

# Europäische Projektwerkstatt Kultur im Ländlichen Raum (Naumburg, Germany)

*Matthew Li, First Year, BA Philosophy Politics and Economics, Balliol College*

## Work Projects

The project involved running three seven-day long residential camps in a small village in rural Thuringia called Unterweißbach. In each camp, there were eight children. The overarching aim of the project was to get the children to see that learning English can be fun. In contrast to school, there were no formal lessons in English, but rather, we engaged in fun and practical camp activities using English. These activities includes: cooking, building, film-making, cricket, rugby, rap-recording, gold-washing, capture the flag, making natural paints, flag making, bonfire games, and excursions. The other intern and I were very well supported by Alex, the host. We were treated as equals in the running of the camp, so there was a large degree of independence to plan activities for the camps in the ways that we wanted.

## Daily Life

Normally, we would wake the kids up at 8:00am, and sent some of them off to the bakery to collect breakfast, while getting others to lay the table. Breakfast was at 9:00am, and after breakfast, I would often take a group of two or three to do cooking for midday while the others would do outdoor activities with the other intern. After lunch, we would all usually regroup and do an activity together, usually outdoors. After dinner we would sometimes have a bonfire or a film. Once we

even went midnight swimming in the local pool. The activities were nonetheless very flexible, and we would often have to make our decisions in the morning as to what the plan would be according to the weather, and depending on what the kids expressed interest in. Sometimes we would have day long excursions as well,

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which obviously changed the routine around. During the camp, almost all of the time in the day was spent with the kids and the other camp staff, since we all lived in the same house, and there was no time when work really 'started' or 'ended'. That being said, I did not feel like I could not take an hour or so out to relax when the kids had free time, or when they were washing the dishes. In the four days in between each of the camps, the host took me sightseeing in the local area which was very nice. After the camps, the family of one of the children invited me to stay with them in their village for two days which was very nice, and I also travelled to Frankfurt and Erfurt to do some sightseeing.

## Lasting Impressions

I loved living in Germany and exploring the culture and





food there. Running the camp was also extremely fun and a great way to meet lots of nice people. I would definitely return to work there, and would consider living there in the future as well. I also found that working with kids was an excellent way to improve my German language skills, which is something I have wanted to do since dropping the subject after GCSEs. I don't know what my career goals are, but I know proficiency in a foreign language is definitely a useful thing to acquire.

*James Mooney, Second Year, BA Modern Languages (French and German), Brasenose College*

## Work Projects

As a summer camp, the work projects at Kulturino mostly revolved around preparing or leading indoor and outdoor activities with the children there. Indoor activities included cooking, board games or fireside games. Outdoor activities ranged from scaled-down sports matches and typical camp games (such as 'capture the flag') to long walks and hut-building. Besides such activities during the camps, other work projects included the tidying and preparation of the camp and grounds before the next round of children arrived.

## Daily Life

Daily life at the camp ran according to a schedule prepared in advance. After breakfast, the group of eight

children would be divided into two groups of four, each to be supervised by one of the Oxford interns. One group would stay indoors, and help with cooking, the other would play outside until lunch. After lunch, there was more time for 'English activities', then the children were given free time before reassembling as a group for dinner. After dinner there was typically a bonfire or a film, depending on the weather, before the group went to bed, which was always at a comfortably early time. Despite scheduled breaks for free time, all of the time spent at the camp was spent in the company of the hosts, the children or both. For some, that might seem overwhelming but, thanks to the group this year, it was a pleasure.

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## Lasting Impressions

The internship at Kulturino left me with a fond impression of the people and the area of Thuringia. As a teacher, I was surprised and delighted by the friendliness of the children. As a foreigner and a guest, I was made to feel welcome by the hospitality and the friendliness that seem to prevail in that part of the world.