

## Comments of the European volunteers working in the EUKI project „Frutti per la Biosfera“



**Pheline Kuhnert**, 20, Germany, background: high school graduate, March `18-March `19

*"For the new project Frutti per la Biosfera, together with Giacche Verdi, we developed a PowerPoint presentation, which later should be presented in the schools. In order to have the right input for this work, Giacche Verdi organised several workshops and meetings where we talked about the connection between our nutrition and climate change. I really liked this work, because the topic is really very up to date. I already knew a lot, but some things were completely new. In our small flat we volunteers tried to buy now even more exclusively regional, in season and packaging-free products. This was actually easier than I thought, as we had the weekly market here in Bronte. The supermarkets and small shops as well as vegetable merchants slowly got used to the "crazy" volunteers, who just bought everything "please without a bag". Personally, I learned really much through the exchange with other volunteers and the Giacche Verdi. I think that thanks to this project, my lifestyle has changed and will continue to change when I return."*

**Karl Knauer**, 27, Germany, April 18-March 19, Background: Carpenter

*"In the last week of November we went to the schools in Bronte, Maletto, Adrano and Biancavilla for the first time of the project "Frutti per la Biosfera". The second phase of the project is the creation of a school garden in the schools according to the local conditions. My wish to go into children's and youth work has been strengthened during my volunteering with Giacche Verdi."*



**Michelle Eckhardt**, 21, Germany, April-Oct `18, background: Landscape planning

*"It was particularly exciting for me to learn how an environmental education trail is planned and implemented. All in all, I have to say that my internship in Bronte was very good for me. The friendliness and interest of the people there helped me to overcome some of my shyness. During my time I often jumped over my shadow and dared to do new things, which of course wasn't always easy, but in the end helped me to go ahead. I am grateful for the time I was able to spend in Bronte".*

**Susanne Schmitt**, 28, Germany, background: Landscape architect, Aug. `18 – Jan. `19

*"During my time with Giacche Verdi I experienced nature conservation from a new perspective. An important part was the project "frutti per la biosfera", in which we explored the question of what our food has to do with the climate. After we were offered some lectures about agriculture in Sicily ourselves, we worked as a team on a presentation that was presented in numerous schools in the region. Since we worked very intensively on the project, it became not only an environmental education measure for the children, but also for us volunteers. During the conception phase, research was carried out into how individual processes work and how best to prepare them for children. Then it was time to pass on what we had learned. Besides this presentation every volunteer had the chance to present his region and a typical product or a typical fruit/vegetable. At the latest now there were no more excuses, the language barrier had to be overcome. I perceived children as very open-minded and interested and was sometimes surprised at how profoundly they already discussed."*





**Selver Gok, 24, Turkey, Background: Economic sciences, July 18-April 19**

*"I've always been happy that this period I was volunteering was in Giacche Verdi. Because we did a very nice and very good jobs. We've always tried to create awareness. We've worked to make people more conscious. We have beautified the nature and the environment. We gave life. With the trees we planted, the garbage collection activities, and the trainings we gave to the children, we have learned and taught that this planet is our home and that we should take very good care of it. We understood and explained how important organic foods are for us. Thanks to the practical trainings, we have left traces. That's why I'm happy. We did useful things to people. I have had much experience."*

**Betul Dogan, 28, Turkey, background: Economy & Ethics, Sept 18-March 19**

*"Thanks to Giacche Verdi Bronte I can contribute to climate protection. I am proud to leave an important trace for the future of children here in Sicily: it was one of my dreams before coming here from Turkey. For Frutti per la Biosfera I also drew pictures of birds, insects, garden design. Every day I've spent here, I've got new experiences and I've saved a lot of beautiful memories that I'll never forget. There are so many things to tell."*



**Selina Goldenstein, 24, Germany, 1.9.2018-31.8.2019**

*"The project "Frutti per la Biosfera" showed me in a very vivid way that indeed children are our future. We should try to act now and make politics act now, but the most important thing for me will be still to educate the next generation and make them feel able and motivated to do it better than we did it until now. A child asking me "But if we have grain here in Sicily why should they transport it from Romania?" showed to me how important our work is and how the views of children can be so simple but make you question even more the current decisionmaking in everyday politics on how to fight climate change."*

**Fabio Traina, 19, Germany, high school graduate April.19-.April .20**  
*"About our work in the schools, to be honest, at the beginning I thought that there are "only" children who will certainly bring motivation for other things, but not for the environment. But it turned out the opposite, until now every single school class was one hundred percent motivated and accordingly they worked very well with us and showed a lot of interest. It was a nice experience to see how the children got active and always asked what we would do next and also how they talked to the farmers during our visits of the organic farms and how they discussed and talked about the experiences they had at home. I was particularly impressed by Claudio Schilliró and his farm and how calm he explained everything to the children, in addition to also learning something from him. I recently experienced the olive harvest, which was big joy and made me imagine a future part-time activity in agriculture. There have also been some personal changes for me, I have now have clear thoughts about my future and my consumer behaviour has also shifted everything to the more local, as I simply have more opportunities here than in my hometown in Germany, which is very industrial. "*





**Menekze Iris Conbaz, 20, Turkey, background: Medicine, 1.3.-31.5.2019**  
*"Thanks to "Frutti per la biosfera" I had an opportunity to learn more about gardening. I learned about plants specific planting seasons, how to take care of gardens and gardening tips from people who studied botanic! Moreover I gardened with children and helped them learn more about nature. Communicating with children on such important subjects helped me develop my interaction skills. I would like to thank everyone who had a role in the project for coming up with the idea and letting me participate in it!"*

**Viktoria Grötzinger, 19, German, high school graduate, April.19-.April .20**

*"The best part of this project was for me, when we went to the middle school in Bronte to attach a birdhouse in the school garden to close the project. It was nice to see how well groomed the vegetable beds were and that everything started to grow. Another thing which was nice, was how happy the children were about the birdhouse and how proud they showed us what they planted, and how nice it is growing."*



**Emir Can Kaya, 25, Turkey, Biology, 4.3.-31.5.2019**

*"The first thing I have to say about the project "Frutti per la biosfera" is that it helps children to understand the nature and especially the biosphere of Sicily. They can see, understand, learn and distinguish the type of specific plants and trees in Sicily, also they learn everything about the soil which takes an important role for the plants. I think, these informations can change their perspective, and it was also good for me. I travelled around Etna and saw beautiful landscapes, towns and coasts, I learned a lot about the language and culture, met lovely persons and worked together with different nationalities. For me, it was an amazing experience."*

**Fabiane Lira (Brazil), 28 10.11.2018-30.6.2019**

*"Frutti per la Biosfera was a very interesting project, because of its different approaches to the choices we can make in everyday life, concerning a healthy diet that is in balance with the planet. The visits of the organic farms were always very fruitful, the children were really participative. In the beginning, they said that insects are disgusting, but while they visited the farms they realized how important insects are for organic agriculture. At the end of the project, they were able to say why it is important to consume food of "km 0", and they were always very enthusiastic about consuming the food they planted in the gardens."*



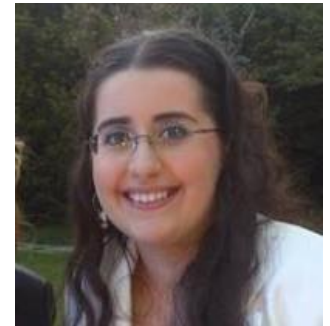


**Natalie Exner, 24, Germany, background: Ecology, Febr.-August 19**

*“For me it was a pleasure to be part of the project Frutti per la Biosfera. I think we really changed a little bit how the school children see garden work and animals. They saw that it makes fun to play with the soil and to harvest the fruits of the work. The children learned that it is important to consume seasonal fruits and local products, and in this way, they consume products that are fresher, tastier and less polluting for the environment.”*

**Çisem Topaloğlu, 23, Turkey, background: Computer Engineering, June-Sept. `19**

“Living here in Bronte for three months has helped me gain a competence in living a healthy and contented life style. At the back of the Giacche Verdi Bronte office, there is a garden where the previous volunteers had cared for and filled with a lot of vegetable and fruits. While we are not working outside the office, it is usually one of us volunteers who goes to the garden to take care of the plants we have there. Usually it is just to water the plants or harvest them. We have the most fun when we can harvest from the plants and eat the harvests in our lunch or dinner the same day!”



**Furkan Altıparmak, 23, Turkey, background: Law degree, June 19 – September 19**

“In the beginning of my voluntary stay we mostly studied Italian, watched documentaries about environmental activism and climate change. We discussed and wrote articles about many topics from renewable energy resources, nuclear and biogas energy and whether they are “green”. I helped to the preparation of two educational videos about plastic waste and the importance of local food. My EVS experince in Bronte was great. I met people from different cultures, I learnt a little bit of Italian, I tried to cook many Italian dishes and most importantly, I made friends for a lifetime.”

**Laura Serra, 19, Germany, high school graduate, July.19-July.20**  
*“In my time with Giacche Verdi I learned a lot about the environment, agriculture and Sicily’s culture. I also learn more things about a sustainable life every day. The things I love about working with Giacche Verdi Bronte are that the work is very varied from day to day and we can always share our ideas and realize them. After my first visit on a school I would say I’m surprised about how interested the children are about the nature and environment. In the end of our visit a boy also asked when we will meet again and teach them new things. The changes I already made here are eating less animal products, buying less wrapped products, buying vegetables and fruits at local farmer markets instead of supermarkets and composting biowaste instead of throwing it away. In the other eight months of my stay here at Giacche Verdi I think they will come more and more changes.”*





**Leon de Meijer, 18, Germany, high school graduate, July.19-July.20**

*“Concerning what I have learned in the four months, I am already here with regard to sustainability and I am now fully aware of the substantial impact agriculture has on the global environment.*

*As much as I now know of the responsibility, each and every one of us has in his daily life and so I am living vegan since around about the time of my arrival. Furthermore I became conscious of the privilege one possesses living in Germany and the lack of environmental education in other countries.*

*Following this consciousness came the realization of the importance of educating those less privileged people about the necessity of environmental protection and a sustainable lifestyle. I also discovered my affinity for children and their open-minded way of listening and learning as well as their great potential for a green future as a result of that. I am looking forward to making even more memorable experiences and doing my part.*

**Konstantin Buchholz,18, Germany, high school graduate, Sept. 19-Sept.20**

*“To be a volunteer of Giacche Verdi in Bronte is a great experience. I learn much about the Sicilian lifestyle and the friendly and open attitude of the people living here. In the educational projects it is wonderful to see how interested the children are and that they always take an active part during the work in schools. I think they really learn something and have much fun. I enjoy every moment during my work and free time and am glad and thankful to be here.”*



**Natalia Nazarenko, 22, Russia, background: Ethnology, Oct.19-April 20**

*“I learned a lot in the short time that I have been here. Mostly the discussions between the Volunteers about various important and complicated topics like 'the good way of living' or 'how to reach a sustainable life for everyone on our planet', have pushed my worldview further and made me even change my nutrition. For some weeks now I eat vegan, and I begin to like it a lot. The work itself is amazingly varied. It extends beyond our own training on environmental protection and climate change and writing critical reports. Furthermore, we carry out several projects in elementary schools in the coming months, like Frutti and Boschi per la Biosfera. I am happy to be here and I'm looking forward for the time to come.”*

**Stefan Reith, 21, Germany, background: Ecology, 1.9.19-10.3.20**

*For me, the experience of living and working in another European country is really an enrichment. Above all, my view of Germany has changed through the experiences here. One of the big behavioural changes is linked to not having a car around. Most of the time I am walking where ever I have to get. What I really like is how Giacche Verdi also takes care that we get some insights in the culture here in Sicily and not only the work is the focus for them.*

