

# **„Global learning for mind and heart” Jaunpils 8.05.-12.05.2017.**

## **The first day was a hard day, but very interesting, well-organized and unforgettable**

Today we started already at 8:50 in the morning. We teachers had our breakfast at 7.30pm and the bus was waiting for us to drive us to school. There the principal and all teachers waited. It started with a magnificent show, with many talented young dancers. We already knew a couple of them from the meeting in Poland, where they had danced for us. It was amazing. Then we were welcomed by the school's principal and received a bag of presents, including a nice t-shirt designed for this occasion.

Then we went to different activities and made sweets and much more, together with school students, all of whom were very nice and spoke very good english. Then we all came to the gym where we watched a lesson that Andres held with his talented students. Then Irena appeared with a group of dancers and held a hard but very nice workout with all guests, both teachers and students. It was exhausting, but we all became excited and happy after that.

It was nice to have some rest after the workout, with food and drink, but we had to hurry to the next workout, immediately after the meal. Then all groups presented their countries, cities and schools. The students were incredibly talented and held interesting and well-planned presentations. Then the students went with their hosts and the teachers stopped a stud for a brief discussion of their impressions and experiences of Erasmus +.

Then we all walked together to the city's castle, where we played a medieval roleplay. We were received by City Mayor Ligita Gintere and we shared our presents and received gifts from her, who also invited us to a very beautiful table full of local delights. Finally we were invited to a very good medieval dinner.

## **Erasmus+ in Jaunpils, Day 2**

What a day it was today! The 9th of May began colder than we had expected. Once in the bus we drove to Kandava, in german Kandau, that is an old town in Latvia. As a settlement, it is first mentioned in 1230 in a peace treaty between the residents of Riga and the residents of the Abava valley in Courland. In Kandava we visited a military castle built around 1257 and gradually dismantled over the years. We were at the top of the hill and had a look to foundations in a town park. We walked a long walk through the old city streets and visited Kandavas DEJU skola, askol for dance. There we watched a fantastic dance show perfectly directed and performed with youngsters. After that we went to the bus for further travel to Sabile known for the Wine Hill, the town symbol and has also been included in the Guinness World Record Book as the most northerly vineyard in the world. While we were there it started snowing, the 9th of May! Sabile is almost as old as Kandava, and here there was also a castle from the 13th century. It was snowing so we instantly went home to an artist and female craftsman who made and sold typical Latvian craft products, especially textiles.

Near of the wine yard is a small and strange garden filled with hundreds of pale straw dolls. All the dolls look rather similar in appearance and the garden has over 200 dolls

with more appearing each year. Most of the dolls are set about different everyday situations like cooking a meal, cutting down a tree, or even walking up to altar. The dolls are all the creation of one woman. We took many pictures there even though it was snowing all the time. Then we went to Kurzeme, after the inhabitants. In ancient times the Curonians, a pagan tribe, which inhabited Courland. The Brethren of the Sword, a German military order, subdued the Curonians and converted them to Christianity in the first quarter of the 13th century. In 1237 the area passed into the rule of the Teutonic Knights owing to the amalgamation of this order with that of the Brethren of the Sword. We went there to see The Venta waterfall (Ventas rumba) which is the widest waterfall in Europe. This 249 meter wide naturally formed waterfall is associated with a number of legends and historic events. We visited also the old brick bridge. The biggest bridge made of bricks in the world? All this is to be found in the town of Kuldīga, in German Goldingen, a town called the pearl of Kurzeme, there the small River Alekšupīte runs through Kuldīga old town, along the walls of the houses. The Old Town around the small river itself is unique: it is the only remaining 17th–18th-century ensemble of this kind in the Baltic states and walking along its old streets is like moving to ancient times.

The last place we visited was Smārde, a school and a place for rituals of Latvian wisdom and the art of Latvian folk dance. dinner in ancient Latvian style. We had the opportunity to take part in a ring dance and then we had dinner there, then we went home to Jaunpils.

## **Erasmus + meeting in Jaunpils, day 3**

It started with a bus ride of about an hour. It was cold, very cold for the season, but the sunshine. From Tukums, we first went to Jūrmala, which is a city in Latvia, about 25 kilometers west of Riga. Jūrmala is a resort town stretching 32 km and sandwiched between the Gulf of Riga and the Lielupe River. It has a 33 km stretch of white sand beach, and a population of 57 000, making it the fifth largest city in Latvia. Mens Lettland var en del af Sovjetunionen, Jūrma was a favorite holiday-resort and tourist destination for high-level Communist Party officials, as Leonid Brezhnev and Nikita Khrushchev. You can see luxury villas everywhere and a modern pedestrian street, which runs through the center, is full of restaurants and souvenir shops. Jūrmalas reputation as a spa destination began in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when wealthy landowners began the tradition of relaxing at the seaside,

But it was very cold, despite the sunshine. The snow lay on the frescoes and on the roofs of the cars. The white, beautiful beach was deserted, except on some walkers who defied the cool wind. Without a doubt, Jūrmala is a very beautiful city, but we all longed for Riga.

Suddenly we arrived at the capital. We went out of the bus in the middle of the city. Valentine and the colleague in history, whose name I forgot, told us about Riga's history and showed us around in all historical places. We saw the president's residence, the school ministry, the stock exchange and much more. Most authorities had offices in nice old houses, and while we were talking about this, some street musicians began to play the European anthem,

One feature of the Riga visit which fitted perfectly into the project was to visit the Opera House. The Opera House in the Old Town is one of Riga's most beautiful houses. The

Opera House was one of the first houses that were renovated in the beginning of the 1990s after the Soviet okupation. Renovation was completed in 1995.

Then we went to Jelgava City, which is located on the right bank of the Lielupe River, is famous for its beautiful baroque castle. The castle was built in 1738 after the architect F B Rastrelli's drawings, and is the largest baroque castle in the Baltic Sea, with an area of 2.2 hectares. It was former home of the Duke of Zemgale and 30 people of the family are buried in the castle, so the students in Latvia's Agricultural University share premises with thirty dead people, Valentine said.

Today's highlight was when we visited the Culture House in Jeslava and saw hundreds of young people from three to seventeen years dancing together. We had the opportunity to attend their large rehearsal before the set of a ballet show.

## **Erasmus + meeting in Jaunpils, fourth day**

For teachers, this day was a hard day of planning and administration ahead of the project. All the coordinators gathered in the office of the principal while the students and the rest of the teachers worked with artistic production. After lunch, we repeated for the big final show in which we all should participate acting and dancing.

After the rehearsal at the castle, we all went together for a long walk, which ended in the woods. There a group of teachers awaited us with many planned activities, which we did not know about. It started with a warming where we chased each other and collected as many "tails" we could. We were really heated! Then we got into the school divided into groups for a long orientation with a map in our hands, where different controls were highlighted. Once we've found the controls, we need to do some exercises, individually and in groups. Some group came first and some group came a little later, but everyone was happy and sweaty. Meanwhile, the sport teachers had made fires and offered us soup, sausages and fries. A hot cup of tea strengthened us before the big end of the day, collective dance. The powers of heaven were gracious to us so the weather was perfect for these activities, and the forest became a great scene for all this. One day in Jaunpils, none of us will ever forget.

## **Last day in Jaunpils, May 12th – The Big Show!**

So finally the last day came. A sunny but cold day brought us to a moss where we went on foot. On wooden planks we walked in a long row, like pearls in a necklace. Ķemeri Moorland (Lielā Ķemeru tīrelis) is special for its great biological diversity, the unique Kemeru Bog, mineral waters and therapeutic mud found here. A boardwalk took us to the world of moss, small pine trees, deep pools, tiny dark lakes, and the smell of wild rosemary. They told us not to leave the boardwalk since the ground is extremely swampy, you can sink and disappear, so they told us. We climb to an observation platform that offered a magnificent view of the bog from above. The sunshine and the fresh air made us feel easy and happy. Then we went to the beach, a beautiful white sandy beach, in which many (well, some) of us did not manage to stay away from the water.

After lunch at school, the last rehearsal began. We were to participate in the school concert. The students had been training for months and we, all groups from the different countries, would perform our presentations. Some of us had dance, group dance and solo dance; some had a song in different tones, some had made a movie. Presentations fit into a theater play and we behaved like kings princesses, giants and much more. The castle's large hall was full of students, teachers and parents. When the show started,

everything worked perfectly. With the applause rising in our heads, we walked back to school for a small celebration, which was also a farewell party. With the applause rising in our heads, we walked back to school for a small celebration, which was also a farewell party. Bye Jaunpils, we will not forget this week. See you soon.

Jose - Martin Martinez y Rique