

Viandando Workcamp (04/09/11-18/09/11)

Before we left for Modica in Sicily we didn't know exactly what to expect from the workcamp. In the description of the camp it said that it was a social camp and that the volunteers would be working with guys from a marginal neighbourhood of Pozzallo. Most of them face social and family problems. We also knew that the activities would take place in cooperation with the "Literary Café Rino Giuffrida", a place where the guys have the possibility to express themselves with artistic activities.

After we arrived in Catania Airport we took a bus to Modica where we were picked up by one of the coordinators because the house where we lived was not reachable with public transports. The owner of the house welcomed us and showed us the rooms and the furnishings. The beds in our dormitories had already been prepared.

The camp was divided into two parts – the first and the second week. In the first week we worked together with the guys from Pozzallo with theatre activities and music workshops. These exercises gave us the opportunity to get to know each other better. We concluded the first week with a public performance in the city of Ragusa in which we could integrate elements of our workshops. The event in Ragusa was called "Ragusani nel fondo". This event takes place every year and offers the possibility for the inhabitants to get to know the current local projects and artistic works (music, acrobatics, theatre etc.).

The aim of the second week was to become more aware about the problematic situation around immigrant and mafia affairs in Sicily. For example, we went to an immigrant centre in Vittoria, which is called "welcome center". As an introduction they showed us a presentation which summed up the living conditions there and the role of the church. In the "welcome center", immigrants can participate in workshops like baking pizza and producing and painting ceramics. Furthermore, the centre offers Italian lessons. All these measures have the aim to facilitate them the integration into the Italian society. We spent a whole day in the centre playing games and making music with the immigrants, not only to sweeten their day, but also to show them that there are also people who fight against racism instead of supporting it. At the port in Pozzallo we also visited an immigrant centre which served as a negative example compared to the "welcome center" in Vittoria.

Apart from that, we went to a farm in Lentini to do a symbolic work on the field against the mafia which has a huge influence on agricultural affairs in Italy. The fields had been expropriated by the government three years before and rested uncultivated. Our symbolic work consisted of liberating the fields from rubbish and thorny bushes.

As a final event of the workcamp we prepared a performance in Pozzallo.

Apart from these activities, there were also activities of daily conviviality because we shared a common household with the boys and girls from Pozzallo. At the beginning we laid down rules of social behaviour and made a list of duties like cooking, cleaning etc. Our coordinator gave us an overview about the weekly activities, where we could check our free time and kinds of activity or excursions. During our time off we spent a lot of time in Pozzallo at the beach or at the literary café, where we met other boys

and girls from Pozzallo, who didn't live with us in the house. Excursions to Modica were arranged, where we could go out for sightseeing or shopping.

For both of us the camp was a great experience. We got to know different people with different social and cultural backgrounds. The topic of the camp – and at the same time the topic of our theatre activities – was intolerance. The theatre activities were useful to not only make the audience but also ourselves more conscious about social differences and the way we treat those who are different. We also had the possibility to get to know people from Sicily and their hospitality. We liked the atmosphere in the house because we were treated like family members. We always cooked and ate together and we perceived the time in which we were eating more as a kind of a social ceremony than as a simple meal. Sicily is a great place. The two things we liked most about it were the friendliness and the hospitality of the Sicilian people and the wonderful landscape.

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