

# Horten Natursenter; a place to teach and learn outside.

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Aylin, Matthew, the Spanish group and myself have spent two weeks in this site, surrounded by a forest, an enormous lake and owning an observatory to look at the stars.

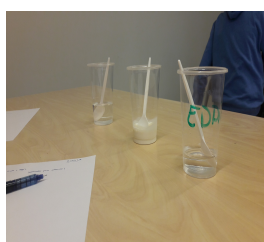
The very first day (the previously Wednesday) we created our “medal”, which was made with a piece of wood, cut by ourselves, and later decorated with our names.

We also met Andreas, Hege and Gunn, the headmaster and the teachers of the center. They showed us the main building, where there was the entrance to put the shoes off; at the right there was the *classroom*, with picnic tables and a screen to show diapositives and theoric while acts at the same time as a laboratory. In front of the first door are the offices, more tables and the kitchen. Behind it there is another room to storage some material, such as pencils, knives, axes...

They also have garages where you can find wood for making the fires, swimsuits and equipment to go canoeing, guns for shooting and all types of tools.

## **Monday, 16/04/2018**

Our first day! We arrived and Hege told us the plans: a group of teenagers were going to stay, knowing how latex and its components work; while a group of children would be outside, learning about the states of nature (solid, liquid and gas).



Because it was our first day, I stayed inside doing the experiment. It was fascinating how just with latex, vinegar and water we could make a little jumping ball.

After that I went outside with the little ones: they started making bubbles with soap and water taken from the river. It remembers me the first time I saw someone doing it with their own hands. I was still in the school and I tough it was magic. Of course we were doing bubbles at least as big as our heads.



The last experiment was with ice and salt. The teacher was explaining that when you put a rope in the ice with the salt, it can be “catch”. Later, the salt will melt the ice, so the temperature between staying just ice and ice+salt does that the temperature raises.

## **Tuesday, 17/04/2018**

The day started raining. No so much, but enough to make you a bit uncomfortable under it, so I felt blue.

As yesterday, a group of teenegears came and were looking at the screen, with all the theory about plants. It was in Norwegian so I didn’t understand so much, and in fact I wasn’t very interested in it, so, after the speaking, I went out with an axe and I started cutting trees with some classmates because we needed wood for other days.



After that, we had lunch inside together. The people that stayed inside were dissecting plants and using the microscope to see the cells. I did it last year in my university and it was fascinating, so I hope they had fun!

Last hour we went out and two girls came to ask us the meaning of “Despacito”, so we told them and started a conversation. It was so nice talking with them and asking question about their school and themselves. They were fantastic girls and I truly know that my friends enjoyed it too. Even one of them (ajumajumMatthewajumajum) had like an army of 12 year-old children.

I would love to visit them at their school and say hi again.

## **Wednesday, 18/04/2018**

Contrary to yesterday, the sky is blue, the lake is still frozen and the sun has come to say hello. Today the students are from Bakkenteigen and they are going to recollect plankton and study it.

For us the story is different: Matthew, Joan and Aylin have been putting the canoeing stuff into the water so they can use it in the next few days.



The Spanish girls have been sweeping the leaves and stones of the picnic area. The teachers said that is because they are going to cut the grass but... there is no grass right now... so maybe is for the future, and they just have the job done. I have the feeling of being used as a tool, but the girls and I were playing music and dancing while working, so it wasn't *that* bad.

It was exhausting and the brooms were a bit broken but it could have been worst. For example, we could have been picking rubbish, breaking our backs. Even in bad times you must smile and think in a positive, optimistic way.

Moreover, Andreas has told us to think about ideas because tomorrow we are going to do the class. I proposed to make a recycling bingo and everybody have agreed. I love when they listen to me and understand what I am saying.

The best part, and celebrating that everybody leaves earlier on Wednesday, has been doing the waffles. We found enormous worms on the flour but we could take them. Seriously, they were huge! And the waffles delicious, we have the best cooks: Alicia and Irene!



#### **Thursday, 19/04/2018**

As they told us yesterday, we made a class for the children. The first part was doing the bingo, so we divided the class into 8 groups and they should pick everything on the list and all they could find on the forest.

The second part was supposed to be weighing all the garbage and dividing into the different types

of containers to recycle. In this way they learned how to recycle. Because of the time they just see the weigh and started eating.

After that they started playing and searching for worms. Our planification was literally into the bin: we had created games to know how much time it takes to degrade trash like plastic bottles, cigarettes, gums... but we couldn't do it. It was frustrating.



However, I continued trying to have fun. I saw a girl that was alone and even if I don't know Norwegian, I told her in English why she wasn't searching anything. As I said, my Norwegian is the same as my Russian: 0; so her answer was like "okay :)". I proposed her going together and she accepted. She understood most of the things I was saying, and if not, I tried to express it with my body, pointing out or making faces. I am not so much into bugs but it was awesome encountering eggs, spiders and worms of 21 cm.

Definitely, it was a divided day: on the one hand I felt bad because nothing was going as we planned but it is common when teaching: the unforeseen occur and we can do nothing; on the other hand, I spent time with kids and that is very grateful because is my future job.

### **Friday, 20/04/2018**

Last day of the week! We met Andreas at the forest next to Horten and, doing the same as yesterday, we made a bingo about the spring. The only bad thing was that it wasn't sunny, so the children, around 6 years, couldn't find the points of the list.



However, Andrea took a huge snail while walking through the forest and the kids were flipping because of this. We didn't do some many more things: there was a boy of 18 years that was doing his practises at the school so we started talking and later we were playing with the little ones.

We also made some dancing songs in Norwegian to call the Sun and the spring and after running with them, we made our own typical valencian song about it. It was so cute!



## **Monday, 23/04/2018**

Today we had a group of students around our age (more or less) from Bakkenteigen. It was raining and windy, I was cold and I felt not very well because of my period. We did not make any fire because it was done when we arrived, so I entered into the building and sit with a paper, just in case I needed to take notes.

I did literally nothing; just two drawings. The class was inside (where we were), in Norwegian, we were not introduced and in any moment I felt like being part of the class.

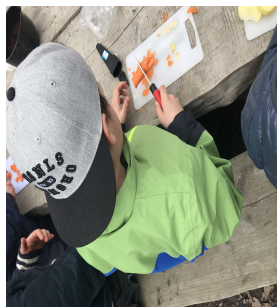
I felt that being there was useless and I just wanted to go home and rest.

## **Tuesday, 24/04/2018**

This morning has been very busy.

It was cloudy and when we arrived there I made a glass of hot milk and I went outside to help preparing things. I started a fire while a group of children (around 6-7 years) came.

At the first sight it was an easy activity: cutting vegetables for making a soup. Of course it is easy for us. For most of them was a bit hard. They didn't know how to use the knife and where literally killing the food. So we were helping, saying how to grab the tool and how big they had to do it.



After that we started with the soup. We made the vegetables more little because it was not going to be done with the size they had in that time. I have to say that even with the jokes, it was delicious. I repeat once and once. Perfection seems like that soup.



After being a waiter I tried sharpening sticks for the sausages and well, I tried my best. I made just one and it wasn't even sharp. But I had fun, in fact I love having a knife and doing decoration!

My last thing today was going into the canoe with Matthew, Andrea and Clarissa. We got stuck in the other part of the lake and we saw a snake, but we could handle and we get back to the center.



### **Wednesday, 25/04/18**

I didn't go because I had an appointment. I talked with the teachers the first day and they said it was okay.

However, I talked with my classmates and they said that they were doing nothing: just staying a bit in the canoes and later they cooked waffles.

### **Thursday, 26/04/18**

I went there with less than five hours of sleeping when a group of children came to know more about the spring and how plants grown.

My day consisted in showing how to inside a seed in a glass full of earth and writing the variety's flower name.

Obviously I made my own: Dea Dia (Blomsterert) and Nepit/Annona (Ringblomst). I love naming my plants and, even I don't think is true, I like thinking that talking with them and singing made them to grow faster. As I said, I don't believe in this but it makes me happier.



(They are growing really fast. You can see it [here](#))

Later we came inside with all of the plants and we filled them with water. We ate, we waited until the hour: talking, throwing water to the others, laughing... and we went home.

### **Friday, 27/05/18**

Our last day! It was as bussy as other days: we had a big amount of children divided in two groups, they were going to know more about the heart and the lungs: one of them was with their teachers, learning how to take their pulse, while the other was in the hill, making an exercise like if they were in the army.



They had to run with two bottles of water twice, going down and up, later they took a rifle and shoot to some ballons that they had previously blew. After shooting, they should jump three times and relax.

After doing it twice, they were shooting without running. When they finished I had the opportunity to try. I didn't shoot any but when I was 10 my parents gifted one rifle because of my birthday I used to do it. The sensation of measuring your aim is always fun: you shoot everything or nothing, there is no between!



When all of us finished the lunch we made a gymkana with the kids. They should find every spot of a list that we were giving to them related to the social security, such as the phone numbers of the police, firefighters, ambulances... or how to do first aids, parts of the heart... It was a healthful competition! While waiting for the other group, that were canoeing, we played hide and seek.



Last thing of everything, eating pizza and saying goodbye to our teachers. It was sad because I had lot of fun, but I'm pretty sure that I want to come back again to see them and pass one night in the observatory before I came back to Spain.

## Conclusion

To sum up, I like being in this kind of school, I had lot of fun most of the days, maybe because of my way of being and that I love enjoying doing new things and remembering activities that I've done when I was little, but I don't think this kind of center is as useful as being in a real school for my teaching formation. Maybe spending a week here would be fantastic, and the other week in a formal school.

I can't bring to Spain activities that I've done here; I can't say to the parents that in the nature their children are going to use knives to cut wood or that they are going to make their own fire, much less I can say that they are going to take a gun and shoot.

This things are impossible to do in my country, our culture is different and it is a bit useless because we don't go as often as here to the forest, we don't do barbeques or bonfires outside -in fact they are

forbidden.

But I can try to import ideas made outside the class, even if it is not real “outdoor”. For me, being outdoor is staying outside the classroom, even if it is in the corridor or the playground. Our children and us, as students, spend more time in a chair, locked in four walls with tiny windows named class, than in other part of the building.

The only thing I regret, apart of the previously said, is that we weren't really into the class because of the language, but at the same time I understand that is difficult to being translating everything all the time. Instead of being a teacher or a teachers' helper I felt just like an intern.

Refering to the curriculum, I have the opportunity to see that except of nature and its relation with science (biology and chemistry), there is no more things related to it. Subjects such as music, arts or languages are not on it. On the other hand, I think that developing skills or doing exercise like canoeing and incentivize their curiosity are things that are not on a formal paper but that are also necessary to grow as a person, so, even without saying literally that they are learning, they **are** learning.