

Youth Support in Rome



We helped the children to create content about Africa, then we added it to the drawn map of the continent to make an interactive map.

During the second week our focus was on South America, especially the wildlife of the rainforests, so we draw and designed animals, while talking about their importance.

Impact statement of doing youth support in Rome

I volunteered with IVHQ (International Volunteer Headquarters) in their youth support program taking place in Rome, Italy for 2 weeks. There were many aspects which motivated me to take part in this program, one was its purpose: by participating in youth support volunteers are going to summer camps to look after children from marginalised and fragile groups, such as asylum seekers and victims of domestic violence, so it has a social aspect of providing summer programs to these children which are usual for children from more stable backgrounds, but for them it is an opportunity to make new friends, learn a bit of English and just relax and play games while their parents at work, so it also helps fighting inequalities. I like being around children as I have a sister who is 11 years younger than me, so it was an opportunity for me to utilise my skills that I got from looking after her, and I found that the children at this camp were happy to play with me, or practice English in a playful way, like counting the number of passes with a ball in English without dropping it. There were some cultural motivations, as I learnt Italian in secondary school, and it was a good opportunity to practice it, and it was also clear that the children preferred to be around volunteers who spoke Italian even just on a basic level. I also got to immerse myself in the culture in my free time, I got to visit the most well-known attractions in Rome, and as it was my first time there, I truly enjoyed it.

While looking after the children we mostly did arts and crafts, and there was a different topic each week, first Africa and then South America (they go through every continent, but I was there for these 2). I helped the children designing African masks and drawing the jungles of the Amazonian region while I was telling them about these places, we also listened to some authentic music, and on each Friday we created a little play where we tried to show how we imagine life at these places. I found these programs to be really creative and useful, as the children got to start knowing these places through these activities, which based on their stories was all new for them as in school it is not the main focus, it was great to contribute to their exploration of the world even for just these small bits.

Being around these vulnerable children was emotionally challenging sometimes, but because of that my favourite part of the program was when a little girl asked me to go sit with them without me offering it, as it meant they trusted me enough to ask me, it was a moving moment for me.

Taking part in this program made me see that doing social work is truly rewarding, and that I might do similar things in the future, maybe volunteer again in another place. I would wholeheartedly recommend this program to anyone who ever thought about volunteering, they would get life-lasting memories and many new friends all while doing something good for a certain community.

The bursary covered nearly half of all expenses, so it was a significant help and made it possible for me to participate in this specific program, as without it I would have had to choose another location for a shorter length, which would not have been the same.

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