

SCORDIA, SICILY, ITALY

PERIOD: 16 TO 23 APRIL 2023

HOSTING SCHOOL: L.I.S.S. ETTORE MAJORANA, SCORDIA, SICILY

Description of the activity. Describe the content, methodology and the results of this activity.

- **Who were the participants in the activity (including local participants)?**
- **How was this activity related to or integrated with the normal activities?**

Participants: 15-16 years old, mixed boys and girls (24 and 21 from Scordia and Aguilar de Campoo, respectively), 2 Spanish teachers and various Italian. All the activities at school were related to Charles V and his visits to both countries (Italy and Spain). The cultural activities might be considered similar to a typical school trip.

The week spent in Scordia by Spanish students included activities at school and cultural visits. The methodology was for students from both schools to interact as much as possible and to reflect their knowledge on Charles V. The results were very positive as students worked well together, in pairs and teams, and gained an insight into the above-mentioned king whom they knew little about. Students were encouraged to consider how they might improve the activities for future participants. A very positive attitude was noted among students.

ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED OUTSIDE THE HOSTING SCHOOL

- A visit to the Italian Ministry of Agriculture's orange research center in the town of Palazzelli, as this crop is emblematic not only of the Catania region, but of the whole of Sicily, and it is a major local economic activity.
- A visit to the towns of Augusta and Syracuse. In the former, the students were able to see the Spanish heritage in the form of the remains of the fortress that protected the city, and in particular, its main gate, where the Royal coat of arms of the Spanish crown still survives. After that, we continued our trip to Syracuse, where in the morning we visited the area corresponding to the island of Ortigia, where monumental elements such as the temple of Apollo, the Cathedral or the Arethusa fountain are located, without forgetting to admire its excellently well preserved old town. In the afternoon, after lunch in a local restaurant where we tasted a typical Sicilian menu, we visited the archaeological ruins of the Neapolis, with the Laotomia and the Greek Theater as points of major interest.
- A visit to the nearby town of Militello, of great heritage value for its Sicilian Baroque style buildings and of great interest for our project because of its special connection with one of the nieces of Charles V, Dona Juana of Austria, having resided in the town due to her marriage to Prince Branciforte, a local nobleman. To this end we visited the sanctuary church of Our Lady of the Star, the Church of St. Nicholas, the Diocesan Museum and the former palace of Dona Juana, which is now the seat of the local town hall.

- A visit to Etna volcano. Thanks to Tizziana, the teacher in charge of the visit, they all learned many aspects related to Etna, such as the importance of the lava soil for the cultivation of the pistachio tree, so famous in Sicily, more specifically in Bronte. In the afternoon, after a lunch in a local restaurant where a typical Sicilian menu was tasted (pasta with pistachio sauce and cannoli for dessert), a visit to Taormina and its beautiful Greek theater from which both Etna and the Mediterranean Sea could be seen.
- A visit to both cities Randazzo and Catania. The former is a town where Charles V stayed in 1534. There, two tour guides introduced us to its beautiful medieval streets, its churches (St. Mary's, St. Nicholas' and St. Martin's) and the actual building from whose window Charles V waved. After a lunch in a local restaurant where a typical Sicilian menu was tasted, the visit to Catania took place: the Gate of Charles V, which leads directly to Piazza Pardo (home of the "Pescheria") and the Cathedral of St. Agatha.
- The Spanish students said goodbye to their Italian classmates and their families in the same place where they had been welcomed at the beginning of the adventure: at the doors of their school.

ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED INSIDE THE SCHOOL PREMISES

- Welcome ceremony for the Spanish students by the headmistress of Ettore Majorana High school, the project coordinators and the educational responsible for the area.
- A lecture on the traces of Charles V in Sicily by Professor Amalia Monica Pintaldi.
- The students worked on an activity related to the recreation of a Charles V identity document with a teacher from the Plastic Arts Department to later prepare a radio interview with the Spanish monarch about his visit to the island.
- An Italian language activity was carried out by the teacher Maria Giovanna Elena Disma from the Spanish Department.
- A group of Italian students from the school, who were carrying out an activity unrelated to the project, interviewed some of the Spanish students about their perception of Europe and the nature and characteristics of their feeling of belonging to the European Union as young citizens.
- Spanish and Italian students worked on assignments within this project in small mixed groups. Evaluation took place.

How did the participation in this activity benefit the involved participants?

Participation in the activities was clearly beneficial to the students as they improved their understanding of cultural differences between the two countries. While there

were clearly cultural differences, the two countries had a lot more in common than differences. The teamwork and communication skills employed during all the activities were good to see. Indeed, a number of meaningful suggestions were made by students in the feedback session at the end of the week.

The Italian host families warmly welcomed their young guests and generously dedicated their time and resources to them throughout the stay. Good relationships have been established and this is undoubtedly the best silver lining.