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**MREŽA
UDRUGA
ZAGOR**
CENTAR ZA MLADÉ KZŽ

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editors word



We don't know each other yet, but I hope that over the course of the next 10 months, we will.

I've been given this magazine as an outlet to share my experiences volunteering through ESC, to express my opinions and ideas, and hopefully to help you discover something new. This is a new path for me, and we will explore it together.

The vision for this magazine is still evolving and will take time to be fully realized. So, I decided this month will be different. We'll take it easy and get to know each other. The overarching theme that ties everything together is change, growth, and empowerment—topics that are particularly significant in my new life.

My goal is to encourage you to take an active role in your life, to seize the opportunities you have, and to change your life for the better. If sharing my experiences can help you do that, then I've done my part. This month, I will share my thoughts on living abroad, my experiences traveling solo as a woman, and more. Mladena also returned this month with her article on problem-solving, which fits beautifully into this month's theme.

Hopefully, in future issues, we will delve deeper into new topics. But for now, let's just have a chat. Let's get to know each other and share.

Pavla

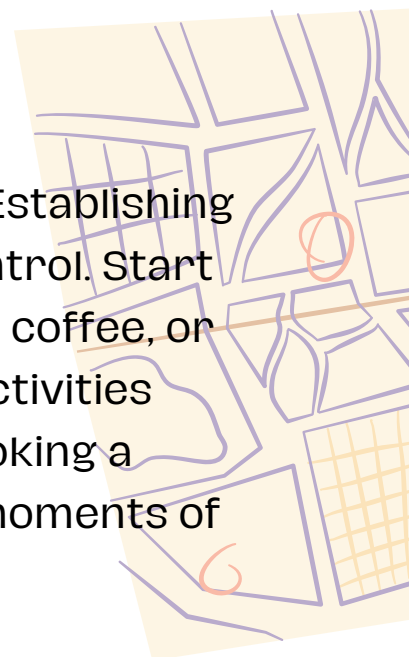
Moving abroad, be it for studies, work or volunteering, is an exciting adventure filled with opportunities for growth, new experiences, and self-discovery. However, it can also bring challenges, such as adjusting to a new culture, missing family and friends, and establishing a new routine. Taking care of your mental health during this transition is crucial to making the most of your journey. Here are some practical, doable steps to help you navigate the change.

1. Acknowledge Your Feelings

It's normal to feel a mix of emotions—excitement, anxiety, loneliness, or even homesickness. Instead of suppressing these feelings, acknowledge them. Journaling or talking to someone you trust can help you process your emotions. Remember, it's okay to miss home while still appreciating your new life.

2. Create a Comforting Routine

A new country often means a new daily rhythm. Establishing a routine can provide a sense of stability and control. Start small: wake up at the same time, enjoy a morning coffee, or take a walk in your neighborhood. Incorporate activities that bring you joy, like reading, exercising, or cooking a favorite meal. A routine can anchor you during moments of uncertainty.



3. Stay Connected with Loved Ones

Technology makes it easier than ever to stay in touch with family and friends back home. Schedule regular video calls or send updates about your new life. Sharing your experiences can help you feel supported and remind you of the people who care about you.

4. Set Small, Achievable Goals

Adjusting to a new country is a process. Set small, realistic goals for yourself, like learning a few phrases in the local language, finding your favorite café, or navigating public transportation. Celebrate these small wins—they're proof of your progress and resilience.

5. Seek Professional Help if Needed

If you're struggling with anxiety, depression, or loneliness, don't hesitate to seek professional support. Many countries have mental health resources for expats, including therapists who speak your language. Taking care of your mental health is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Bathke, A.; Kim, R. Keep Calm and Go Abroad: The Effect of Learning Abroad on Student Mental Health. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*. 2016.

Pazil, N.; et. col. International students' experiences of living temporarily abroad: Sense of belonging toward community well-being. *Asian social work and policy review*. 2023

Adjusting to a new country takes time, and it's okay to have ups and downs. Treat yourself with the same compassion you'd offer a friend. By taking care of your mental health and embracing the journey, you'll not only adapt to your new home but also discover strengths and joys you never knew you had.



Photo by Cottonbro Studio

Kako se nositi sa problemima i (p)ostati pametan

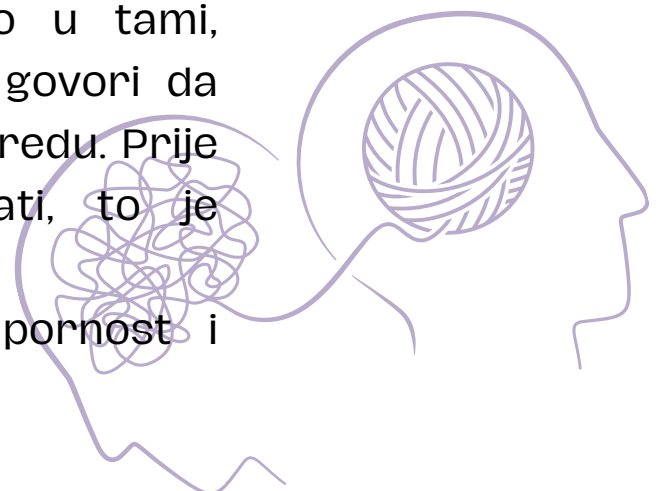
by Mladena Štin

Možda će ovo zvučati čudno, ali sad kad se okrenem iza sebe s navršenih četrdesetak godina mogu reći da mi je drago što su mi se u životu dogodili lošiji spletovi okolnosti i teže situacije, jer da ih nisam iskusila ne bi danas bila na onom mjestu na kojem jesam. Naučila sam, postala malo mudrija (starija) i preživjela.

Nije lako suočiti s poteškoćama i situacijama koje ne možemo predvidjeti, naročito kad si mlad i neiskusna, većina problema ti se čini nesavladiva i nepobjediva. Međutim, oni su sastavni dio života, ne postoji osoba koja se s nečim ne bori u nekim životnim situacijama. Važno je samo imati na umu da od problema ne treba bježati (još im nitko nikada nije pobjegao), treba ih pokušati riješiti na najbolji mogući način.

Kineski znak za riječ „kriza“ sastoji se od dva znaka – jedan znači opasnost, drugi priliku. Krizne životne situacije ne možemo izbjeći, ali možemo si pomoći sa načinom doživljavanja stresne situacije, dakle ne smijemo pasti u očaj, bespomoćnost i prepustiti se, treba se boriti.

Treba uključiti ono malo svjetlo u tami, poslušati mali glasić u sebi koji govori da izdržiš i ustraješ i da će sve biti u redu. Prije svega treba pozitivno razmišljati, to je polovica rješenja problema. Druga polovica su upornost i strpljenje.



Kad se nađeš pred preprekom ili problemom savjetujem ti nekoliko jednostavnih savjeta koji će pomoći u bržem i efikasnijem rješavanju problema:

- 1.** Nemoj paničariti, previše dramatizirati, preuveličavati nastalu situaciju, jer će ti tada problem izgledati sto puta gori.
- 2.** Pokušaj analizirati problem, rastavi ga na nekoliko faza koje ćeš pokušati riješiti jednu po jednu.
- 3.** Nikad se nemoj ustručavati zatražiti pomoć. Smireno razmisli o kompetentnoj osobi kojoj se možeš obratiti i na koju možeš računati.
- 4.** Budi uporan/uporna. Nijedna stvar nije se riješila preko noći. Ukoliko rješenje ne uspije odmah, probaj pronaći drugo prikladnije.

I najvažnije od svega, nakon što uspješno riješiš problem i prevladaš kriznu situaciju budi svjestan/svjesna da si iz toga naučio/naučila nešto novo: kako se takav problem rješava i kako ubuduće izbjeći takvu situaciju.

Ne zaboravi: Svaki trud je uvijek nagrađen, bez iznimke.

Samo hrabro!



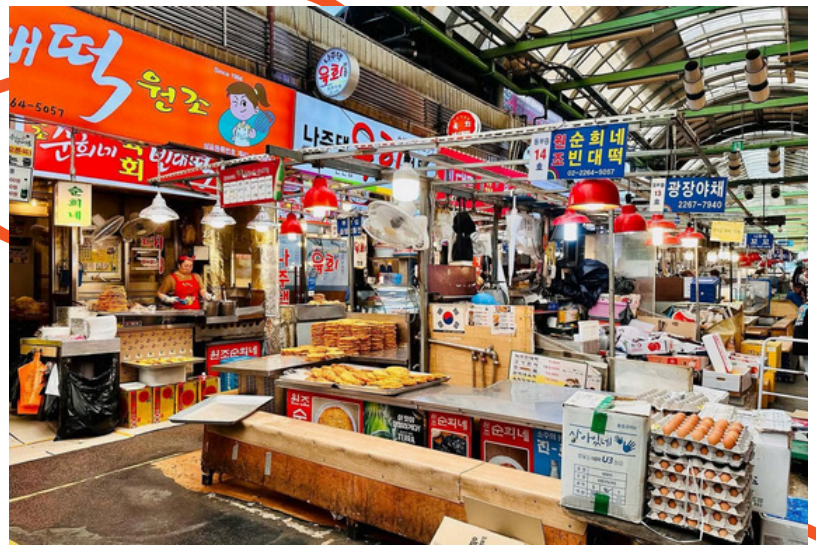
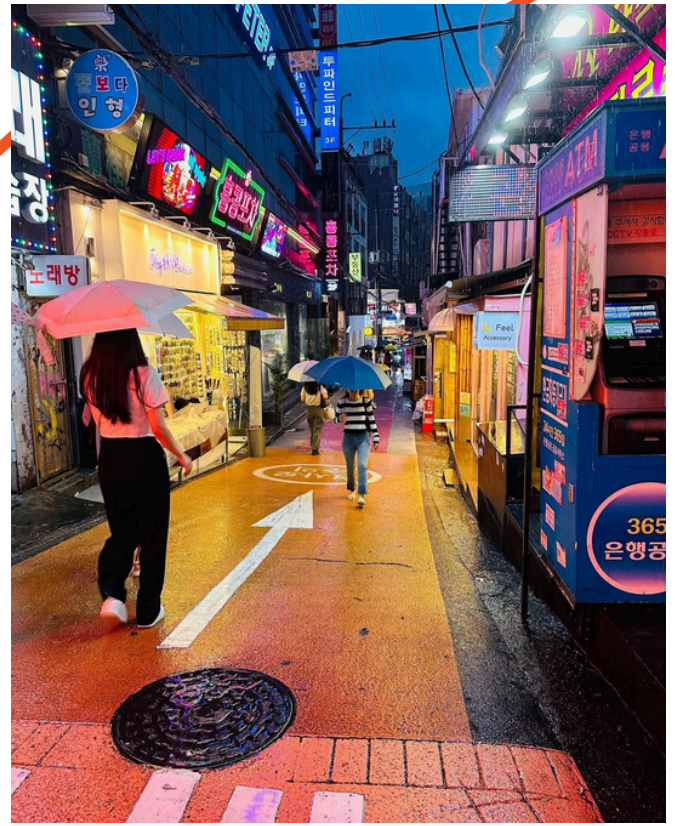
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Traveling solo as a tool of self-discovery

My solo travels began as a promise to myself. After years of dreaming about traveling but waiting for the “right time” or the “right person” to go with, I decided to stop waiting. And right away, I decided by first journey will be the dream one.

I booked a ticket, packed my bags, and set off for the first time to South Korea’s vibrant capital. I had no idea what to expect, but I was determined to embrace every moment. Korea is closely related to my studies. After studying the language, history and culture “only on paper” it was time to test my skills in real life. I wanted an experience outside of the university boundaries.

The first few days were a whirlwind of exploration. I wandered through the narrow alleyways of Bukchon Hanok Village, where traditional Korean houses stood in stark contrast to the modern skyscrapers in the distance. I got lost in the labyrinthine streets of Myeongdong, where vendors called out to me offering everything from spicy tteokbokki to fluffy Korean pancakes. At first, I felt self-conscious eating alone at street food stalls, but I soon realized that no one cared—they were too busy enjoying their own meals.



Photos by Pavla Faltová

One of the most transformative experiences of my trip was hiking up Namsan Mountain to the iconic N Seoul Tower. As I climbed the steep path, surrounded by locals and tourists alike, I felt a sense of camaraderie despite being alone.

At the top, I joined the tradition of attaching a “love lock” to the fence—not for a romantic partner, but as a symbol of my love for myself and the life I was creating. The view of Seoul sprawling below me, glittering under the night sky, took my breath away. In that moment, I felt an overwhelming sense of pride and independence.

By the time I left Seoul, I was no longer the same person who had nervously stepped off the plane just three weeks earlier. I had navigated a foreign city, made new friends, and discovered a strength within myself I didn’t know I had. Solo travel had taught me to trust my instincts, embrace the unknown, and find joy in my own company.

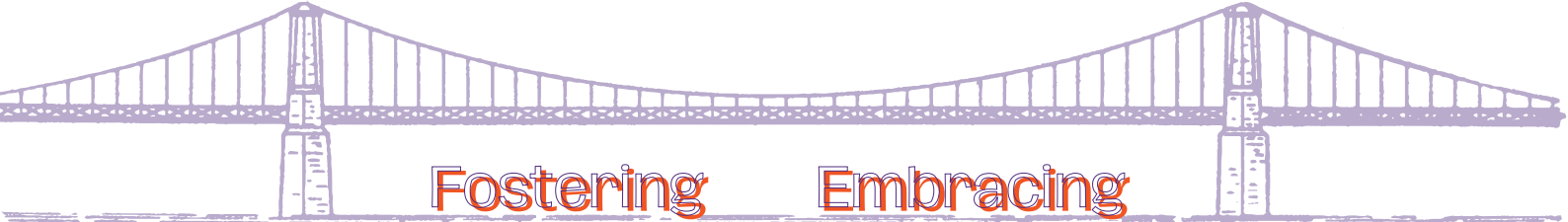
To any woman considering solo travel, especially to a place as dynamic and welcoming as Seoul, I say this: Go. Take that leap. The world is full of beauty, kindness, and adventure, and you deserve to experience it all—on your own terms. Seoul will welcome you with open arms, and you might just leave with a piece of your heart still there, waiting for your return.



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Photo by Gije Cho



Fostering Solidarity in a Multicultural Society: Embracing Differences and Building Bridges

In an increasingly interconnected world, multicultural societies have become the norm rather than the exception. Diversity enriches our communities, offering a tapestry of traditions, languages, and perspectives. However, cultural differences can also lead to misunderstandings, stereotypes, and divisions if not approached with care and intentionality. Fostering solidarity in a multicultural society requires empathy, open-mindedness, and a commitment to building bridges across cultural divides.

Educate Yourself About Other Cultures

Ignorance often fuels prejudice. One of the most effective ways to foster solidarity is to actively learn about other cultures. This goes beyond surface-level knowledge of food, clothing, or festivals. Dive deeper into the history, values, and traditions of different communities, especially those you encounter day to day.

Read books, watch documentaries, or attend cultural events to gain a better understanding of what shapes people's identities and worldviews. Education helps dismantle stereotypes and fosters respect for the richness of other cultures.

Celebrate Diversity

While cultural differences are important, it's equally important to recognize the shared humanity that unites us. Focus on common values such as kindness, respect, and the desire for a better future. By emphasizing what we have in common, we can build connections that transcend cultural boundaries. For example, collaborating on community projects or advocating for social justice can bring people together around a shared purpose.

Find Common Ground

Tolerance is often seen as the bare minimum in multicultural societies, but true solidarity requires going beyond mere tolerance. Instead of simply accepting differences, celebrate them.

Participate in cultural festivals, learn a few phrases in another language, or try cooking a dish from a different cuisine. By actively engaging with and appreciating diversity, you contribute to a culture of inclusion and belonging.

Lead by Example

Solidarity cannot exist in the presence of systemic inequality and discrimination. It's essential to address issues such as racism, xenophobia, and cultural marginalization head-on. Support policies and initiatives that promote equity and justice for all members of society. Fostering solidarity starts with you. Be a role model for others by embracing diversity in your own life, and encourage others to do the same.

Dobbie, D. ; Richards-Schuster, K.
Building Solidarity Through Difference: A Practice Model for Critical Multicultural Organizing. *Journal of community practice*. 2008.

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