

## **The second month of my experience in Greece: from first steps to confidence**



### **Going around Thessaloniki**

Two months is the right time to feel at ease in a new place. The castle we have built together with the kids last week represents it well. My confidence with Thessaloniki has grown and after two months I can find easily my way in and out the city. Simple things as the best coffee close to the office, the right bus to take for different places, alternatives for a walk are in my mind, as the initial ability to welcome and guide others. At first I was surprised by how strong cold coffee can be: now, with longer and warmer days, I've learnt how to drink it. Extremely slowly, but continuously. It can save your life! I am also improving fast with the Greek language. I am really proud of my simple sentences and apparently, in this case also, the embarrassment is gone: now I want to speak better and better.

### **On arrival training: meeting new people and places**

Volunteering abroad is not just contributing by doing your task and meeting new cultures and people. Sometimes it can be a privilege! In June we had the amazing possibility to attend a 5 days training for EVS volunteers in Spetses, a charming island close to Athens. This initiative was focused on the nature and aims of our program. Its function was to give us information and to make us meet with other guys from all over Europe, who are volunteering in these months in Greece - as we are. I will remember forever the scent of the wild spices all around the island and the long hike we had to reach the top of the island. These training days were absolutely useful and inspiring. We made friends with other volunteers and earned lots of new connections around the country: a good motivation to travel during free time and discover places!



### **Starting my project and a new team**

This was the month of the true start of my personal project activities. After one or two months you can feel sufficiently good in a new environment, to give your personal point of view. To impact the reality around me I choose to facilitate theatre workshop with children, collaborating with a small team of volunteers. We are both internationals and native volunteers. It is my first time in the position of main responsible and coordinator of this kind of activity. That was in my fantasy, but I didn't expect to feel so comfortable in the situation. The team is working well. We established a nice atmosphere during meetings and workshops. Everyone is giving contribution both in planning and running the project. We have facilitated 3 workshops so far, and 5 are going to come. We want to work for empowerment, team-building, inter-culture and social freedom for both volunteers and kids. The participants are enjoying the activities a lot, even if there are challenges: for example, the program of a single workshop may vary quite heavily based on age and number of participants.

### **New experiences and workshops to come: how to get busy!**

Another strong experience I had this month was the educational intervention in the Roma Camp of Peraia. It is not easy to explain the sensation of entering a camp for the first time. For sure I realized that for the mental schemes of people who live in the center, these places can be hard to accept. I am really happy I had the possibility to play with the children, supporting the Mobile Unit and especially Alberto, who is implementing educational, theatrical and circus activities (very inspiring for me). These activities can be amazing *per se*, but I was illuminated by their coordination with protection policies and monitoring interventions. The next month I will be more and more busy: new workshops (English lessons with migrant adults and mindfulness meditation for social workers) are going to come! Stay tuned!



Φιλακία

Dario

(and the Lovely Arsis Volunteers Family)