

Eco Experience - our ESN Poland trip in October 2017

First-hand accounts by Sebastian Gruber and Nadine Fries

Sebastian:

Eco Experience is an ESN* project for everyone who loves to hike and to be in nature. This project also includes many funny tasks that you have to accomplish with a group.

The project is in Poland and offered by the Bednarska school. First when we arrived at the school we had to prepare our own dinner as a group to get used to it because they told us that we will have to do it the whole week. After that we spent the night at school. When we arrived at the lodge in the middle of the forest we got an introduction to everything, for example how to get water from the fountain or how to wash the dishes without running water. For me it was really funny to do that stuff with other people because you get to know everyone. One of my highlights in this week was the trip on Thursday with only a map and a compass. We had to get to the checkpoints marked on the map. Everything was allowed to get to the checkpoints - the only thing we were supposed to use was our English skills.

My group consisted of three girls and two boys - one Polish guy and three Dutch people and of course myself from Germany. :)

Nadine:

We walked for a couple of minutes until we arrived at a raised hide. One of our tasks was to pee at a raised hide. We proceeded to climb the hide and eat breakfast. We had forgotten to bring our knives, so we decided to use an insurance card to cut the bread into slices. We also used the card to spread Nutella onto the bread.

Afterwards we continued walking for two hours until we arrived at a place with three houses.

Another task was to bring a boiled egg from a chicken that we saw. Since there were chickens at one of those houses, we knocked at the door of the first house and when a lady opened said door we politely asked if we could have one egg. The lady replied with yes and then brought us ten eggs. Still at the door, I heard the lady's son speak a German word, so I asked in German if it was possible to get boiled eggs to which the lady replied that we may indeed have boiled eggs too. Furthermore, she also offered us tea and coffee, an offer that none of us was willing to refuse.

Then while we were sitting there with complete strangers and drinking coffee she even made us lunch which I think was incredible. I asked her why she was able to speak German and she answered that a few years ago she had a job in Germany in which she had to pick apples.

When we left, her son drove us to different task places until the time for goodbye came. At the time we bade farewell it was 6 pm already, so we had two hours left to get back home. On our way home, we encountered a river and we had to decide either to cross the river by swimming or to lose a lot of time by walking a safer path. We chose the direct approach and as a result, we had to walk through the dark for almost two hours in wet clothes.

When we finally arrived home we were very relieved that nothing worse had happened.

*ESN is the abbreviation of "European School Network" consisting of more than 20 schools from eleven different countries. The network organises group, project and 1:1 exchanges. The Carl-von-Ossietzky School has been a member of the network since 2009



making some experiments



washing dishes without running water



doing some research



a venomous snake



Preparing some lunch



walking through the forest