 13 to 16.

Topics of regular Saturday trainings implemented during our internship:

- ▶ Volunteerism
- ▶ Drugs and alcohol prevention
- ▶ Mind maps
- ▶ Tolerance
- ▶ HIV and AIDS prevention
- ▶ Teamwork and cooperation



**Trip with youth club members nearby Tbilisi**

Together with 17 youth club members we spent a wonderful day on a small hill with a church close to Tbilisi. We left Koda at 8:30 by marshrutka and came back at 18:00. After a short hike we reached our place where we spend almost all day. During the day we had several workshops and energizers dealing with teamwork and cooperation in the group. Furthermore the youngsters developed an idea how to promote volunteerism and created a short promotional clip about volunteerism, which was screened on the festival. Additionally, we had a nice breakfast and lunch together and enjoyed panduri playing and singing.

**Documentary “Bridge Over the Wadi” screening**

We had also documentary screening. This documentary was borrowed from the Czech NGO *People in Need (PIN)* within the project CAUCADOC. At the beginning we had documentary introduction and after the screening there was very interesting discussion. First youths discussed about Arab and Jewish problem and then they tried to compare it with Georgian and Ossetian topic and they talked also about their moving to Koda and situation in local school.

**Creating documentary “Koda Community Educational Center”**

During October we filmed the Koda CEC activities (courses, youth club activities and children development program) and we interviewed people, who are somehow connected to the center and have different roles – director, staff members, trainers, volunteers, children, beneficiaries. Then we created 16 minutes long documentary in Georgian language, that can Koda CEC use for the promotion of the center. The 1<sup>st</sup> viewers were staff member and the screening was part of our last meeting. Seemed they enjoyed it 😊

**Last action with youth club**

At the end of October we had our last youth club action. Because of the presidential elections we couldn't be in the centre. Youngsters chose to play some sports and do some activities in Koda. We met at two in front of the center and play some games in the playground. We started with football, continued with rope jumping and then played some games and energizers. There were 19 youngsters and then many children join us, so finally we were big group. After 2 hours playing we took some pictures and moved to our flat. As a surprise for our youngsters we prepared screening of videos from our common actions – trainings, trip, and festival. It was really nice to remember what we did together and youngsters enjoyed it so much. Then we continued with small sweet supra with Czech cake, German chocolates and candies, Georgian sweets. At the end we had room full of nice people, strong emotions and powerful feelings.

**FESTIVAL "COLOURS OF KODA"**

Before the festival we created a banner "Colour your life, be a volunteer" as a part of the project "Volunteers for brighter future". It gave us inspiration for the name of the festival "Colours of Koda".

The festival started on Friday evening. We wanted to promote Koda CEC and its activities and continue with documentary screening with discussion. Concerning the situation, that approximately 80 children and youths and just 10 adults joined the presentation in front of the Koda CEC, we decided to change the plan and just had a short presentation of youth and volunteers club. Afterwards we celebrated and danced with the children to promote the next festival days.



On Saturday we started at 9 am with the preparation of the festivals area in front of the Koda CEC together with 15 youth club members and volunteers. At 12:30 the festival started with a short introduction and the guests had the possibility to take part in different workshops (handcraft and embroidery), visiting exhibitions and buy some of the products. For the children there was a game tournament and other activities. Furthermore we had some workshops as bread baking, a Red Hands Action and a "tree of wishes" - to collect some ideas what could be changed in the daily life in Koda. In addition to these activities we organised a football tournament.

We had a guest from the European Union Monitoring Mission, who wrote about the festival to their report for European Commission. Then Georgian regional TV came (TV Kvemo Kartli ) to report about festival in the news and also Czech TV documentary makers came and filmed the festival.



In the evening the festival continued in the cultural house in Koda. Koda music and dance clubs showed some dances and played original music. After this program we started to have a party, which was really demanded by the children and youngsters. Some adults join the party as well, but most of the guests were youngsters. Approximately 80 people join the party, which ended at 10pm.

On Sunday afternoon we had small clean up action around the center. At beginning just 5 youth club members came, but after we started, more youths came, and finally we were more than 20. We cleaned area around Koda CEC and after we ate cake that I baked for the participants of clean up action.

**CONCLUSION: COLOUR YOUR LIFE**

The internship gave us the possibility to share daily life with the IDPs in the village Koda. It is really different from the living in our home countries and the busy city life. During our internship we lived really close to the people, in the same apartments and under the same conditions, so we were in daily contact with them. Following to this we were able to get an impression of their real life situation and their experiences during and after the war in 2008. Beside the coverage of these events in the news we got a very strong impression of what the people experienced, what the war means for them and how it changed their life. Additionally to this we were invited to their homes and we could join daily life activities such as bread baking, wine making and we got closer to their culture and daily living.

Concerning our work, we experienced the work of the Koda CEC, many activities the center provides and get an impression of the role the center is playing for the local community. We had a chance to implement our own projects and realize our ideas within the framework of Koda CEC. We were supported by the staff members as much as possible. And later when the cooperation with youth club started, we had an opportunity to work together with the youngsters, which was not easy but an amazing experience.

The biggest obstacle in our work was the language barrier in the way that we were not able to communicate on our own with the youngsters, because they don't speak Russian, English, neither German nor Czech. With the older youngsters it was quite possible to communicate in Basic English, but still the communication was a bit problematic. We needed the translation and almost everything depended on the help of a translator. But the translation prolongs all the activities and it makes work unproductive and decreases the interest of the teenagers.

The most important experiences within the work were:

- Interesting work in intercultural team
- Flexibility (every minute changes and not really big planning)
- Different view of time management (different meaning of time and time using - sometimes really easy going and sometimes time pressure)
- Work with language barrier (youths doesn't speak English or Russian and we don't speak Georgian)

I would like to prolong my internship and stay there longer. When we got known more the youth club members and start our cooperation we just left. But for sure, I am coming back soon.

The internship, Georgians, their hospitality, warmness, magical country and Great Caucasus opened my eyes, heart and soul and showed me the life from different perspective.



**GLOBAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES**

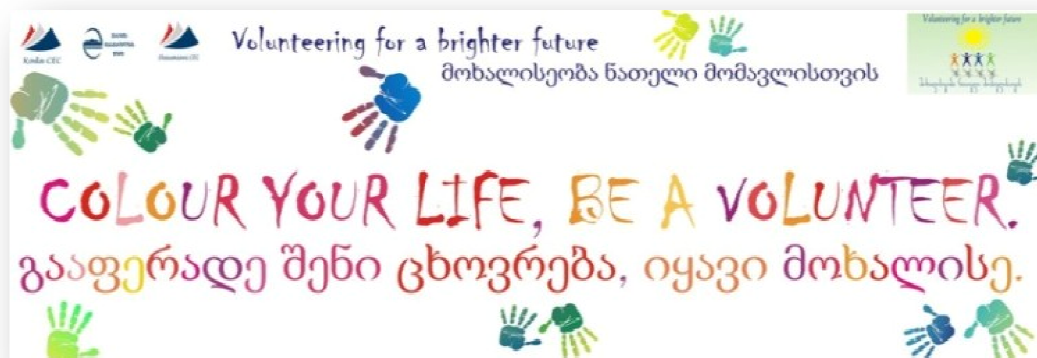
I wrote blog during the period of my internship. You will find my stories in the Czech language on the [www.glenka.wordpress.com](http://www.glenka.wordpress.com). One article about the internship and IDPs life was published on the Czech travellers' portal [www.hedvabnastezka.cz](http://www.hedvabnastezka.cz). I had also three discussions about Georgia, IDPs problems and global education. Two in Prague - one for students of the Czech University of Life Science and one in Tichá kavárna. One discussion was in Karlovy Vary. I am planning more discussion in smaller towns and villages in the Karlovy Vary region and the exhibition in Ostrov. Together with other GLENies we are planning common activity and at the moment it's under construction.

**CONTACTS**

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Banner promoting volunteerism