Hallo, my name is Adam Eager!

I wrote a blog a couple of months ago when I first arrived here in Germany to take part in this EVS project.

I work at Jugendbildungszentrum Blossin; this is a youth education centre based in a small village in Germany and provides training and activities for young people and adults alike.

When I left Newcastle, England in September 2016, I had already gained lots of useful insight and experience on leading sporting activities through volunteering with StreetGames. However, since I have been here I have taken part in many more seminars and workshops. These have developed my understanding even more as I now have a clearer view on working with international groups, the individual needs you are faced with as well as specific skills needed to lead activities such as climbing and archery.

As I mentioned in my other blog I met a group from Germany when I took part in a StreetGames project called Youth Leaders Across Borders and I have had the pleasure of meeting up with all of these people now at various events and social meetings, as well as working alongside some of them here in Germany.

During my time volunteering here in Blossin, I have had the opportunity to plan and deliver large events for groups, including international groups, to develop their group and communication skills. One of these events was for a group of young teenagers wanting to develop their teamwork; in order to do this I planned and executed a game in which they must get from one side to another by competing in various relays such as three-legged, blind-folded and wheelbarrow in order to collect letters which would then become a race to create the largest word possible. This worked extremely well due to the age of the group and was the first time I led a group completely in German! This gave me a massive boost in my confidence of working alone with groups in a language which I had two to three months to learn and perfect. One reason that this was made possible was through the help and support provided to me through my amazing colleagues who have put up with my terrible German and helped me to correct my mistakes!

Another regular task I perform is organising discos for groups who stay for the week, this is one of my favourite duties in Blossin as it helps me develop my German in a chilled and working environment. It’s also a highlight of many of the groups who come and stay with us.

Sport is a big part of my life and has been since I was young, playing basketball for my school and local team. I have been to many Newcastle United football games when I worked there as a steward and have experienced first-hand the support provided to the Newcastle Eagles at the basketball games. But I can honestly say that the talent and fan base here in Germany is on a different level to my home town! It exceeds in all ways possible. Stadiums are bigger, supporters are louder and of course there is klashpaper (the ultimate way to show your support to your team). I must admit these comments are based on my experiences at the athletics and basketball in Berlin but I will be going with some colleagues to see Hertha BSC play so then I will be able to fairly compare the football.
Of course Christmas recently passed, and I think it’s the first time I’ve had a ‘White Christmas’ as yes it did snow here in Germany and quite a lot actually. However, before going home for the holidays, we had a staff party for everyone at Blossin from reception staff to chefs; we spent a night away in another part of Germany where we shared a meal together, traded stories and go to know each other a little better. This was definitely a highlight as it meant we got to interact with those you never really speak to except from a friendly hello or goodbye.

I spent two weeks back in England for Christmas with my family, it was a memorable experience walking through the doors to family you haven’t seen for months, when you used to live with them and see them every day but those weeks flew by after the celebrations and the game nights.

As I mentioned earlier, the project that I am taking part in is the European Voluntary Service, this is a project funded by Erasmus+ and this year the project turns 30 years old. For this they held an event in Berlin with Ministers and highly decorated individuals from across Europe. The organisers of the event contacted my tutor and asked if I would be able to attend and take part in a panel in which I would be asked a series of questions about my time here and why I chose to do take part in this project (oh yes and, of course, Brexit).

Naturally I was overwhelmed that out of the hundreds of EVS volunteers in Germany they chose me to represent them so I jumped at the opportunity. Once the day came and I arrived at the Berlin Congress Centre I felt a sudden wave of nerves take over my body but as the day progressed on and I was presented with lots of free food (always a bonus!) the nerves disappeared. I was invited up onto the stage by the presenter and immediately the nerves came back as I turned to face the room filled with attendees. Once I started to talk and heard the audience laugh it became much easier and the worries were gone. It is opportunities like this to develop skills and approach new fears that are the main rewards of doing this project.

So that is my story for the past couple of months and I am sure that the final seven months will be just as good if not better.

For all the other young volunteers and young advisors out there, I can only hope that you can all take part in a similar opportunity as I can guarantee you won’t regret it. I’m sure StreetGames will support you all the way like they did and still do with me. It can be quite scary at first leaving your little bubble of family, friends and your country in general but it is an experience that creates memories and gives you so many new skills. You don’t pay for your house, you get paid to develop as a person and encounter so many new cultural differences you couldn’t even begin to imagine. Did I forget to mention you get money for recycling your plastic bottles here in German - how amazing!

I’m living my dream so now it is time for you to live yours.