

Megan's Volunteering Story

WALES 2023

WCIA has been involved in international exchanges since the 1970s, both sending young people abroad for placements and welcoming young people from across the world to Wales. We believe that there is no better way for a young person to develop key skills and competencies, as well as gaining invaluable citizenship skills, than to undertake an exchange, get out of their comfort zone and do something truly life changing.

We believe that everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to volunteer abroad, to develop as global citizen and contribute to a fairer and more peaceful World in a safe environment.



This is Megan from Estonia. She was studying Psychology at the University in Tallin as well as volunteering at a nursing home. Her placement in Wales was the first time that Megan had left Estonia on her own and lived in a different country.

Megan spent a month volunteering with WCIA as part of a 1-month Taith funded placement this summer. Megan lived in Cardiff with other international volunteers and WCIA staff members. The placement saw Megan being a key part of the communications and marketing team. Assisting in attending events, writing blogs and articles, creating content for social media and interviewing people across the nation to hear their thoughts on what the future of Wales should look like.

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'I was lucky enough to manage Megan during her time spent with WCIA, she enthusiastically threw herself into new opportunities, some of which took her outside of her comfort zone. She really developed as a person during her time in Wales and made a fantastic contribution to the WCIA comms team.'

Tom Weiser – Outreach coordinator WCIA

Taith and International Exchange

2022/23 was the first year that young people in Wales could take up international exchange opportunities through Taith. Taith is a Welsh Government scheme aimed at bringing Wales to the World and the World to Wales. Every young person who lives in Wales, aged between 16-25, regardless of their background or where they live are able to take up an international exchange through Taith.

What Megan Enjoyed Most

I enjoyed meeting new people and developing myself. But also the events we attended: a workshop on Polarisation and COP28 meeting in British Council Wales were really interesting. I liked collaborating with the team members. As well as, seeing the waterfalls and hiking in Brecon Beacons, seeing Tenby, Caerphilly Castle, Cardiff, Liverpool, Chester and Manchester. I had the most amazing time with my housemates, I liked the conversations we had and how they opened my eyes. I loved the accommodation and living in Penarth.

A Typical Day Volunteering

Depending on the day I either worked on social media posts for WCIA with another volunteer, attended an event, had meetings with communications' team, travelled around Wales and to England or interviewing people in Cardiff as part of the long-term charity strategy work. I didn't expect to get to travel as much as I did, and it was amazing. I really liked the working culture in WCIA.



How the Placement Impacted Megan

Volunteering changed me a lot. I learned new things, became more confident. It helped me grow and understand a different culture. The memories and friends I made are really special and made me think differently about my future and my usual life. I discovered new things about myself such as I should be more confident in myself, I shouldn't be afraid to get out of my comfort zone. I developed communication skills while engaging with individuals from various backgrounds. My understanding of different cultures improved too and this experience really made me think of my own country as well.

What made Megan choose to do international volunteering?

I wanted to get new experiences and get to know a new culture, improve English skills, meet new people, get out of my comfort zone, try something new as I had never done international volunteering.

What's next for Megan?

I had an idea to do my Masters degree abroad, but now I'm seriously thinking about it and making plans how to apply. I'm much more confident in putting this experience and a description of what I did on my CV.

WCIA is extremely thankful to have had Megan join our team, she was an inspiration and brought so many engaging and new ideas to our organisation. This wouldn't have been possible without the funding from Taith and we are very grateful for all the opportunities it has provided young people to go abroad and to come to Wales.

If you've been inspired by Megan's story, or know a young person who could benefit from international volunteering experience or are an organisation wanting to learn more about participating in international exchange, check out our other volunteering opportunities which can be found [here](#), or email us on volunteer@wcia.org.uk

'My placement met my expectations and exceeded them. My housemates were lovely and we had a lot of fun. The team was supportive. I had a very positive experience.'

Megan Merrits, WCIA Volunteer

