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Media Release

“BRIDGE IT!”: READY FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

On 30 November - 4 December 2016, the evaluation seminar - the final stage of the 5th year of the “Bridge It!” Programme - took place in Rīga, Latvia. This non-formal education Programme was initiated in 2012 and is directed at involvement of youth from Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and the North-West of Russia in the development of the Baltic Sea region, finding solutions for current social problems, and establishment of good neighbouring ties between the targeted countries.

The main goals of the seminar for the participants were to discuss experiences gained from the 6-month Programme, to submit narrative and financial reports, and to thoroughly evaluate the social activities together with their mentors. This year’s projects dealt with such topics as natural products, waste separation, women’s objectification, raise of attractiveness of depressed areas, integration of people with disabilities, sexual harassment, cinema art for understanding between nations, and others.

” The highlight of the seminar was the Public Event “THINK & ACT” at the “Kaņepes” Cultural Centre – prepared by “Bridge It!” participants and alumni, - admits **Laura Leimane**, one of Programme Coordinators. - The guests were welcome to attend not only the Programme presentation but also workshops divided in three thematic areas – critical thinking, green thinking, and non-formal thinking – as well as to celebrate our fifth anniversary together. Now we can look with optimism into the next five Programme years.

Throughout the whole afternoon, a *Living Library* was open, a unique opportunity to hear first-hand stories and ask guests various questions. As *living books*, **Sandris Ādminis**, activist of animal rights from “Freedom of Animals”; **Sandra Dejus** from the Improvisational Theatre “Spiediens” (“Pressure”); **Inga Gaile**, poet and member of the Latvian Writers’ Union; **Alma Vītola**, winner of the Jungle Marathon in Brazil 2015; and further fascinating people have joined.

At the evaluation seminar, the participants also visited local initiatives in Rīga – the “Gaiziņš” Social Centre, the “Mana jūra” (“My Sea”) Campaign, and the Resource Centre for Women “Marta”, tapped inspiration for future activities as well as learnt on follow-up educational opportunities available within and beyond “Bridge It!”.

For Your Information. The “Bridge It!” Programme has been implemented in the sense of the EUSBSR Horizontal Action “Neighbours”. To learn more on the Bridge It!, please go to www.bridgeit.eu or <https://www.facebook.com/bridgeitprogram>.

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