

# Bilateral Meeting

## Sciacca-Leeuwarden

14-18 October 2019

Monday

14th

The Dutch delegation arrived in Sciacca at 14:30. We were all very excited and happy to meet them. They arrived by bus at the thermal station. It was a nice and shiny day, as soon as they got off the bus they were impressed by the beautiful view facing the station. Our parents, who were excited to meet them as well, were ready to pick up their luggage and drove us home. After lunch the whole group met at the beachfront area called “Stazzone”, where we had a walk along the sea and played some games. Then we went to the “Bar Roma”, one of the most famous bars in Sciacca, popular for its “granita”, a typical Italian lemon ice, we also had a nice walk to the harbor where we took some photos. At the end of the day, we had dinner with our families, at home.



## Tuesday 15th

On Tuesday, we met at the “Classico” school at 8.30. We tried to entertain our guests with welcome games. The gym teacher took us to the outside court, he prepared a nice warm atmosphere with music and we had fun playing games and dancing. Later, our head teacher met us at the conference room, where she gave a warm welcoming speech to our special guests. Then we took turns showing a power point presentation about our country’s traditions, culture, history and monuments. Afterwards we had a short tour through the “Classico” school. Soon after, we went to the Art school, where we had a break with some typical homemade sweets made by our parents. We toured through the Art school and felt very proud to show the amazing art works it contains. We spent the rest of the morning decorating some tiles in the ceramic lab, where we had a workshop: an art teacher showed us how to decorate tiles with some Sicilian design styles. We had lunch altogether at a small restaurant near our school, where the Dutch could taste something of our Sicilian cuisine.





After lunch we went back to school where we had a work session. We were divided into small groups and each group had a small box containing some questions we exchanged in order to know each other better. The questions were about our hobbies, traditions, way we celebrate our main festivities, general cultural things, what we do on Sundays, when we get together with our families etc. After that we worked on matching profiles in order to form international groups for the students meeting in March. Before going home and having dinner with our parents, we had a guided tour uptown, in “S. Michele”, we visited some of our beautiful neighborhoods in that area.

## Wednesday 16th

The 3rd day was a very busy one. After breakfast we took the coach to the capital city, Palermo. On our arrival, there was a tour guide who explained the history of some monuments. There is a legend according to which who sees the eyes of the Gate sculptures we were looking at, will fall in love with an inhabitant of Palermo. We visited the Norman Palace, with its famous Paladine Chapel, we had a break in a former monastery that now works as a bakery. We visited the so called “Piazza Vergogna” that is the Square of shame because of its naked statues, the antique Town Hall, some famous churches in Palermo, in particular, the Cathedral of Palermo. We had lunch and tasted some typical Sicilian dishes. In the afternoon we had some free time, finally, we took the coach back home at 17:45. We had dinner with our families.



## Thursday 17th

The 4th day was the most intense, full of powerful emotions. After breakfast we went to school. At 9.30 we had a workshop with some refugees who live in our town. First they showed us a short video about their home town from where they had fled, they



were willing to tell us about their stories and to answer our questions. They come mostly from Nigeria and Egypt and crossed the Mediterranean sea by boat. We sat in a circle and asked them the some questions. We learned a lot about the terrible conditions they had to overcome and the reasons why they fled from their land. We felt so sad and most of us had tears in our eyes listening to the tragic stories. Our sadness was then mitigated by the story of Ismail, a refugee, who had fled from Ghana when he was a child to escape from religious persecution and violence, now he lives and works in Sciacca. He's fully integrated into our town and is very thankful to the people who have welcomed and helped him, so we decided to consider him as a message of hope.

For lunch our Dutch friends tried a typical Sicilian food "pane e panelle", we ate all together in a public garden and chilled out admiring the view. In the afternoon we visited the city center. We walked around the town streets and took some souvenir pictures. In the evening we met at the mother church in Sciacca, first we had a guide tour around it, then we participated to the celebration of the Catholic mass while our teacher translated the priest's sermon into English. The priest welcomed our group very warmly and wished to convey a message of peace through dialogue and prayer in one God, in order to build a relationship based upon mutual respect. Despite different religions and





cultures the common Christian matrix made us feel united spiritually in one family.

Afterwards we had dinner in a pizzeria, where also the refugees were invited and had dinner together with us, we were grateful for their presence.



## Friday 18th

We met at 7:45 at the thermal station, where the coach was parked and ready to leave.

After putting the bags on the bus and taking the last pictures, the hardest moment arrived when we had to say goodbye. Many hugs followed, letting go is so sad but suddenly as we were waving goodbye, we smiled realizing we'll see again in March, in the Netherlands!

