

Youth Exchange: Italy

13th to the 22nd of July 2016

My name is **Jola Brown**, I'm 18 years old and come from Wales. I recently had the amazing opportunity to take part in 'The William Theatre Youth Exchange' project this summer. The sending organisation for this project is LAW, Language Academy Wales. I heard about this opportunity through my school, from one of my teachers who thought it might interest me. I decided to apply as it sounded like a once in a lifetime opening.



The project took place over the 13th to the 22nd of July 2016 and was situated in the heart of Molfetta, a beautiful little town **on the South-East coast of Italy**. **Five different countries** took part in this project, involving the participation of **25 people**, with the addition of team leaders, staff and volunteers. **People from all over the world united to take part in this international project, coming from Russia, Italy, Spain, Slovakia and of course Wales.**

During the project we stayed at the Seminario Vescovile di Molfetta, the accommodation was stunning. It was very spacious and clean. The rooms were made up of 4 to 6 beds and were all equipped with separate bathrooms. The cafeteria, where we ate most of our meals, was located downstairs along with the meeting room and the auditorium. I was given a very warm



welcome from the other participants and given a tour of the building on arrival. We were given three meals every day; morning, lunch and dinner. Luckily there was also a delicious gelato shop right outside the accommodation, as well as plenty of shops and cafes. The food was always delicious and I really enjoyed eating out on certain occasions. For example, one evening we were taken to a **local Italian restaurant** and tried authentic Italian food and drink. It was really tasty and the atmosphere was great.

I didn't find one day boring, there was always something to do. I really enjoyed every activity and loved meeting new people from different backgrounds and cultures. Throughout the project there was a widespread of activities; from morning energizers to theatre shows. The very first activity we took part in was called 'the treasure hunt'. I really enjoyed working in teams while exploring Molfetta. Other activities that took place within the accommodation also involved **group work** as well as some theatre input. These included things like 'the blind game' which was all about trust, 'Non-verbal theatre' which involved groups working together to perform silent plays. Other activities also included grammelot, which in fact myself with the help of the other Welsh team members actually led and taught to everyone



else. On the other hand, **alternative activities helped me expand my knowledge on different countries and cultures such as ‘the intercultural evening’ and ‘the human library’.** The intercultural evening was an amazing experience that allowed me to try out foods from all the different countries, as well as learning more about their traditional practises. The human library took place in the nearby museum and consisted of us talking to the public about our own countries and cultures. I met loads of new people and discovered more about Molfetta. I believe all these activities have really helped me improve my confidence along with my theatre skills.

Other than these activities, there were lots of other interesting opportunities available throughout the project. For example, **we were given the chance to visit the local Museum as well as Molfetta’s boat and lifeguard station.** Also, during our free-time every day we could go shopping throughout Molfetta and even visit one of the many local beaches. One beach was actually only a five-minute walk away. **One day we had the amazing opportunity to watch a walking theatre, where actors performed different scenes from famous Shakespeare plays.** It was amazing how they moved around Molfetta and used the different landscapes. **I really enjoyed this experience and found it fascinating to watch.** Also, on the very last day of the project, which was probably my favourite, we were given the amazing opportunity to attend ‘Molfetta en Blanc’.



This event takes place in the centre of Molfetta, near the beach. There were live musicians playing classic Italian tunes but most importantly everything and everyone was white! The dress code, tables, chairs and accessories. It was such a beautiful sight and such an amazing memory that I will treasure forever.

This experience was not only an amazing opportunity to visit Italy but also to meet new people and make new friends. I have been able to develop my theatre skills and have definitely improved my confidence as a person, not only through communication but also through my piano playing and singing. This experience will be highly valuable to me in the future as it adds to my mobility experience which will be very useful for my future aspirations to work abroad. Additionally, I wish to join a theatre club at my new university come September, so I believe this experience will really benefit me in the long-run. I had such a lovely time and I would love to go again. I highly recommend this project to anyone who's up for an adventure.