



AJ INTER JOURNAL

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- Welcome to the new volunteers
- On-Arrival Training in Torremolinos, Málaga
- International Day Against Violence on Women
- Training Course in Birštonas, Lithuania



Erasmus+



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WELCOME TO THE NEW VOLUNTEERS



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About me

Hi, my name is Cláudia Gonçalves, I'm 24 years old (soon to be 25!) and I'm from a small town called Vila Nova de Famalicão, in the north of Portugal.



Parque da Devesa is a large public park with walking paths, green areas, and a small lake perfect for a run, a walk, or just to sit on a bench and enjoy the scenery.

I'm passionate about travel, storytelling, and discovering new cultures. I've always been curious about the world beyond my own backyard. Growing up, I didn't have many opportunities to travel or experience life outside Portugal. But I've always dreamed of seeing the world, meeting new people, and learning from different perspectives, and that curiosity has shaped the path I'm on today.

For those who enjoy hiking, Monte de Santa Catarina offers a network of trails leading to panoramic views of Famalicão and the surrounding landscape. A perfect spot to take in the town from above, enjoy nature, or even watch the stars at night.



My town

Famalicão, as we call it, is located in the north of Portugal, in the Braga district. Even though it's not as famous as Porto or Lisbon, it has its own charm. One of the things I love most is that it's a place where modern life meets tradition.

The town center has many charming small cafés and boutique shops along calm streets, where people often gather for long, leisurely conversations.

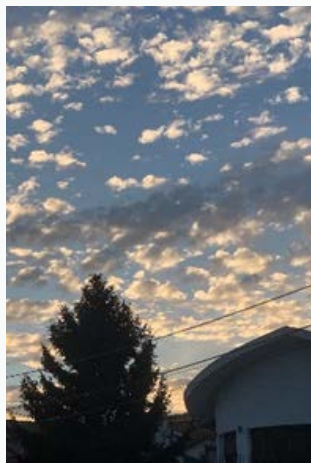
Studies and Work

I have a bachelor's degree in Tourism Management, and if I'm being truly honest, I only did it because I didn't really know what I wanted to do in life (still don't), but that actually opened the door to my first experience abroad. Six months after finishing university, I started an internship for recent graduates, living and working in a hostel. Until then, I had never traveled or lived alone. Meeting people from all over the world and experiencing life outside Portugal for the first time was challenging, exciting, and exactly what I needed to start a new chapter in my life.

Hobbies, interests and personality

I'm a person with many different passions, and they say a lot about who I am. I've always looked at the world differently, wanting to know more than just what my eyes could see. I love photography, writing and storytelling, and always notice the little details most people overlook. I'm especially drawn to capturing architecture and sunsets because they tell stories on their own. Writing allows me to transform those observations into words.

Some of my art in the pictures below:

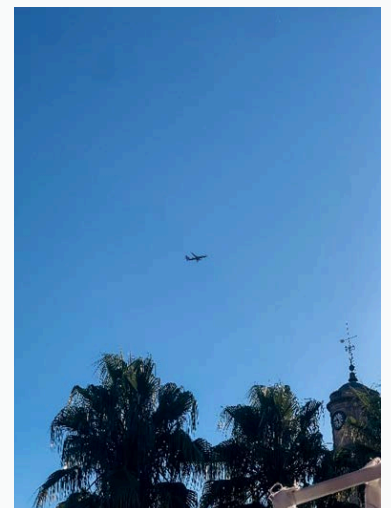
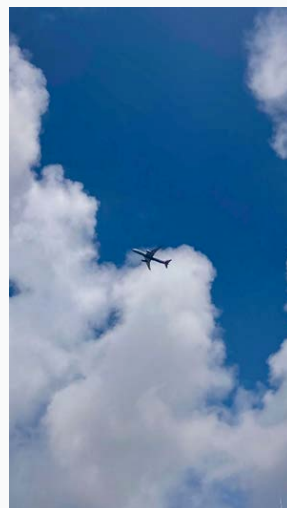


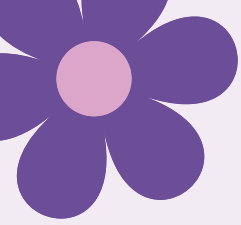
Dancing is another passion of mine. Even though I don't like performing in front of people, it's my way of expressing myself and releasing energy - something I can't go a day without.

I first discovered dance through hip-hop and dancehall, and nowadays, in addition to those, I mostly enjoy African-inspired dances. Watching and learning from talented dancers has always motivated me. Some of my favorite dance artists include Matt Steffanina, Les Twins, and The Royal Family.



Last but not least, watching planes is another passion (maybe even obsession) of mine. There's something magical about seeing them pass by in the sky. I love imagining where they're going and why the people are traveling - is it for work, just a holiday, or to see the love of their lives? It always sparks curiosity and daydreams every time I see them.





WHO I AM

Hi, I'm Agata. I'm 19 years old and I'm from Trento, Italy. I finished high school this year and decided to take a break from my studies to travel and explore new cultures by living in different places. Now I'll be volunteering in Jerez de la Frontera for 6 months.

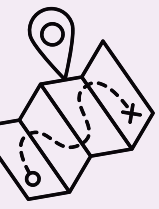


I would describe myself as a curious person. I really enjoy exploring new places, cultures, and meeting new people. I'm also proactive and stubborn, so I always try to do my best and do everything possible to reach my goals. I enjoy being around people, but I also treasure my quiet moments alone.

I love colors, sunsets, the sea, flowers, animals, nature. Sports have always been a big part of my life. I practiced basketball for many years, but unfortunately, due to injuries, I had to stop. Now I'm exploring other ways to stay active, like running or going to the gym, but basketball remains my passion.

I'm also a creative person. I'm not very skilled, but drawing, coloring and creating new things is like therapy for me, it helps me connect with myself and relax.

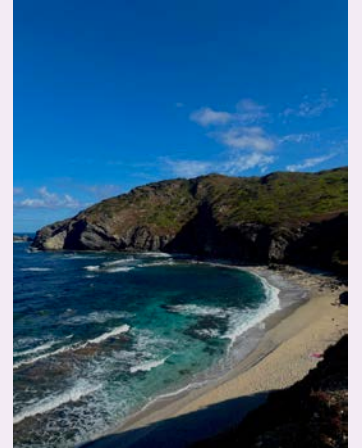
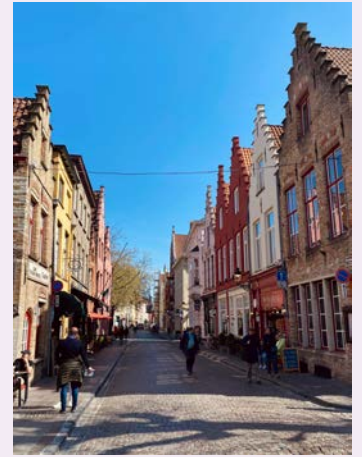




TRAVEL

Another thing I really love is traveling, exploring new places and cultures, and meeting local people. I enjoy visiting cities, but also going on adventures in nature and by the sea.

My favorite trip was this summer, when I went on a road trip through Sardinia and slept in the car. We discovered many wild and less touristy places.

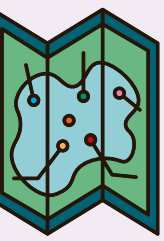


VOLUNTEERING

I enjoy volunteering because it allows you to help people while also learning new things and seeing life from different perspectives, challenging your beliefs. I volunteer in my city with migrants, elderly people, and children. Last summer, I went to Malta for a month to volunteer at a summer camp, and before joining this project, I volunteered for two months in Timisoara, helping migrants.

About this experience in Jerez, I hope to learn new things, such as social skills and how to use social media, meet new people, improve my English and learn more Spanish.





WHERE I LIVE



I live in Ravina, a village of 3,500 inhabitants, 5 km from Trento.

Trento is a small city of 119,000 inhabitants in the north-east of Italy, in the middle of the mountains and the Dolomites.



My favorite places are the countryside near my home, where I enjoy walking with my dog, and the stream with the waterfall.

In Trento, I like the bars, walking in the street of the center and Muse's park.

Torbole, near Riva del Garda, has a special place in my heart because I spent a lot of summers camping there with my grandparents and friends.

I really love Italy. There are many beautiful cities to visit, but also amazing nature, the sea, and the mountains. The food is one of the best things, especially pizza, pasta, and gelato.



ON-ARRIVAL TRAINING IN TORREMOLINOS



On-Arrival Training in Torremolinos, Málaga

From the 23rd of November until the 27th, Marleen and I (Miro) from AJ Inter, travelled to Torremolinos, Málaga, to participate in their On-Arrival training. During these days, we met with other young people that are doing their ESC volunteering in Andalusia as well. People coming from Granada, Cádiz, Córdoba, Almería and many more participated in this training.

The On-Arrival Training taught us a lot of things, some of which were already known, but also many things that were new or more deeply looked into. The European Solidarity Corps, Spanish culture, especially the Andalusian one, and the basics and essentials of volunteering.

We started talking about our motivations for why we decided to volunteer, our expectations of volunteering, and quickly started to grow a connection because we live more or less the same life right now. Also, the rights and responsibilities that we as volunteers have were discussed. For example, our Henner insurance and the support we get and have to get from our organisations.

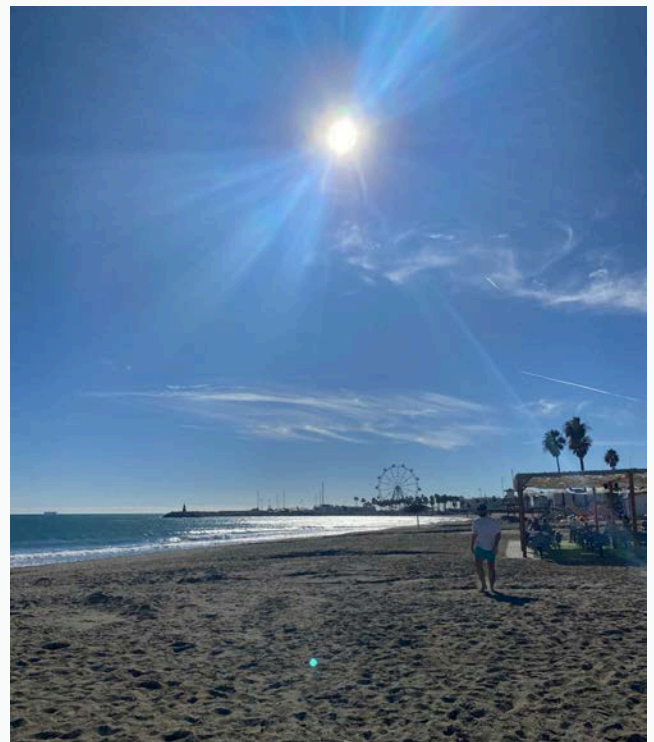


We also practiced Spanish with a teacher, who helped us learn new words that will help us in our everyday life.

Interculturality was a big part of the project too because we had people from all over Europe participating in this training. We talked about stereotypes and how to communicate and solve them.



Spanish culture was the biggest cultural part of our training. This was introduced in a really funny and playful way, where we learned about figures like the Afilador, Spanish dance culture, and many more. A gymkhana in the Málaga city centre was also part of getting to know more practical things about Andalusian culture.



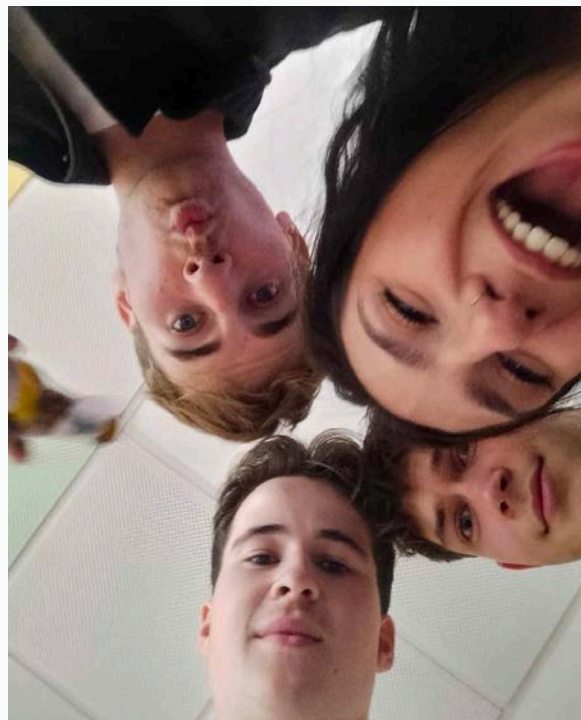
Games like leading a blind person or new kinds of card games also gave us more confidence in trusting other people.



By the end of the week, we felt more connected and motivated as a group. We learned how to handle challenges and improved our communication.

We were really excited to participate in this On-Arrival training, especially to meet new people in our area who are doing similar things as us in life. From playing guitar in our rooms, to playing volleyball at the beach, or having a costume party with our costumes having to start with the first letter of our name. Those experiences made the project even better, and I think they especially grew a bond between us.

After the project, many of us decided to go to the Zambomba in Jerez de la Frontera and meet up a second time. This training is also a good opportunity for us to explore the other Andalusian cities and have a strong network.



The training course was a really important opportunity to get to know other people, exploring their situations and comparing our lives as ESC volunteers in the south of Spain. It also helped us as humans a lot to understand everything better.



**END
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**



25th November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Every year on November 25th, the world comes together to raise awareness about violence against women and to honor the courage of survivors. This day reminds us that violence (physical, emotional, psychological, or economical) is never acceptable, and that action is needed from all of us.



Violence against women affects millions of women around the world, cutting across age, culture, and social background. It can happen in homes, workplaces, schools, or public spaces. Sometimes it is obvious, but too often it is hidden, leaving scars that last a lifetime. A friend, a neighbor, a coworker, the woman on your side could be one of them. Listening, noticing the signs, and offering support can save lives.



Organizations and communities host campaigns, workshops, and events to raise awareness and support women affected by violence. These programs help people recognize abuse, challenge harmful behaviors, and promote equality. Survivors share their stories to inspire others and show that change is possible: from women rebuilding their lives to activists fighting for protection and policy reform.



Violence against women is not just a personal problem, it is a societal issue. Stereotypes, unequal power dynamics, and cultural norms often perpetuate harmful behaviors. Challenging these systems and promoting respect and equality is essential. Small actions like intervening when witnessing harassment, speaking out against discriminatory jokes and supporting victims, can ripple out to create a safer, more just society.



This day is more than a date on the calendar. It is a call to action. Together, we can build a world where respect, equality, and safety are guaranteed for all women, and where silence is replaced with support, awareness, and justice.



The 25th of November is a day to reflect, act, and stand in solidarity. It's a reminder that every effort matters. Educate yourself and those around you. Support survivors in your community. Advocate for stronger protections. Remember: the woman next to you, whether at work, school, or on the street, could be facing violence. Do your part. Stand with her. Speak out.



ERASMUS+ TRAINING COURSE “PROJECT ON” IN LITHUANIA



Cofinanciado por
la Unión Europea

AJ INTER Participates in the Erasmus+ Training Course “Project ON” in Lithuania

From 23 to 28 November 2025, AJ INTER took part in the Erasmus+ Training Course “Project ON”, hosted in Birštonas, Lithuania. The programme brought together youth workers, project coordinators and organisation leaders from across Europe to strengthen their competencies in designing high-quality KA2 Cooperation Partnership projects (KA210 & KA220) within the Erasmus+ Youth field.



The main objective of the programme was to support organisations in improving their ability to plan, design and implement impactful cooperation projects, integrating key elements such as inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, green practices, youth participation, quality project management, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination, sustainability and long-term impact. Through a mix of experiential learning, simulation exercises, real case studies, and group work, we learned how to turn needs analysis into a coherent project logic and how to draft a strong proposal aligned with the Erasmus+ priorities for 2026.

Our Experience as AJ INTER

At AJ INTER, we strongly believe that the quality of our work grows when our team keeps learning and connecting with others.

For this reason, we want to highlight an important message: "We do not only send young people abroad with Erasmus+ opportunities – we as youth workers also join training courses to learn new information, meet colleagues from other European countries, and expand our professional network."

Our participation in "Project ON" allowed us to update our knowledge on KA2 Cooperation Partnerships, explore new methodologies for youth participation and non-formal learning, strengthen our capacity to design sustainable and inclusive projects, exchange ideas with partners from different countries, and begin shaping the foundations of a future KA2 proposal.

This training not only improved our skills but also motivated us to develop new project ideas that respond to the needs of the young people we work with in Spain.

Beyond the learning experience, the training took place in a beautiful setting surrounded by Lithuanian nature.

One of the most memorable moments for our team was experiencing the first snowfall of the winter, turning Birštonas into a peaceful white landscape and making the intercultural experience even more special.



Impact and Follow-Up

As part of the project's follow-up, AJ INTER will continue integrating the approaches learned during the course into our daily youth work, sharing tools and methods with our local community and partners, and working towards the development of a new KA2 Cooperation Partnership for submission in 2026. We have already started to work with our partners from Latvia and Hungary. We are committed to bringing this knowledge back to our organisation and transforming it into meaningful opportunities for young people.



Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank the hosting organisation, the trainers Vldas and Aiste, and all partners involved in making "Project ON" a high-quality learning experience. Our gratitude also goes to the Erasmus+ Programme for supporting the mobility, learning and cooperation of youth workers across Europe.



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Ask any questions!



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