

Report on the IUW Jena 2010

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The International University Week in Jena was a very interesting experience. We had the opportunity to make new contacts, visit Jena, exchange ideas and information about social work in different countries...

On Monday we were warmly welcomed at the Fachhochschule. First students and lecturers of the different countries and universities or high schools introduced themselves, their country or city. It became clear that some of the lectures couldn't make it to Jena because of the consequences of the ash cloud for the planes. This was unfortunate because some of the workshops had to be cancelled or someone else had to fill in for the responsible lecturer. But finally all the workshops went great so the consequences were very well handled.

In the afternoon the students had a cityrally. In this way they got to know the city and each other because they had to form groups with students from other schools and countries. For the lecturers there was some time to get to know each other and to go to the hotel.

In the evening there was a welcome party in the youth café "Treftpunkt". The students from Jena had made great food for all of us. The students regretted that the goal of the evening (getting to know each other) was not fully reached because the students were gathering in groups they were already familiar with. They didn't really meet new people.

On Tuesday we started the workshops. We had chosen the workshop "Victim support schemes". Because of the fact that Prof. Vankerckhoven was stuck in Tenerife, the students and Prof. Bloemen had to fill in the workshop. Thereby the focus of the workshop was not only on victims but also on the perpetrators. The students of Leuven first explained how social work in Belgium is organized. In the workshop participated students from Belgium and Germany, so we compared how social work, and more specifically the treatment of young delinquents is organized in both countries. This caused very interesting discussions. In the end of the day it was clear that you have to handle each client (delinquent) as an individual and search for the best way to handle with his or her deeds.

Furthermore we all agreed that you can't handle a young delinquent without paying attention to their environment (parents, friends, school...).

In the evening there was no special activity for the students so they gathered with a group and went to the Lobeda mountain. The lecturers were invited by Prof. Trenzcek for dinner in a typical East-German restaurant. It was a nice experience and we had a pleasant evening with the lecturers of the Fachhochschule.

On Wednesday three volunteers of the organization Drudel 11 came to talk about their program THO (Thuringian Training and Education Program). They work with youth delinquents who are convicted for right-wing extremist crimes. It was for us (Belgians) weird to hear that right-wing extremism is still such a problem in Germany. We were not aware of that.

On Wednesday evening there was a beach party planned but because of the bad weather it was replaced to the youth café. There, we had a barbecue and the students gathered around a bonfire. They got to know other students.

On Thursday we could visit the concentration camp Buchenwald and the city Weimar. The visit of the concentration camp was very impressive. The guides handled the topics in a very interesting and respectable way. Especially the walk to the concentration camp through the railway that was constructed by the prisoners gave a different view on the camp.

In the evening there was a farewell party. Lots of students however were tired or didn't feel like partying after visiting the concentration camp. But again, the students of Jena had prepared a lot of great food for us.

On Friday the results of the workshops were presented. It was nice that the different groups tried to handle this in a creative way, but on the other hand it was not always very informational. Maybe it was better to do this in a more "academical" way. It is also an important skill for students to present results and information in a clear and objective way.

Overall the international university week was a very interesting and pleasant experience. It was arranged well and we were well received.

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