

Osnovna šola Franceta Prešerna Kranj

Our trip to Kranj in Slovenia started April 12. We went from Trondheim to Oslo by plane, and then from Oslo to Pula in Croatia. We stayed one night in Pula before we went by train to Ljubljana. The headmaster at Osnovna sola Franceta Preserna, Ales Zitnik, picked us up at the railwaystation. He drove us to Kranj, which is about 20 minutes from Ljubljana. Mr. Zitnik showed us the student dormitory, where we were going to stay. Afterwords he showed us the town before we went to a restaurant to eat.

Monday at eight o'clock we met the Mr. Zitnik in his office. We got a map of Kranj and brochures about Slovenia. He also had a representation about the Slovenian school system. The Slovenian school system is pretty simular to the Norwegian system, all though it has quite a few differences, too. The pupils start at school when they are six years old. Then the children have already been in pre-school education. It seems like the pre-school in Slovenia focus more on subjects than on playing, compared to the Norwegian pre-school, although this is just assumptions from our side. We spend one hour in an pre-school class, and that's the impression we got. At six years old, the children start the first cycle in the basic education. At nine years old they start the second cycle and at twelve they start the third cycle in the basic education. So the basic education is from age six to fifteen, in classes first to ninth grade. The structure of the basic education is very much the same as in Norway.

In the Norwegian school system we have classes from first to tenth grade, and the classes are organized by age through the whole basic education. In Slovenia this is a little different. In Slovenia the pupils are organized in in groups indepentent of their age. The school classrooms are also devided into different subjects. This is quite different from Norway, where each class has its own classroom and almost all the subjects are teached in the same room. We have own rooms for art and crafts, home economics and music. Some schools also have own rooms for biologi. When they reach a certain age, the pupils in Slovenia change classrooms depending on which subject they will have that lesson. If the lesson is maths, they will go to the maths room, if the lesson is geography, they will go to the geography room.

The teachers education is very different in Slovenia than it is in Norway. In Norway we study for four years and we can teach every subject from first to tenth grade. This is a big contrast compared to the Slovenian teacher education, where they study only one subject and also

teach only one subject if they are going to teach the fifth grade or higher. Another possibility is to teach all subjects from first to fourth grade.

We got to know a Slovenian student who was at his fourth year of the teacher education. He had practice on the same school as us, and he told us that in four years of study, he has had only three weeks of practice all together. In Norway we have seven weeks of practice the first year, the second year we have eight weeks, and the third year we have seven weeks of practice. This is a big difference in the education systems. The student we talked to thought that three weeks in four years was too little. He didn't know if he had chosen the right occupation before he got to try it, and then he had already studied for four years. Then it was a bit too late to change his mind. When we get to practice in school already the first year of the study, we can decide if we have chosen the right profession or not. We are very satisfied that we get to practice a lot.

Another thing that's very different from the Norwegian school, is all the meals. In Norway the pupils eat breakfast at home before they go to school, and they eat lunch at about 11.30 where they bring their own food. In Norway we mostly eat bread , with cheese or salami on it. It's called *matpakke*. We experienced that the Slovenian school has a quite different system. Most of the kids eat breakfast at home, but some of them get breakfast in the school. (Which the kids parents have to pay for). At 09.40 the kids have brunch and eat a snack. Later they eat lunch, which is warm soup and a warm meal. The food is really good, and we think that it is a good thing that the kids have common meals at the school. When you eat only bread from first to tenth grade, like we do in Norway, there is a risk of getting tired of bread. That's why variation can be a good thing

In Norway we have a lot of focus on disiplin and respect towards the teachers, but one can often experience that there's a big lack of respect among the pupils. The teacher has often trouble getting the pupils to listen and pay attention. This is one of the main challenges in norwegian schools. We are impressed with the autorithy the teachers have in Slovenia. When the head master walkes in to a class room everyone automaticly raise. Normally the pupils listen to the teacher, and are much calmer then in Norway. There is another way to treat and respect authorities then we are used to. We are very inspired with this behaviour, and will try to do the same when we become teachers. This is a good quality for the Slovenian school

system. It's difficult to say anything about why this is, to a certain degree, missing in norwegian schools, but one factor can be how the parents raise their children nowadays.

We participated in a gym lesson in the fourth grade, and were amazed about the children, both because of their respect for the teacher and because of the sound level.. Everyone kept their voice down, and did exactly what they were told. They warmed up by themselves and they obviously had a routine in the gym. This was very different from the norwegian gym lessons where everyone is running around shouting with no respect for the teacher. Many norwegian children believe that the gym is a place to act crazy. We feel that the Slovenian children behave less outgoing. Only one of the children we've met, had the diagnose ADHD. In Norway this has become a »popular« term, which is used in too many cases. This is not a good development because those who are diagnosed get strong medicine.

Another thing that was different from Norway, was that the boys and girls were separated in both gym and swimming. In the gym, the girls had activities on one side of the gym and the boys on the other. The girls had a female teacher and had quite different activities than the boys, among other things jumping heights. The boys had a male teacher and they had a more masculine activity, basketball. None of the activities were done together. This was a difference from the norwegian gym lessons, where all the pupils have the activities together. We also observed swimming lessons, and they had a similar system there. Every other Monday boys and girls had swimming separately. We got an impression that the pupils are very fit. The teachers were not in the pool with the children, which is a bit unusual compared to norwegian swimming lessons. The system with separate sex in gym and swimming, is also an unusual thing for us. But we got an understanding that this wasn't a common thing for slovenian schools, but were done in Osnovna sola Franceta Preserna because of something that had happened between a teacher and some pupils earlier.

In Norway the teachers have their own desk at the school. The norwegian teachers have to stay at school from eight o'clock to half past three. After the pupils go home, the teachers sit by their desks and prepare the next lessons. In Slovenia, they didn't have their own desks, so the teachers went home when they had finished their lessons. The headmaster said it was both ups and downs with this system, because the teachers had to do all the work at home. He ment that it could be difficult to separate work hours and sparetime hours.

We stayed at a students dormitory during our trip. We lived in the international part of the building, among other students from all over the world. For example Brazil, Armenia, Turkey, China and USA. They made a lot of noise in the evening, but except from that it was ok. We got to know som very nice people. One of them was the Armenian boy Vahan, who worked at the school. One afternoon we teached a english private lesson for five children, and Vahan showed them a power point presentation about Armenia. This was very interesting also for us. We also had a presentation of Norway.

In the weekend we went on a trip with two of the english teachers, the student who had practice, Vahan and the janitor at the school. We drove to the Postojna cave and spent a few hours there. We went in to the cave, which is the largest known cave system in Slovenia. We watched the diversity of shapes, expansive cave areas, stalactite and stalagmite formations and water characteristics. We also saw the »human fish«, which is the biggest reptile that live in the cave. The fish was white and had four legs. It was really ugly. Afterwords we drove to the coast of Slovenia, to a town called Piran. This was a very beautiful town, and the weather was really nice! We had sun all day. We went for a walk in the town, and it was some kind of festival. There were many people in the center, and we got to taste different Slovenian food. After a while we went to a restaurant to eat. We sat in the sun and had a great time. In the evening we drove to a vine farm in a small village. We went to the basement where it was a lot of barrels with wine, and we poured wine directly from the barrels. We tasted vine and sang slovenian and norwegian drinking songs. It was a lot of fun, and a really nice trip.

The Thursday before we left we went to Bled, which is a popular place to go for tourists. In Bled there is an island with a church on it, and it looks very idyllic. We ate a cream cake called the »Bled cake« and it was really good.

We went to Ljubljana two times during our stay in Slovenia. The first time we we went together with a slovenian lady, who knew the headmaster at our school. She had studyed in Norway for a while and talked a little norwegian, so she wanted to meet us. She was really nice and showed us the attractions in the town. Ljubljana was a beautiful town, so we went there once more by bus.

Every day at eight o'clock we followed one of the teachers into one of the classes. In some classes we had to introduse our selves and tell them where we came from. In other classes we sat down right away without a presentation of our selves. Some classes where very curious

and wanted to know about us and our country. This was mostly in the lower classes, the older pupils were more reserved, probably because of the age. We felt welcome in every class, and we also feel that we were included mostly everywhere. Some teachers used the whole lesson talking to us, which was a great experience. Both we and the pupils got to practice the English language. Some of the usual questions we got were how old we were, if we had any pets, our favourite colour, and if we liked Slovenia. Some of the older kids refused to speak English, so the conversation was a little amputated. We got to observe how the teachers taught and their didactics and pedagogics. This was really interesting and we learned a lot. If we should mention one negative aspect about it, it must be that the lessons mostly were in Slovenian language, and that we didn't understand much. But except from that, it was very educational and informative.

The last day we were told to have a presentation of Norway in five different classes. They were fifth graders, and we were very excited about this presentation. Before we went to Slovenia we had made a power point presentation about Norway. We used this in all of the classes, and we think the pupils liked it. Among other things, we told them about the nature, trolls, viking, the royal family, the capitol, our home town and we showed them a map of Norway. We think the presentation went well, and we think the pupils learned something about Norway.

When we look back on the trip to Slovenia, we see that we have learned a lot. We have learned about a different culture and school system. Because of this we are very happy and grateful that we got this opportunity.