

# **Final report**

Ekaterina Blokova, Russia

Dates of volunteering: October 26 - December 24, 2017.

## **My tasks in the project “Boschi per la Biosfera”:**

- participation in organisation school lessons;
- creating of the personal slides for presentation;
- searching for ecological games for children;
- working with social network of Giacche Verdi;
- article about our lessons;
- videos for illustrating our project;
- creating the calendar.

3 months of my volunteering in Sicily had finished so quickly, that for me it was like 3 weeks. During this time I have got important professional and private experience, which I would like to share with you. Not all of this ideas are about environmental protection, but all of them are changing my life right now.

## **Living in small town**

This is the most incredible invention for me. I have been living in St. Petersburg for all my life, and all this time I thought that only in the big cities we can live the real life, full of events and opportunities. Well, I also always loved nature and tried to spend weekends in the forest, but it was only for few days. This internship in Sicily was my first time of living in a small town. And it changed everything in my mind.

It's true that in Bronte (compared to my city) there is not a lot of things to do. You shouldn't make an everyday decision - which seminar or concert or lecture to choose. And this gives you an opportunity to open your mind for many other very important things: meditation, understanding your place in the world, creating ideas, feeling connection with nature and so on. And to calm down!

After returning to St. Petersburg this idea formed in my mind. Now I see that this is more complicated and small town gives you great opportunity for development of your personality. That's why now I try to work more with far away regions and provinces in Russia. The other reason is that during this 3 months I have lost my educational project in my general work in environmental center: so now I have more freedom to start something new.

## **Etna**

The experience of living near volcano is unbelievable! This change the level of your point of view. Near volcano you are not only a person with your personal needs - you are also a human on the Earth and you have an opportunity to see the process of changing or even creating of the planet (like in the beginning of everything)!

## **Environmental education**

The main idea of my volunteering was environmental education. This is the very special topic for me and the main thing that I was doing for all my life. The children are our only hope: teaching kids about ecology means to teach the whole world about it and if they learn to respect and care from a young age, they will become advocates for protecting nature.

All activities in schools were a greatest joy for me. In the beginning of our lessons I couldn't understand anything in Italian. But after few weeks I started to understand the questions of school students. For me it was a miracle!!!

Now I am a big fan of the idea to mix the foreign volunteers and children. The pupils showed great interest because we were so funny farlanders for them (except some classes that were too active and crazy, of course).

The teachers were also amazing, as the lovely students, and I will always remember this experience.

## **Giacche Verdi crew**

Environmental NGO sector is the sector with good people :)

Gino is one of the kindest persons I have ever met in my life. I am so thankful for him for all things that he do for people, animals and nature. And also for believing in my ability to learn Italian! I still use facebook in Italian and try not to lose my language skills.

Andrea is one of the best people for this work! I really appreciated his help while I was dealing with my tasks. Working with the soul, with personality is important when you work with people. So bright and energetic person with creative ideas. I am so thankful for this experience with creating video and audio for Christmas - it was unforgettable.

I'd like also to thank Stefanie for her kindness! I was a big surprise for me when she offered Marie to live in her own house, when she was sick. It's great! We need to be more attentive for people surround us.

### **The calendar:**

I would like to estimated separately about our calendar! It was my small dream to create it for last two years, but my organisation had no money, that's why we haven't even tried. But we made it in Giacche Verdi! Unfortunately there were no opportunity to print it for schools, but this made me really happy!

### **New skills:**

This is one more important point. During my volunteering I've got some unexpected skills that I use now in my daily work:

- Photoshop
- Video addition
- Audio recording

The last idea I would like to share with you is that Sicilians are joyful people, who always appreciate happiness and parties. Time together with Sicilians is the time of the personal transformation. And this is also a miracle.

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