



## **Strengthening voices - strengthening ties**

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I have never thought about writing as an immigrant. Now, that I have been living in the Czech Republic for two years I feel the need to express myself on different topics related to my own experiences. I find that migrants' participation in media is beneficial for host country's citizens, because it gives them an opportunity to discover new perspectives and also realize that things that are absolutely natural to them can be a real challenge for non-natives. I decided to join the Media4us project in order to improve my own skills in this area.

Media4us is a European project that aims to give migrants the possibility of learning about and creating media content. One of the project's activities was a summer school, which took place in Sweden and gathered around 40 migrants from the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Hungary and the Czech Republic. This project was organized by the Dutch organization Mira Media and hosted by Glocal Community Voice in Sweden.

Over the course of five days in Sollentuna, a beautiful suburb of Stockholm, the participants were instructed in different topics related to media. In addition to workshops like video making, social media, editorial techniques, typical for this subject, the participants had exposure to other topics as well. One of the workshops that had a great impact was on Debating and Spokesperson training, designed to teach migrants to express their point of views correctly when speaking with local authorities. Another relevant activity was based on Democracy and Citizen's initiatives, useful for those who feel the need to improve the community they live in. It was a great honor for the participants to be mentored by professional trainers and international specialists who had supervised the whole process.

In order to achieve tangible results at the summer school, the participants were asked to create their own media campaigns. The migrants proved to be ingenious when applying their knowledge

and using free tools to promote their campaigns. The main topics they developed were: breaking down prejudices, social integration in Europe, taboos and giving a voice to migrants.

After working hard on their campaigns, we were taken on a gorgeous boat trip to Aland Islands, located between Sweden and Finland. Working in such a multicultural environment was a great experience for everyone - participants learned from each other, worked on a common goal, shared amazing memories.

In addition to learning new media-related skills, the summer school gave me a chance to talk to other migrants and reflect on my own life. Talking to a Chinese girl from the Netherlands, whose parents had immigrated long time ago and who has never been to China I understood that there are people whose heart is European but they are nevertheless regarded as immigrants here. I began thinking about my future plans. If my children will be born and grown up in Europe, will they be considered as alien in their birthplace just because of me?