

Between Nîmes and Rome: A Week in Motion

Diary of an Intercultural Week Between Nîmes and Rome

I didn't realise it at first, but this project began long before we boarded the train. It started in the confusion of emails, funding deadlines missed by a breath, students who hesitated, plans that shifted, and accommodations that appeared and disappeared like mirages. It started in that strange mix of excitement and responsibility that comes when you're trying to build something that didn't exist before.

From May 11th to 15th, I accompanied four BPJEPS students from the IFME of Nîmes to Rome for a week of exchange with the cooperative **Ludus&Momo**, a kindergarten in the neighbourhood of something that happens behind closed doors but something that grows from the territory itself. Families, neighbours, stories, struggles — everything becomes part of the pedagogy.

This diary is the trace of that week: messy, warm, unpredictable, and full of life.



Before Leaving

The preparation was a small odyssey. We applied for regional funding too late and had to find alternatives. One student withdrew, the others hesitated. We searched for accommodation, found it, lost it, found another, lost that too. Every time I thought, “Okay, now it’s settled,” something shifted again.

But strangely, all of this made me feel more committed. It wasn’t just a task anymore — it was also *my* project, something I wanted to see through no matter how many times I had to start over.

My Role

I had never organised a pedagogical exchange abroad. Not even close.

But instead of panicking, I felt a kind of quiet determination. This was exactly what my ESC project was supposed to help me grow into: a facilitator of mobility, someone who builds bridges, someone who makes things possible even when the path is not straightforward.

And honestly, I’m proud I didn’t give up when it would have been so easy to do so.

Preparing the Students

Before leaving, I organized a series of Italian language ateliers for the students. Nothing formal — just practical sessions connected to what we would actually do with the children: colours, emotions, simple instructions, greetings, movement verbs. We even did a session on phonetics, which made everyone laugh at first but ended up being surprisingly useful.

Those workshops became a small ritual. A way to imagine the week before living it.

The Unexpected (Because There Was Plenty)

Rome welcomed us with sun, noise, and... a cancelled reservation.

The day before the scheduled check-in, we discovered that our accommodation had annulled our booking. On a Saturday! With almost no alternatives available, and with the precious help of my lovely tutor Sun-Mi, I started searching again, found a temporary place, and then one of the girls got bitten by bedbugs. So I searched again. And again. Until we finally found a clean, comfortable apartment for the rest of the stay.

It was stressful, yes. But it also showed me something I didn’t know about myself: I can handle emergencies. I can stay calm. I can take care of people.

Arriving at Ludus&Momo

The kindergarten felt alive from the moment we stepped in. Walls full of drawings, corners full of materials, children moving freely, educators who welcomed us with warmth and curiosity. Nothing felt rigid or overly structured — everything breathed with the rhythm of the group.

The neighbourhood around it carries its own stories, and the nursery is deeply connected to them. You can feel it.

What We Actually Did

Our days unfolded in a natural rhythm, mixing our ideas with the spontaneous energy of the children. Nothing was forced. Nothing was theatrical. We simply entered their world and let things happen.

Some mornings began with simple games to learn each other's names — the kind of warm-up that breaks the ice without anyone noticing. Other times we jumped straight into activities based on colours, emotions, movement, depending on the mood of the room.

We did small creative workshops: cutting, gluing, building little rainbows with strips of paper. The children concentrated with that seriousness only toddlers have, the kind that makes you smile because it's so pure.



There were moments of running, dancing, stopping suddenly when the music cut off — a chaos full of joy. The music, voice, and movement workshop, part of a psychomotricity session, became one of the highlights: rhythm, imitation, voices rising and falling, bodies discovering space.



We explored emotions in playful ways: guessing faces, choosing colours, leaving handprints on a collective mural that slowly filled with tiny stories.

And then there were the treasure hunts — small adventures around the nursery, where the children had to find clues, name colours in Italian and French, and celebrate every discovery as if it were gold.

Nothing was perfect, nothing was rigid, and that's exactly why it worked. It felt alive!



What Came Out of It

For the students, it was a week of stepping out of their comfort zone: listening to and speaking a little Italian, adapting to unexpected situations, observing a different pedagogical approach, taking initiative, and discovering that they could handle more than they thought.

For Ludus&Momo, it was an exchange of perspectives, a bilingual experience for the children, and a chance to share their community-based approach with people from another country.

For me, it was a confirmation that I can coordinate mobility, mediate between cultures, solve problems under pressure, and still find joy in the middle of chaos.

Personal Reflections

This week wasn't perfect — and that's exactly why it mattered.

It was full of surprises, last-minute changes, logistical nightmares, and moments of pure joy. I saw the students grow, connect, and open themselves to a new environment. I saw educators who believe deeply in what they do. I saw a neighbourhood that carries its own burden and strength.

And I saw myself becoming more capable, more grounded, more confident.

This diary is not just a report. It's a trace of a little transformation — theirs, and mine.