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ONBOARDING WEEK 1

1. Who am I and why have I registered for an ILL?



Hello! I am Sofiia Milian, and I am 18. My home country is Ukraine. Now I am studying at St.Polten University of Applied Sciences as an Erasmus student in Austria.

I have registered for an ILL because I want to improve my soft skills and to have more communication with people from other countries.

2. What is my field of study?



3. What do I plan to do after finishing my studies?

I plan to find a job. Also, I want to travel more.

Actually, it is a little bit hard question to me, because I try to enjoy every day and appreciate what we have today.

4. Who/What motivates me?

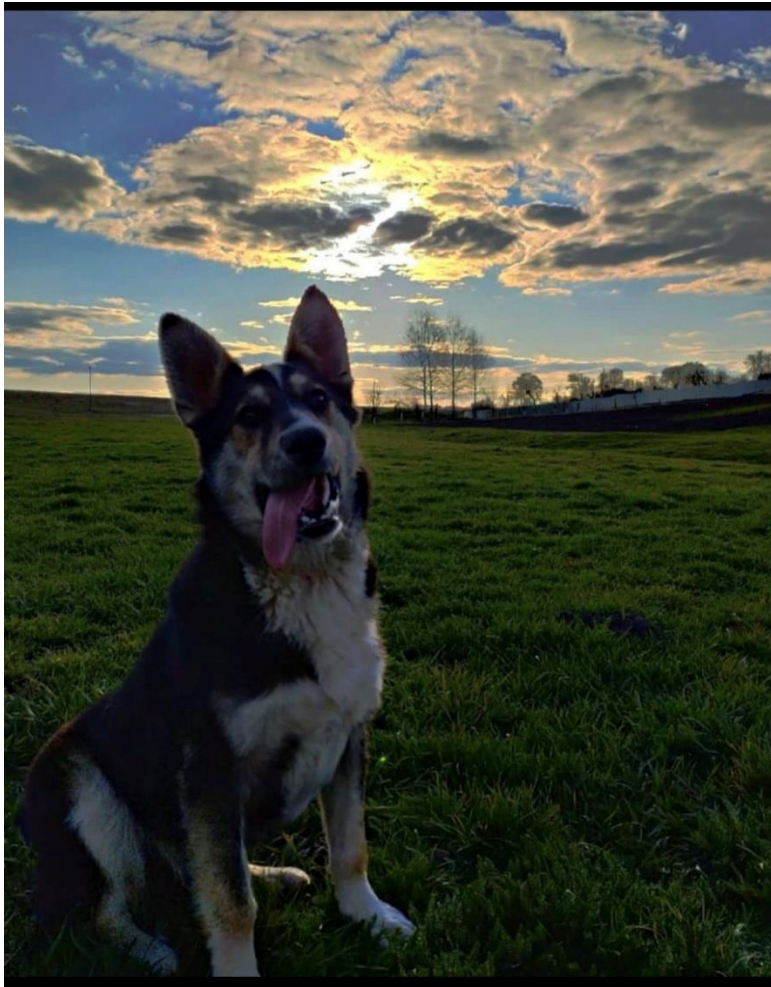
People which surround me. I am lucky to have so cool and energy people in my life.

5. What do I do in my free time? / What am I passionate about?

I like to spend my free time with my family and friends.



Or just take this time for myself. For example, watch some movie with ice-cream or play with my dog:)



6. What are my strengths?

My strength is determination. If I have a goal, I will struggle to reach it.

I am an empathetic person. I can understand and share the feelings of others. Empathetic people are often good listeners and are able to provide comfort and support to those who are going through difficult times. They are able to recognize the emotions of others and respond appropriately, offering words of encouragement or a shoulder to cry on when needed.

7. What do I already know about the challenge topic (when/where/how did I first encounter it)?

Actually, I do not know a lot about it, but I am interested in it and hope that it will be newsworthy.

ONBOARDING WEEK 2

1. How was the Kick Off & 1. Onboarding Week for me?

The first week with the site and the topic in general was interesting. We anticipate working in a global team and facing various problems, so it will be quite exciting to see what happens next.

2. Who is my reflection partner?

My reflection partner is Catarina Jesus.

3. How did selfassessment on Future Skills go?

Good. I learned what skills we will develop. Of these, I chose those that I have developed and on which I still need to work. It was very helpful, because now I know what I need to focus on.

4. Which 3 Future Skills have I chosen & why?

I think that each of these skills are important. But I would like to highlight **Design Thinking** because I will be able to apply its methods in order to use concrete methods to carry-out creative development process. **Innovation** because I can develop several ideas and opportunities to create value, including better solutions to existing and new challenges. And **initiative&performance** because I can reflect on my needs, aspirations and wants in the short, medium and long term. I can identify and assess my individual and group strengths and weaknesses..

5. My current level & my goal level by the End of this ILL for each chosen Future Skill

I am not bad at these skills, but I want to improve it. I hope, ILL will help me with it.

6. What have I find out in my desktop research?

7. What will I focus on next week?

I would like to focus on teamwork, on the issues we will be discussing, getting to know everyone better and just enjoying the process.

WEEK 1

1. How was the 2. Onboarding Week for me? How did we as a Team begin?

It was pretty good. I think that we are a great team. Everybody is friendly and determined.

2. Who is my new reflection partner?

It is Catarina.

3. Which skills, knowledge, strengths will help me with the DT Process?

Empathizing, defining, ideating, prototyping, testing.

4. What did I learn?

I got to know my team better and it was good. I learned more about DT.

5. What surprised me?

That our teachers are so open minded and understand students.

6. My sparkling moment.

I have not had a sparkling moment.

7. What have I found out in my desktop research?

8. What will I focus on next week?

I will focus on subject topic more.

WEEK 2

1. How was the 1. ILL Week for me?

I met the other team members during my first week at ILL, and I received an overview of the project I will be working on. Moreover, I got a tour of the Living Lab and had a chance to get acquainted with the equipment I'll be working with.

Getting to know my colleagues and the Living Lab environment, learning about the project I'll be working on, and starting to make some contributions to the project were probably the main goals of my first week at ILL.

2. What did I learn while reading other Portfolios?

I learned that everybody is creative and that we have similar thinking. Each of us wants to improve communication and language skills.

Building a network of contacts and connecting with others in my field can be accomplished by reading other people's portfolios. I might meet new mentors or collaborators, or I might come across chances to work with them on new initiatives.

In general, perusing other people's portfolios can be a worthwhile educational experience that can extend your perspectives and present you with fresh perspectives and chances.

3. What did I learn?

I learned more about Design Thinking.

Design thinking is a problem-solving methodology that focuses on understanding users' needs, identifying problems, and creating innovative solutions. It is an iterative, human-centered approach that puts empathy and experimentation at the forefront of the design process. It can be applied to a wide range of fields, from product design to business strategy to social innovation. It is a flexible and creative approach to problem-solving that encourages collaboration and experimentation.

4. What surprised me?

The emphasis on the actual world: Living Labs are created to be environments where students may apply their knowledge and abilities to problems found in the real world. This course may differ from others you've taken in the past, which might have placed a greater emphasis on theoretical or abstract ideas.

5. What will I focus on next week?

I think, we will be more focused on our research about a problem with blindness. We will consider methods how we can help people with this problem.

6. Which creative methods have I / we applied last week? How did that go?

Brainstorming: This is a method for generating a large number of ideas in a short amount of time. It involves encouraging a diverse range of ideas, without evaluating or criticizing them. Brainstorming can be done individually or in a group.

Prototyping: This is a method for creating a low-fidelity version of a product or solution that can be quickly tested and refined. Prototyping can involve a wide range of materials and techniques, from paper and cardboard to digital tools.

WEEK 3

1. How was the 2. ILL Week for me?

Unfortunately, I was absent because of my holidays. However, I think it was great meeting like every time.

2. What have I found out about my reflection partner?

My reflection partner Catarina is really a good person. She is responsible and determined. I like her straightness. Catarina is doing well in the teamwork.

3. Which skills, knowledge, strenghts have I used already in the DT proces?

Collaboration: DT is a team-based approach, and collaboration is essential to its success. This involves working with others, sharing ideas, and building on each other's strengths to create better solutions.

Empathy: Understanding the needs, motivations, and behaviors of the users or stakeholders you are designing for is a crucial part of the Design Thinking process. Using empathy allows you to see the problem from their perspective and come up with solutions that meet their needs.

4. What did I learn?

5. What surprised me?

6. What feedback did I get until now?

Sofia, I really liked the way you applied my suggestions on your portfolio this week.

It was really impressive how you applied it without making things complicated, you kept it simple without being too simple. I really enjoyed reading it. I also really enjoyed the definitions of the creative methods mentioned above.

I suggest you to keep up the good work and keep explaining things the way you've done it this week, don't get scared or shy of expressing yourself.

7. What will I focus on next week?

I will gather the information about blind people.

8. How did Define phase go for me and for my team?

Define phase of a Design Thinking project involves synthesizing the research and insights gathered during the Empathize phase and using that information to define the problem statement and establish design criteria.

During the Define phase, me and my team engaged in activities such as:

Affinity mapping: Grouping similar data points together to identify common themes and patterns.

Creating personas: Developing fictional profiles of typical users or stakeholders to better understand their needs, motivations, and behaviors.

WEEK 4

1. What progress did we make in the previous week?

We finished with *empathizing phase*. We learned about the audience for whom we are designing, by observation and interview. Then we started to learn *define phase*. Our point is to create a point of view that is based on user needs and insights.

2. What was my contribution to that progress?

We have had to come up with the questions about the “blind people problems”. Each of us wrote some questions and then we made a conclusion of it. It was well-done work.

3. What did I learn?

I learned more about problems of blind people. What difficulties they meet every day. I can show some examples:

- Independent living: Blind individuals often face challenges with independent living, such as cooking, cleaning, and self-care, which can be challenging due to the need for specialized equipment and training.
- Safety: Blind individuals face safety concerns in navigating their environment, such as navigating stairs, crossing busy streets, and avoiding obstacles.
- Navigation: Blind individuals face difficulties in navigating through unfamiliar places and relying on their senses of touch and hearing to get around.

However, it is only a small part of their problems.

4. What did I learn about pitching?

5. What surprised me?

6. What was my contribution to the pitch? What will we adopt/change for the final pitch?

7. What will I do differently next week?

We will consider our questions and finish the DEFINE phase. Then we will move to IDEATE phase. Brainstorm and come up with as many creative solutions as possible.

WEEK 5

1. How is the cooperation with external stakeholder working?

Cooperation with external stakeholders in an ILL project can have its challenges and benefits. However, in our team I can see only benefits. Successful cooperation with external stakeholders requires clear communication, mutual respect, and a willingness to work together to achieve common goals.

Working with external stakeholders can help ensure that the project is focused on real-world problems and challenges.

Stakeholders can create opportunities for collaboration and partnership, which can lead to further opportunities for research and innovation.

2. What feedback did I get from my reflection partner?

Catarina says that she likes the way I keep applying her suggestions. She said that I write portfolio not complicated, but without being too simple. She is approved of my enlightened definitions in the answers.

Also, she suggested to me to try to answer all the questions and do a retrospective of what I felt during the weeks.

3. Where & how am I going to apply this feedback in the future?

I really appreciate Catarina's feedback and try to follow her advice. It can be valuable in helping me to gain new perspectives on my work and to identify areas for improvement. My reflection partner's feedback can also be a valuable source of information for my own self-reflection. Consider how her advice might help me identify my strengths and weaknesses and use this information to guide my own personal and professional development.

4. What did I learn?

We decided to find the solutions for this problem: "Blind people can't read the information on the bus stops or train stations or signals because they can't see it clearly or there's no information about the time or what line/bus they need to take".

So, I came up with some ideas:

- *Braille signs*: Transit systems can have Braille signs at bus stops or train stations that can provide information on bus or train schedules and routes.
- *Audio announcements*: Many transit systems have audio announcements on buses or trains that provide information on upcoming stops, route numbers, and other relevant information.
- *Mobile apps with accessibility features*: Some mobile apps designed for public transportation have accessibility features such as text-to-speech or voice commands, which can be useful for individuals who are blind or have low vision.
- *Assistance from transit employees*: Transit employees can provide assistance to individuals who are blind or have low vision in finding the correct bus or train to take.
- *Service animals*: Individuals who are blind or have low vision may use a service animal such as a guide dog to help them navigate public transportation.

It's important for transit systems to provide accessibility options that cater to the needs of individuals who are blind or have low vision, to ensure they can use public transportation independently and safely.

5. What surprised me?

I understood that working with people from different countries as a one team can often lead to new and unexpected ideas or approaches that you may not have considered before.

Seeing the impact of our work on real-world stakeholders can be a powerful and motivating experience and may surprise us in terms of the depth and breadth of the impact.

6. What are we preparing for the final pitch?

I think, we do not know yet.

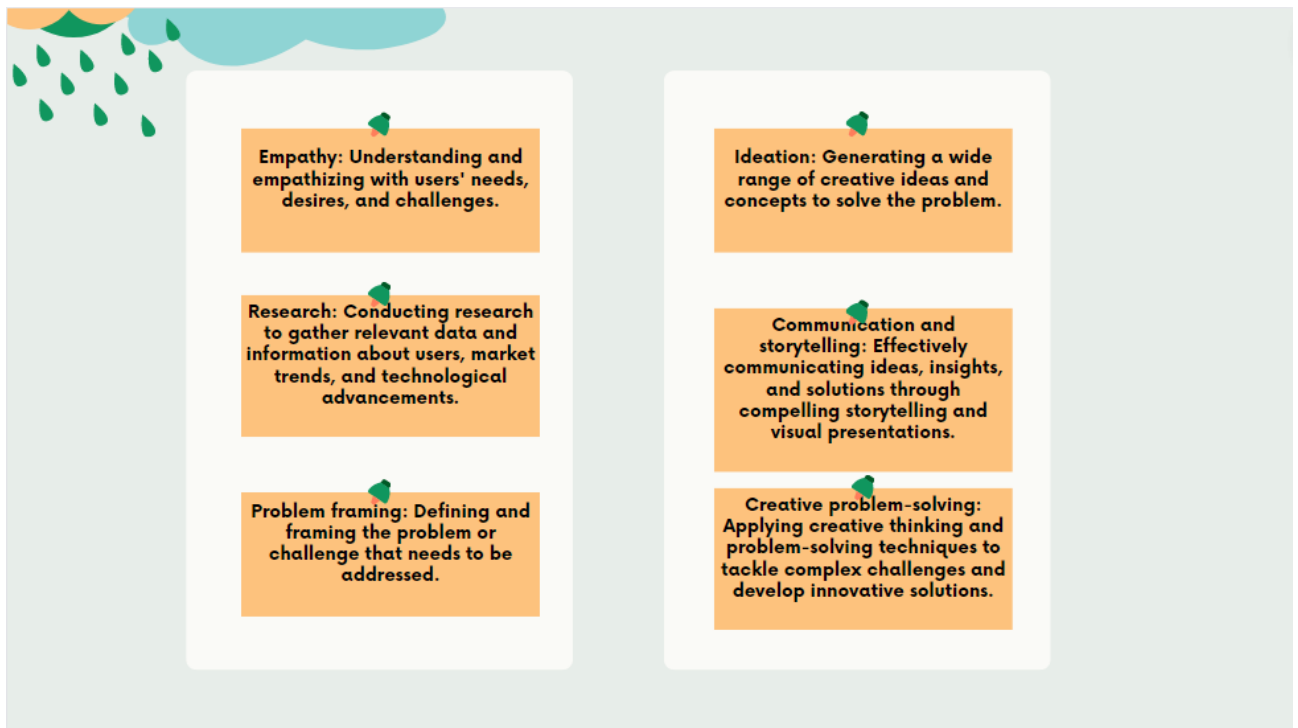
WEEK 6

1. How was the last ILL week for me?

The last week at the ILL was incredibly productive for our team. We made significant progress on our project, collaborated effectively with each other. We did a brainstorm and came up with a lot of creative solutions to our problem.

I also received constructive feedback from my reflection partner, which helped me refine my approach and improve my skills.

2. Which skills, knowledge, strengths have I used in Design Thinking (DT) process?



3. What did I learn (about me, about our topic...)?

Understanding the challenges of blind individuals: As a result of the research, I now have a better awareness of the particular difficulties that blind people face when it comes to transportation. This might involve challenges with locating information regarding public transportation, navigating strange places, and maintaining personal safety.

Assistive technologies and tools: I have discovered various assistive technologies and tools that can aid blind individuals in dealing with transportation challenges.

4. What surprised me?

I have experienced a moment of collaborative breakthrough during the last ILL week, where the team was able to collectively overcome a challenging problem or generate innovative solutions.

5. What is my part in creating a final pitch and a poster?

6. How are we progressing as a team?

We have a good communication in our team. We listen to each other and help each other. Everyone tries to meet the deadlines. Team engages in reflection and learning. Team members actively learning from experiences, adapting their strategies, and continuously improving their work.

OUTBOARDING WEEK

1. How was the overall experience of the ILL for me?

I have never had such a good experience. ILL was something new for me. I met beautiful people there. Working in diverse teams as part of the ILL promotes cooperation and teamwork. Working with varied people helped me build vital teamwork skills as well as deep insights and original ideas.

The ILL experience helped me advance both personally and professionally. It improved my capacity for problem-solving, critical thought, and situational flexibility. Additionally, it offers chances to develop leadership, communication, and project management abilities.

2. What was my contribution (in the process, in team, in meetings, in preparing the pitch/poster)?

I was engaged in team discussions, activities, offering my insights, perspectives and ideas. I was conducting thorough research and analysis related to the problem or topic, gathering relevant data and information to inform decision-making. Helping in the creation of an engaging and convincing pitch by utilizing clear communication, excellent narrative, and visuals to explain the issue, the solution, and the impact to the audience. I managed to contribute to the planning and allocation of tasks, taking ownership of assigned responsibilities, and meeting deadlines.

3. Which skills, knowledge, strengths have I gained, expand, used in last weeks?

Design thinking: I applied the principles and methods of design thinking to understand user needs, ideate creative solutions, and prototype and test ideas.

Research and analysis: I was conducting research, gathering data, and analyzing information to gain insights into the problem space, user behavior, market trends, or technological advancements.

Critical thinking and problem-solving: Applying analytical and critical thinking skills to evaluate complex problems, identify potential solutions, and make informed decisions.

Project management: Organizing and managing tasks, setting goals, planning timelines, and coordinating efforts to ensure project milestones are met.

Reflection and continuous learning: Engaging in reflective practices, learning from experiences and feedback, and continuously seeking opportunities for personal and professional growth.

4. What did I learn (about me, about DT, about the challenge topic)?

I learned DT techniques. We applied design thinking methods such as empathy mapping, brainstorming, prototyping, and user testing to drive the problem-solving process.

Through my participation in the ILL, I have discovered new strengths, skills and talents that I didn't realize I had. I have found that I excel in certain areas, such as problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, or leadership.

I learned how to work in team, and I really appreciate my reflection partner's (Catarina) work on my portfolio. I think that I improved my portfolio and myself by her help and comments.

5. What surprised me the most?

I liked how the classes went. We had a lot of communication and tried to help to each other. It was good that at the beginning of every online meeting we were asked to talk about our mood.

The collaborative nature of the ILL can often lead to surprising and innovative ideas. The diverse backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives of team members can generate unique and unexpected solutions to problems you're addressing.

6. What was most challenging for me in the past weeks?

It was hard to interact with users and get insightful feedback. It could be challenging to find and recruit the correct participants, do efficient interviews or user tests, and accurately analyze their input.

7. How will this experience help me in the future?

The ILL frequently entails giving speeches to a variety of audiences, including team members, or potential users. My ability to communicate and present information clearly and persuasively has improved as a result of this experience. It will help me in different organizations, because now I know more about teamwork and expressing myself.

8. What have I learned about myself?

I understood that I can do a great job if I put more efforts. And my team let me know that I do not have to be afraid of expressing myself and bringing my ideas.

9. Which grade do I deserve and why?

I think, all of us want to have the highest grade. We all did a great job, and everyone contributed something valuable. But some members really put a lot of efforts to do this project and deserve a high grade. For example, I did less work than Catarina, so she deserves higher grade. I hope to have at least 15/20 for my work that I did.

10. Have I achieved my personal goal(s)?

I think so. Now I am more self-confident in teamwork. I am not afraid of speaking with new people. Because I understand that everyone has their own fears, worries and it is OKAY.

11. Have we as a team achieved our common goal?

Absolutely! We came up with a good tool that can help to blind people. We have a beautiful pitch and poster which we are going to present on our showdown.