

go4peace camp in Slovenia

Vipavski Križ, 25. 7.–31. 7. 2022

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We started our camp on Monday afternoon in Vipavski Križ monastery. Niko from Germany, Mariaklelia from Albania, Matej, Mihaela and Urša from Slovenia came from different places and situations. Niko already arrived on Friday evening, Mariaklelia on Sunday morning and Urša on Monday afternoon, right after her job. Me and Matej prepared the camp together with go4peace organizers and we hosted two guests from abroad before and after the camp. We started as a very small group, but during the camp also another 5 young people joined us. Lenart and Lidija from Tuesday afternoon to Saturday and Valentina from Wednesday evening to Sunday. Lidija invited two of her friends: Jelka, who was with us on Thursday and Anita, who helped with the roof-workshop on Friday. At the beginning of the camp I was

concerned about our work, because we were so small group, one participant just cancelled and I didn't know how to divide work among four people. Matej was responsible for food, travels and other activities, so he couldn't join the workshops. We still expected Lenart and close to the end of the camp Valentina, but first we were planning to have three workshops during the week. So, I asked my friend Lidija for help. She just recovered after sickness, but she came and found even two more friends that were willing to join us. We still cancelled one workshop (food delivery) and at our first meeting we decided that me and Mariaklelia will lead the programme for kids under the auspices of Red cross in Ajdovščina, so Niko and Urša do the painting workshop in house Mallorca, that is house for homeless people.



First evening we played Bingo and we really enjoyed our common time. Matej and Niko prepared a list of facts that we had to choose 5 facts that were true for us. Niko was drawing mixed facts from a hat and we tried to collect all our chosen facts. The first one won and this person was – Mariaklelia!



The next day we started with breakfast and after it we watched video for morning impulse (the motto was Bring light). We read the daily part of Holy Bible and we talked about good and evil. It is hard to hear how some people won't enter the kingdom of Heaven. But we agreed that a heart of a person must be twisted to seek the evil. We decline evil, even if we want to help person, who commits it – we can always try to see good in people, but we never see good in evil. We want to bring light. Niko shared his opinion that sometimes we exaggerate with showing only happiness and joy, even if we don't feel it sometimes. We can also share our sorrows and bring light to a person who needs closeness and don't feel comfortable around cheerful people. So, we can bring always light just the way we are.

First day of workshops (Tuesday)

Tuesday was interesting and a little bit chaotic. Mihaela's car had flat battery and motor didn't want to start. So we were pushing it from the courtyard and tried to run it. A neighbour saw us and proposed that he help with his car. First we wanted to try to push a little bit more and he helped us pushing it, but the road was slippery because of the rain and the slope was too steep. Then neighbour put his car next to our car and he filled the battery. We finally departed to Ajdovščina to Red Cross place. When we came we were very nicely welcomed and we got some sweets that kids prepared for us previous day. You can see more about the kids programme in YouTube video that kids recorded on their own. ([Click on the link.](#))

Me and Mariaklelia had some difficult moments with kids, because they had to help with the preparation for the lunch and they had to wash the dishes. We didn't know the system from the previous day and I gave some wrong instructions. Until we found out how it is supposed to be, we needed some time and energy and it was chaotic. We were there with 14 kids, three of them were Ukrainian. There was also a mother of one of the Ukrainian girls and a voluntary translator Nataša.

Almost every day we all gathered at the Red Cross place and we ate together lunch, that was delivered from a senior house. It was very delicious and healthy, but still we had to encourage kids to eat all what they got. Kids had to move and set the tables, prepare them for the lunch and bring the dishes to tables. After lunch they had to take away everything and wash the dishes. That was the most difficult part of kids programme every day and it took at least two hours to complete it. Me and Mariaklelia took responsibility for the programme from 10 o'clock to 4 pm. Mariaklelia had also some difficulties concerning language, but soon some kids communicated with her a lot. They tried to use all their knowledge of English language and they used also translators on their phones. We prepared also a treasure hunt in a park. Kids really liked it. They had to find all hidden objects and then they got the big treasure – a bag, full of lollipops. The best group was a group of Ukrainian girls. They found almost all treasures and answered the riddles. The game was a good exercise for cooperating, which was difficult for some kids at some moments.



Second day of workshops (Wednesday)

Wednesday started differently, we also started the day earlier. One group of participants went to work to a house with burnt roof and they departed already at 8 o'clock. They were removing damaged roof and came back very dirty and black like chimney sweeps. There were also some people from other organisations and from homeless people's house. The situation was really bad – some walls began to crush and the owner of the house was not really conscious of what was happening. House was also very dirty, it had poor equipment and it was in a really bad condition.



After the lunch our tired workers left and went to the monastery, but me and Mariaklelia joined them around 5 pm. This day was much better and easier with kids, because we had a trip to ranch and kids rode horses. They were pretty tired and they were more calm and quiet when we came back. After the lunch we spent some time in a park and also did some hand craft. All kids wanted to stay there until 4 pm and they asked parents if they can come as late as possible the other days.



Late in the afternoon our go4peace group participated on Zoom sharing in a monastery. After the meeting we started to dance. We also learned a Slovenian dance and we danced late in the night. The motto for Wednesday was: *This moment – your chance!* We really had a chance – and a dance.



Third day of workshops (Thursday)

On Thursday Urša said goodbye and Jelka came to help us. The workshop in Mallorca house continued and part of participants went to paint walls there. They finished all their work and they were very happy at the end. They also succeeded to get one man from the house to help them. At the programme for kids we went to the swimming pool and later we had presentations of Albania and Germany. Children were asking many questions and they learned a lot about those countries.

It was nice that Niko stayed with us after lunch and he could present Germany. A mother of one Ukrainian girl was so encouraged by Niko and Mariaklelia, that she presented Ukraine the next day.

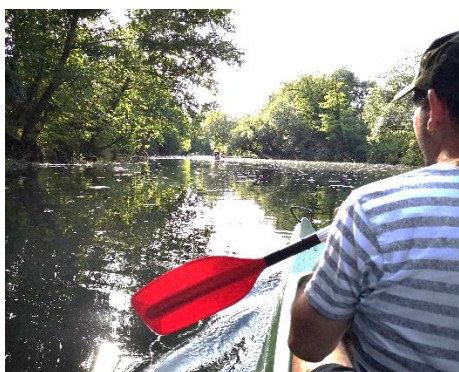


It On Thursday evening it was very cheerful and it ended with Valentina's arrival and "very special" Zoom meeting that we joined during our dinner, because we were a little bit late with it. But it turned out as a very opening moment, because we were relaxed and each one shared a little. New participants (first time on go4peace) really enjoyed it and felt very involved and welcomed. Later in the evening we visited an old library in monastery and we saw books that were older than 300 years.



Fourth day of workshops (Friday)

On Friday we started the day with a prayer before breakfast: "God, bless this day, full of surprises." There were really a lot of surprises. First we found out that there was no ride to the workshop location, because of a misunderstanding. First we planned this work only for Saturday (and we had everything arranged only for Saturday), but our team was ready to go there already on Friday, because they finished with painting. They decided to go to the place of burnt roof and it seemed that they arranged everything on their own. But at the Red Cross they didn't even know that they are even going there and they didn't prepare lunch for them on the location. It was a little bit chaotic, but we managed to do all the work and eat lunch together at Red Cross' place. In the afternoon we relaxed in canoes on Vipava river. We had a lot of fun, when Lenart hit a big fish with his paddle. Fish was sleeping in algae and when it woke up, it moved the boat. Of course, there was some screaming and laugh on the boat!



But surprises didn't end then yet. When we arrived to the parking place, Mihaela didn't find her keys for car. One group went back and checked all locations, where we had stops and we were looking for the keys. The motto for this day was: God is at work, discover it! The symbol for this day was a loupe and we almost needed it for the lost keys. Lenart said: "Until we don't look everywhere, they aren't lost." He really found them – at the very beginning of our travel, exactly where we departed with boats. We came back to the monastery very late and slept deeply until our last day of workshops.

The last day of workshops – Saturday

A polish group arrived previous evening and we saw them at the breakfast. It was a family of sister Anja, who was in Slovenia for some years. We greeted each other and me and Valentina, that stayed in a kitchen for cleaning, talked with them. We told them about go4peace and gave them small pencils with light and with polish text. They were so happy! We said that we want to bring light to the world and we want to give this light to them, too. Then we joined our group that went to the place of a poor man Ivica, his sister Katarina and their mom, who was recently in the senior house. The house was really in a bad condition. The roof was now almost completely removed, but the walls began to crush down at some spots. Matej's father (construction engineer) came to tell professional opinion and he gave some good advice. Renovation depended on good people and their voluntary work, so it was very good to get someone professional. One group was on the roof and the other was working in the garden. We finished work very fast and we had some more time to be together. Also some other volunteers were there and we sat around the table and talked, ate, sang some songs with guitar (also the song Together for peace). It was very pleasing to see our community gathered and how we were all connected through a real joy. "I am so happy that there will be changes," said Katarina gratefully.



After workshops

After the last workshop we were very tired. We rested for some hours and then we had a small picnic with two friars that we really connected with those days – friar Placid and friar Marjan. We enjoyed our time together and we had a final sharing about our experiences from our last workshop and from the whole camp. Each one told favourite motto and the most important experiences. We had to say goodbye to Lenart and also Lidija left after picnic, so the rest of us (Valentina, Mariaklelia, Niko, Matej and Mihaela) slept in the monastery for the last night and we woke up in a beautiful Sunday morning. We packed all our things and went to holy mass at 10 o'clock. After the mass we said goodbye to Valentina and there remained only a small group, that was together also before the camp. We said goodbye to friars and departed from the beautiful village Vipavski križ to Matej's place to have a lunch.



We also said goodbye to our friends on the Red cross. Workshop leaders got beautiful roses from kids.



Thanks to all participants of Slovenian group and to go4peace community for this joyful experience!