



## Erasmus+ Personal Finance Programme Experience



When we signed up to take part in this project in Lower Sixth, we would never have imagined it leading to such a positive outcome. We participated in a trip which was an invaluable experience educationally, culturally, and socially, and one that I, for one, will be unlikely to ever forget. While it is easy to sugar coat this sort of thing in articles such as these and be quite wishy-washy, I can genuinely say that this is the best school trip I have ever been on.

Over the course of the week, our hard work over the past few months paid off as the modules students had made on personal finance were tried and tested to great success. In presentations that were well-taught and informative by the teachers from our various schools, students learned highly useful information for their future as well as the importance of the topics in contemporary life; the work we did felt truly important to not only ourselves but young people in general.

Outside the classroom, we were able to immerse ourselves in both Greek and Turkish Cypriot culture. As someone from the Middle East, I felt almost at home as we sat through kebab after kebab and cycled through the old city of Nicosia surrounded by our immeasurably kind friends at the Emphasys centre and their associates. Trips to places such as the coastal towns of Larnaca and Limassol helped us get a feel for the island as a whole as well as the people within it. From the first meze we ate upon our arrival (from which I still feel full), we fell in love with what this tiny country had to offer in terms of food, scenery, and culture.

As a group, the students from different countries got on excellently as a unit. Our relationship with the Finns and the Italians was one of very high quality from the moment we met and we were able to bond over the surprisingly large number of things we had in common, whether it was playing 'one bounce' in the sunny Emphasys courtyard or simply exploring the city. Despite having only spent less than five full days with them I feel that I have made friends for life and that I would always be welcome in Finland or Italy, and they would certainly be welcome in the UK. This is probably where the trip exceeded my expectations the most; the overwhelmingly positive atmosphere that glued everyone together and made sure that we could all do our respective countries proud.

We are eternally grateful to all the organisers and teachers for their work and for what they helped us create. We return to England exhausted but happy and ready for the final stretch of work before our A-Levels, after what has been a truly enriching week building bridges and producing memories that will unquestionably be cherished by all involved.

-William Karim Salhab, Nicosia, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

