

## **Daniel Butterworth**

I took part in the european team challenge which was part of the bhagavat educational trust. My first impression of this course was a good way to make new friends and develop new skills or improve on the ones i have.

Apon arrival in Bulgaria there was some slight nerves about where we were going to sleep, what the food was like ect but the team and myself soon adapted to the situation and developed a "when in rome!" frame of mind.

This for myself was my first time to Bulgaria but i discovered i picked up the language very quickly and soon enough i was helping friends of mine on the course being lost in translation.

After my stay in Bulgaria i became alot more confident in my communication skills (after 2 weeks communicating with people who dont understand you talking to people who do is a breaze!)

Sadly i am still in the ranks of the unemployed but the work experiance i did in Bulgaria has a very large place in my CV and it has gave me a kick start in doing more charity work. so far i have taken part in sponcerd bike rides for the butterwick hospice and awaiting to do alot more.

I would seriously recommend this to anyone, not just young people but to anyone wanting to expand their skills and experiances.

Daniel Butterworth  
22 years old.

March – April 2010

# **Bulgaria Project 2009**

**By Steven Wilkes**

Participant of BET LLA project hosted in the town of Pernik, Bulgaria from 12 to 26 January 2009

**During my two weeks in Bulgaria, I experienced a different culture, food and living. When we arrived it was -10 and the ground was covered in snow. We met the translators off the plane who were called Vyara and Andy also with them was the main organizer of our trip Stefan.**

**On our first night we took the coach to a little restaurant on the out skirt's of Sofia, on our table when we arrived was a lovely looking salad which we found out was the traditional Bulgaria salad called shopsta which had tomato's, cucumber , black olives, onion and white cheese in it . We also had a dish which was called Kiufte which was beef meatballs which was more in the shape of a burger.**

**We arrived at the hotel in Pernik it was located on Krakra Square in the middle of the town centre. We got acquainted with the hotel and our translators and had a coffee in the hotel lobby with them until we all went bed ready for a big day in the morning.**

**We all woke up and had breakfast around 8 o'clock. It was a bit of a challenge but in the end I think we all got what we wanted in the end. At 9 o'clock we got the tram from the town centre to the orphanage which was about 15 minutes away. When we arrived there we could see some of the kids we would be helping out and also we could see the challenge all of us had to do, we entered the orphanage which is also used as a school for kids that arrive in the morning and leave around 4.30 . When we got in we were not surprised by what we saw the wall's were a state and the paint was uninviting and flakey we could see that this was going to be difficult but we all felt confident that we would succeed in our task , we all got together and we set a plan of action of what we were going to do , we decided to make the walls brighter using reds, yellow's blue's and purples we also wanted to replace the lino which was completely battered.**

**The next day I was quite ill with a throat infection which put me out for the week, which I was quite disappointed about because I wanted to do my bit but I was so ill I was not able to , but I did hear that they got started with stripping the wall and gave the walls a coat of white paint so the top coat would go on easier , I also heard that they had snowball fight with the orphans and got completely battered but I guess they get a lot of practice as there is nothing to do there except to make your own fun .**

**On Saturday**

**We all met up down stairs where Stefan and Andy had prepared a presentation for us. we all sat down and Andy gave us a talk on the Options we would have when our project in Bulgaria, some of them included doing more overseas volunteering which**

grabbed my attention also there was language courses, armed forces, and apprenticeships we all had a think and he asked us what we would like to do and he made a list so he could arrange for us for to get in touch with people who could make these options a reality. We got together into groups of two and we got up and said what we wanted to do so everyone in the group would know what we wanted to achieve and why. After that went on an excursion to the outskirts Pernik there was a festival of masquerade games where a lot of the locals dress up and wear mask's which are believed to scare off all the bad demons and spirits. We all were treated to an amazing show it was very noisy also as a lot of them had bells attached to them while there where dancing around to the beat of the drums, when it got dark we were all treated to a fire show where there was a small bonfire which was surrounded by people also there was a big firework show which was amazing and we all took photo's to remind us of the amazing day. After we left the show which I was sure would go on for a few more hours at least, we went up to the mountain to this very posh restaurant which had this lady singing Bulgarian songs which I did not understand at all .

Our first week was coming to an end but we all enjoyed it and we were all looking forward to the week ahead.

Monday arrived and we all started our day we could see what difference we had mad already the walls where brighter and you could see the effect we where having on the kids, as well as refurbishing the orphanage we also spent time with the kids there was a language barrier but we all felt a connection with them , it was quite fun we met sum great kids and if was a lot of fun teaching them English and they also were trying to teach us Bulgarian even if sum of the words were quite rude. But my favorite was Carl teaching them to say "Holy moly donut shop" they could not stop saying that for the whole time we where there.

Our project was coming along nicely and the walls were painted so we decided that we were going to do some murals from cartoons like Winnie the pooh and lion kind, so we borrowed a projector so we could project the images onto the wall so we could trace the outline of the characters which I did myself and was very proud of even thought it was traced it still looked pretty impressive . We also had a delivery of the lino we would be putting down you could tell the difference in quality from the English stuff but part of the task was working with what we could get our hands on. Anyway we did well with what we had we got on our own little project's Ricky, Pete, John and myself got on with painting the mural's Andy Parr got on with his favorite job which was glossing the door's but beware if you got your fingers on it then he would go nuts, and everyone else just helped us out . We also had to one by one go to see Andy so he could ask us for information that he would use to put together our CV and information pack. After that was all done we had the floor to lay but I was confident as I used to be a carpet fitter so I was in charge of that, we decided that we were going to leave 2 inches of lino up the wall, because the glue was not top grade and if would probably go bad if the water from the staff moping the floor got to it so we managed to do that with minimal problem's. We could see after floor had been laid that we had done an amazing a professional job and it look amazing compare to the state it was in before and I think the whole group was proud of themselves of what we achieved.

It came up to the last day at the orphanage; we would just do the final touches to the place and tidy up our mess. After that we were invited to upstairs to the children's television room where all the children had got together to give us a send off. A few of them got up and recited famous Bulgarian poems and the director of the orphanage said thank you to all of us for an excellent work and the time we put in she said she was very impressed with our work. After that the children came up to us and gave us pictures that had drawn for us, it was a very emotional time because we got so attached to the children and we knew we had to say good bye we gave them our presents that we brought from England and a load of sweets for them to share, it was amazing to see the effect we had on them you could see that they were so happy and it was a great feeling to know that we had made them feel like that. It is one of the proudest things I've ever done and I would recommend it to anyone. But the time had come to say goodbye, it was hard but all good things come to an end but this has opened a door for me and has helped me make a few decisions that could change my life, funny how an experience like that can change your view on things and make you want to be a better person.

On the final Saturday we went to the capital city of Bulgaria which is Sofia, we went there on the train which took us around an hour to get there. Andy our interpreter took us on a guided tour of the place and we all got to see some beautiful buildings including the parliament buildings and very old church. After all that we had something to eat at a restaurant, we all went off in our own little groups and discovered the city. What I did not realize is how big the place is, Carl and Ricky were looking everywhere where we could buy a drum and bass CD packs so we could have a little souvenir of Bulgarian drum and bass. We must have got lost about 5 times, but I was surprised how many people spoke English. The city is such a nice place and has a lot of different variety of shops and they have something for everyone, the main high street is the 22<sup>nd</sup> most expensive in the world but off it you can find some good bargains they are not short of shops that sell the odd fake watch or jewelry. But overall I enjoyed being in Sofia it's a great capital city full of culture and amazing buildings. On the Sunday it was a free day but most of us decided to get ready and start reluctantly packing our bags and making sure we had all our documents. Later at around 7 o'clock we all met up in the hotel restaurant where we had a goodbye meal and so Andy and Stefan could give us a talk. He explained that he was very proud of our work and team ethic and that we were a very good group he also had told us that he had prepared us a folder we could use as a future reference, and he continued to hand them each to us one by one, the pack contained our euro pass CV, a green certificate which explained our achievement in Bulgaria, a postcard from Pernik, a little wooden tube which contained this traditional perfume and a CD with all of the information just in case there was anything we needed to change and there were also photos of us to remind us of our trip to Bulgaria.

Our last day we got up at 6 o'clock in the morning already packed and ready to go, some of us happy to go some of us sad to leave including myself. We caught the coach up to Sofia airport at 8 o'clock which took us an hour from there we boarded the aeroplane and said good bye to Bulgaria.

**The whole point of our 2 week journey to Bulgaria was to give our help and friendship to children less fortunate than us , and also to help ourselves develop as people and we all achieved that some of us in different ways but everyone came back a better person and a proud person , proud that we could say that we took our time to go to a different country and help people less fortunate than us , and seeing the children's faces after we finished our job is an image that will stay with me for ever. I will use that as inspiration to motivate me for targets I have set myself and goals I want to achieve. Hopefully I have the chance to do this again and give my help and support to people who need it, and I have applied to do more volunteer work in Europe possibly for a year in the very near future.**

## **Bulgaria Case Study by Rachel Vincent**

I went to Bulgaria in October 2009 for two weeks, through these two weeks we worked in an orphanage. We decorated one off the corridors but before this we met the young children, the kids it seemed only had one emotion and that was aggression, but as the two weeks went on the whole off my group all pulled together and showed them that we were not there to cause trouble or anything like that they soon become polite but very frustrated, as they were talking to us but we could not understand them, it was also frustrating on our part. Through the two weeks we got to learn basic Bulgarian which was very hard for all of us because it seemed that everything that was said was backwards i.e. yes was a shake off the head, and no was the nod off the head.

As the two weeks went on decorating got a lot easier as the young kids were helping out they were not getting in the way they were trying to help. Our group integrated very well, we all seemed to know where we fitted without been told and got on with things; this made things a lot easier. As you can imagine, like any group who where spending twenty four seven together got very agitated, very easily, but what was said at the time was took and never carried on.

When we were on breaks we played a lot of games with the Bulgarians, they were all very high on football and they were very good so we had a bit off competition, through our basic Bulgarian we were able to communicate with them, which we all very much enjoyed.

On the last day off working in Bulgaria the kids done a little show for us and we took cakes and sandwiches and things like that to them. The Girls did dances which was amazing to see the different variations of dancing in different cultures. And the boys played football, whilst the boys were playing football, a couple off the girls in our group showed the Bulgarian girls songs like if your happy and you know it clap your hands and they picked it up really fast and wanted to sing it over and over again which was very nice for us to see cause we felt we had taught them something it was a big achievement a bigger one that doing the hall cause we had actually taught them some thing

When it was time to say by it was very emotional, all of us had tears in our eyes not so much the boys but you could see they were sad to. The kids came to our bus stop with us and waved us off.

Before I went to Bulgaria my career prospect was not that high nobody seemed to be hiring me. As I had no past job experience, when we were in Bulgaria we had like an employment seminar which I benefited from greatly and it proved it cause as soon as I got home I got a job. Adding the trip to Bulgaria and what I did helped me get the job I have, as soon as I mentioned what I had done I could see the smile in the employers eyes and she probed for more information, and I still think to this day that is why I got the job.

Although I was happy to be home I was missing seeing all the faces on the Bulgarians, I found myself telling everyone I knew how lucky we are, I found myself telling people off for whinging about what they didn't have when we have a hell of a lot more than those poor kids in Bulgaria, that has dwindled down a lot now, but there is not a day that goes by that I don't remember what I do have and when I am feeling slightly un-grateful I think off those little kids who have hardly anything in a different country . Although they are only three hours away on aeroplane it is such a different country to ours and it is still going through its changes if I was given the opportunity again I would bite my right hand off to do it.