



**Hello,**

I am Natalia. I live in Bila Tserkva (80 km from Kyiv, Ukraine). In 2011-2012 I was a participant of the "Sure Start" project. Now I continue volunteering for Partnership for Every Child.

This summer I entered a contest to compete for a place at the International training for youth with care experience in Sofia, Bulgaria. I was receiving social support from the Sure Start social services at that time. The offer got me interested immediately because I wanted to find out how could I help other young people, like myself, leaving care.

At the training in Sofia in October 2012 I learnt how to lead a group when facilitating a youth session, how to motivate young people for change, participation, knowledge and experience sharing. At the training we were doing a lot of group activities ourselves,

discussing and brainstorming for better solutions for youth in and from care.

I enjoyed the intensive agenda and all of the training activities, they were interesting and meaningful. I managed to remember every single of them :-). Most of all, I liked the ice-breaking exercises, where we were getting to know each other while learning something new about the group. They were so easy and effortless, despite the fact we were all very different, coming from various countries across the world.

I keep warm memories about the training in Sofia, Bulgarian culture and traditions from around the world. When I was going to the training I wanted to meet people with similar experiences to mine, to find out, how they live, what they are interested in... What I found out was very exciting! For example, I was impressed by Stephen, one of the managers from the Kenyan Care-leavers' Association, who told us amazing facts about African flora and fauna. Also, it shocked me that out of the Kenyan population of 55 million, 2 million are children and young people living in residential care institutions with conditions even worse than they are in Ukraine...

“ Taking part in the International Training for Youth In/From Care has become a unique chance for me to share experience with my peers, to practice my skills and to improve competence in working with groups. ”

When I returned back to my native town, I visited young care-leavers in the local residential institution and conducted several lessons with them. At the beginning of November, I was co-facilitating an after-care meeting for 26 care-leavers with one of the other "Sure Start" fellows Anya.

I hope I will be able to use the skills and knowledge I gained in Sofia for supporting children and young people without parental care in Ukraine.



*Thank you  
for this  
wonderful  
opportunity!*

*Natalia*