

Report on the work-camp in Parc Ela, 15. to 28. August 2021

work-camp by Service Civil International SCI Switzerland



0 Preface and Acknowledgment

This report is a bit more extensive than usual, for several reasons: It is the first time that I had the function of camp coordinator and also the first time of a SCI-work-camp with Parc Ela as a local partner. This justifies a closer look at the preparations and the organisation of the camp to identify things that went well and should be repeated and things that we forgot, that did not work out as planned or plain mistakes that we should try to avoid next time. Another reason for its size and especially for the many photos is, that I would like it to be a present and a souvenir to the volunteers that took part.

I would like to thank them for good work they have invested in “our” wall, for the cooperation in kitchen and household and for the good spirit in the group. All their names have been replaced by aliases. An important base for that everything went so well laid Duri Albin with his careful preparation of the camp and with his calm and reassuring leadership on the work site. He and his team had an important share to the overall success. Grazie fitg!

1. Preparations

On the 7. July, I have visited the site of the work-camp and the technical leader, Duri Albin in Tiefencastel and Sur. I had the impression, that the camp was well prepared, based on previous experiences of Duri and the Parc Ela with other work camps. We paid together a short visit to the site of the dry-stone wall to be rebuilt down in the valley near the castell and to Val Faller, where we would work the last two days clearing an alp from debris and shrubs. Duri and I discussed how we will share the responsibilities for the work-camp: essentially, he for the work between 08 to 17 h and me for household and free time.

To my preparations belonged also three e-mails¹ with detailed information about the work-camp and how to get there with the intention of getting the participants in an expectant mood and showing them how they also could participate in the common organisation of the camp. The reaction to these mails was sparse.

I travelled on Saturday, a day earlier to Sur to shop food for the first two days, because the local PRIMA-Shop is not open on Sundays. They already had provisioned a food-list I have sent them a couple of days earlier.

2. Arrival

On Sunday, 15. August we were just three participants and Duri who met at the meeting point, Piazza dalla posta in Sur, at 17:30 h. This caused a bit of tension, because we were expecting 4 more. Of one participant from the Ukraine, we already knew that he would not come. He announced this in the week before because it was complicated for him to fill out the covid-travel documents and he was surprised about the costs of travelling to Switzerland.

During the evening eventually another four arrived and this left one woman from Germany did not come, due to a misunderstanding. In the weeks before she was waiting for a confirmation from the SCI and in turn SCI was waiting for her confirmation. She could not be reached by SCI Switzerland. The group distributed the available beds and bedrooms among them and had a first meal together. I gave them first Information about the workcamp and the self-organisation of the group concerning shopping, cooking and household.

3. Holiday House Tga Zia²

Our quarters, the house “Tga Zia”, is a holiday house of a private family with two bedrooms on the ground floor, with a double bed each and in the bigger room with two bunk-beds, probably meant for kids, but adult size. Upstairs there is a large living room with a bed, used as a sofa, a table with ample space for 7 people and some bookshelf and a cupboard. On this floor there is also a large terrasse with additional garden-chairs and a table. Ad-jected to the living room is an open, well-equipped kitchen. In the open attic are two speeling spaces with two mattresses each. In the basement is a modern shower and toilet. The house is for a work-camp a very



¹ See 18. 2 in the attachment

² <https://ferienhaus-crest.ch/>

comfortable accommodation. There would have been space for one or two persons more. There were 11 sleeping spaces of which we used only 7. But that would not allow any privacy, necessitate eating in two shifts and probably a strict management of shower time.

4. Covid-19 Status

4.1 at the start, 15. August

On the 15. of August we all filled out a self-declaration form of our covid status. Three have recovered from covid and were vaccinated twice. Three were vaccinated twice and one had an only one dose of vaccine but a negative PCR-Test.

Therefore we had according to the covid-prevention concept of parc Ela only to wear masks in the shop, on public transport and in the second week when traveling to Val Faller in the van.

4.2 Self-test Wednesday, 18. August

Three days after arrival we all made and Antigen Quick-Test with negative results.

5. Work 1: Dry Stone Walling

In the first week and the first two days of the second week we worked entirely on the reconstruction of an old, neglected and tumbled down dry-stone wall in Pra Grond, about 20 minutes' walk from our house.

We had to take apart the ruins of the old wall, sort the stones according to their future use and prepare the ground for the foundations about 20 cm below ground level.

Then Duri showed how to set up the batter boards for the construction twine for the future new wall. The width at the bottom was about 1m and at the top about 45 cm with a slope of 20 % on each side. During the construction the slope is checked frequently by looking across two construction twines above the wall placed in the right angle.



But first the large foundation stone had to be placed, ideally big enough that two of them touched each other across the foundation of the wall. Heavy work for to, sometimes three people, especially if there wasn't enough standing ground on the side of the future wall. Sometimes we also had to use a crane due to their weight.

Once this was done and the spaces in between the founda-

tion stones filled with smaller stones, we built the outer walls. The challenge was to find the right stone that fitted exactly onto the uneven surface of the foundation stone or later on the layer below. Often, we had to try three or four times to find the optimal candidate. Once in a while it was

frustrating, when the stone that looked quite nice with his face in the façade had an outward slope on his surface and therefore couldn't be used.

The philosophical truth we discovered during this work:

- There is always a better stone for the space you want to fill.
- If you can't find the ideal stone, make do with the optimal.

Duri told us the five golden rules of dry-stone-walling³:

- Two stones on one, one stone on two
- Three stable contacts for every stone, on each side and below
- On the face always outward slopes, on the surface always inward slopes
- Build with the slope (20 %) of the facade of the wall
- fill the heart of the wall tightly, stone by stone

And four no go's:

- ☒ place stones gently on the wall, even when they are heavy, don't let them fall
- ☒ Don't shove them on the wall, lift them up and place them gently again
- ☒ Don't chisel them on the wall, you also move the other by chiselling
- ☒ Don't hold on to the batter boards, they might move out of place



Yes, we also had to chisel some of the stones, if we didn't find the perfect one. Often, the second best had just a bump too much and if we were lucky, it came off with a couple of strokes with the sledgehammer.

Comparably easy was filling the heart of the wall with small stones. The essential is not to dump them in all at once, but to place them one by one, so they touch the neighbouring stones on all their sides. Some of the holes cannot be seen from above, but have to be felt by hand underneath the bigger stones and should not be forgotten.

Then in the same manner the next layer is laid until about 20 cm under the top of the planed wall indicated by the lower construction twine. For the top layer we were looking for large plates, ideally covering the whole width of the wall, or at least one side over two or three joints.

Especially in the second week we not always had enough suitable stone at hand and had therefore to cope with the second best. It would have been too expensive to get larger cover stones from a quarry and it would have distorted the original appearance of the wall.

³ See also: <https://thestonetrust.org/5rules/>
or: <http://www.rockinwalls.com/2011/01/video-dry-stone-principles.html>

In the first couple of days Duri gave us thorough introduction into dry-stone walling and underlined



how important it was to do it slowly and thoughtfully. A slow but steady working pace would help to prevent accidents, avoid misplaced stones, that had to be replaced again and exhaustion from the heavy physical work. He and his colleagues Fadri, Felix and Thomas were our role models for this working attitude. We all eventually found into our rhythm.

6. Household

Apart from cooking and the final cleaning we did not organize household duties. For just two weeks it was not really necessary especially because the participants were quite disciplined to take her working boots off inside the house. Out of her own initiative Nadine cleaned on the first Saturday the bathroom (Thank you!) and I swept the kitchen ones in a while.

Washing the dishes and cleaning the kitchen was not part of the cooking duties, it was purposely left to the self-organization of the group. This worked more or less well. The participation varied individually according to their involvement in housekeeping back home. Some of the younger participants are still living in the parental household

7. Cooking and shopping

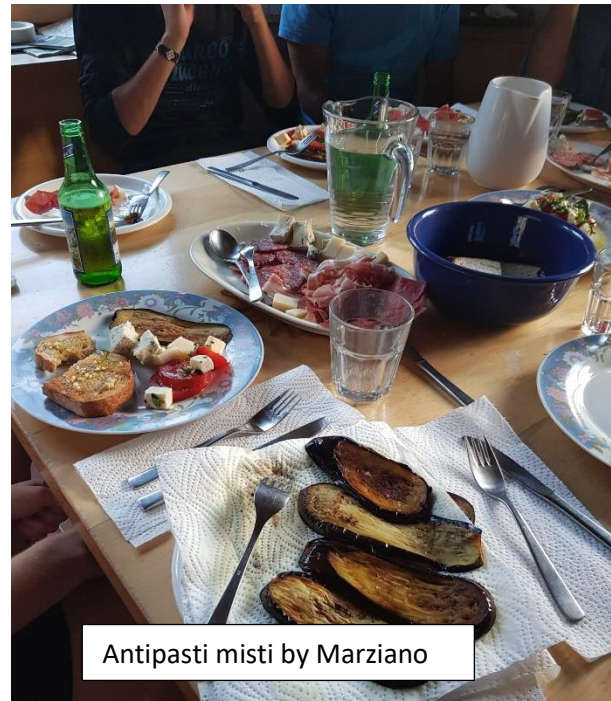
Cooking and shopping was a mayor part of the group experience. As a coordinator I provided in the Beginning the Meals for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday Breakfast and Lunch and then left it to the group to plan their meals and the shopping. The planning was quite tricky, because everything that could not be had directly in the shop, had to be ordered the day before or in the case of vegetable and fruit on Tuesdays, Thursday and Fridays until 11:45. Fresh meat only on Fridays.

I asked the group to enlist themselves in a list of cooking duties respectively for Dinner and Breakfast and Lunch the following day. The list filled itself only reluctantly in the first week. In the second week, when the participants with less work-camp experience had seen how it worked, it was completed with increasing speed and motivation.

Our organisation of shared responsibility for ordering and buying food caused some irritation with the local shop-keeper. She had to explain her system and answer the same questions over and over again. She would have preferred one liaison person.

But for some members of the group living in big cities and used to shopping centres with large stocks, it was a good experience to get to know a small village shop, always on the verge of closing down.

Although Parc Ela did not give as a budget limit for the food, we tried to keep within the budget recommendation of SCI Switzerland: sFr. 12.-- /day and person. I informed from time to time the group about the current running average cost per day per person. We did not quite keep within that limit, but got near to it; we spent sFr. 13.14 /day and person, including alcoholic beverages. Personally, I think to have a budget limit was quite useful and instructive, because it prevented impulse purchases and furthered price conscious shopping. For group members from countries with different costs of living and other mean incomes it is difficult to evaluate the prices of goods. The cost of a bar of chocolate (100 g) e.g. can vary from sFr. -.65 to s.Fr. 2.65. The cheaper one was just as good for a breacktime snack, only with a less fancy wrapping.



Due to the contributions of the group members, we enjoyed a wide variety of menus, quite a few first-timers for most participants:

Fondue⁴

Lasagne

Maultaschen⁶

Spaghetti al Pomodoro

Paella según Helia y Emilio

Tortilla Espanola⁷

Gschwellti

Irmik⁵

Baisers plats aux noix

Apfelkuchen

Crema Catalan (sin fuego)

Chantilly aux Myrtilles

Cooking for a group of seven was for some members of the group a first time. They helped each other mutually, asked others, consulted the internet and even phoned their mother back home.

On the whole, cooking for our self was a good experience: we ate well und learned a lot.

⁴Recipe: <https://www.foodandwine.com/recipes/classic-swiss-cheese-fondue>

⁵ Recipe: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/215598/irmik-helvasi-turkish-semolina-halva/>

⁶ Recipe: <https://www.daringgourmet.com/maultaschen/>

⁷ Recipe: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/147109/tortilla-espanola-spanish-tortilla/>

8. Free-time

Besides working, cooking, and eating there was not much of free time left. Those, who were not engaged in the kitchen used their time often to have a nap before dinner. Others helped to cook to cut vegetables or spent their time with their mobile phone, two talented drawers made use of their drawing pads and pencils. Other listened two music. Between 5 o'clock in the afternoon and dinnertime around half past eight It was generally a quiet relaxing atmosphere; everyone seems to be exhausted from the heavy physical work. On rare occasions some of use played a game together (Malefiz, Uno, Qwixx, Halma....) before or after dinner. Bedtime shifted for the most of us from half past eleven in the beginning to ten o'clock at the end of the second week.



My first drawing since childhood, said Ahmet

9. Excursions

9.1 Savognin - Somtgant, Wednesday, 18. August



In the first week the free day mid-week was very welcome, because we were all tired from the heavy physical labour, we were not used to. We all went by bus to Savognin (Sauvignon, 😊) and by cable car up to Somtgant and from there we walked downhill again to Savognin with a Apéro on the way in Radons. On the way we realized that we would miss the postal Car back to Sur und as a consequence also the closing time of the shop. And that meant we could not pick up the

provisions we needed for dinner. The younger fraction of the group saved us from this fate by running downhill as fast as they could, arriving five minutes bevor the bus. And we had ample time in Savognin for a beer and to watch an early sunset.

9.2 Bivio, Saturday, 21. August

The excursion to Bivio was part of the study program, Parc Ela and Duri organized for us. We went by bus up to Bivio, halfway on the Julier-pass for a walk with Arturo Fascati, a specialist in herbal medicine (amongst other things). On the way he showed us a lot of herbs and explained their use in the kitchen and as remedies for various ailments. On the summit of our short walk, overlooking the pretty village of Bivio he offered us four different herbal teas to taste. And Duri, who accompanied us, rounded the tasting off with a liquor of Swiss stone pine.

The botanic excursion had quite an impact on the group members: in the following days some tried to spot and identify herbs they had been introduced to by Arturo. Nadine made several times tee with freshly collected mint and I prepared a tee made of thyme from our work site.

Here a non-exhaustive list of the herbs we have seen and tasted:

HERBS & FLOWERS		Bivio, 21.08.21
Eyebright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> good for the eyes use: rinsing the eyes, tea 	
Monkshood (Aconitum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> blue flowers poisonous, especially root 	
Wild Spinach & Stinging Nettle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> blood-building & cleaning the body (detox) use: salad, ? (don't cook too long!) 	
Arnica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for injuries and traumata use: piecewise put on injuries, tea against traumata 	
Juniper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> warming, good for bones use: tea 	
Serpentary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> against sweating & diarrhea use: tea (bitter & dry) 	
Swiss Pine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> calming use: wood, pillow (smell) 	
Achillea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stress, menstruation 	
Masterwort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drying, antiseptic use: root 	
Burnet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> roots (tea): drying leaves: blood-building 	
Prunella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> severe eye infection, aggression, outburst of rage (! when the heat comes up in your head!) 	
Achermilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> restores energy (adrenal cortex) use: tea (sweet) 	

List by Susanne, based on notes by Thomas

9.3 St. Moritz - Bergün, Sunday, 22. August

On Sunday the group wanted to see St. Moritz and ride on the Albula-Line of the Rhaetian Railway. Some of us were fascinated by St. Moritz, where the rich people of the world meet, others found it rather ugly. Three of us visited the Segantini-Museum⁸ and the others made a stroll around the lake. On the way back we made a stop for an hour in Bergün, which we all found pretty and more or less authentic. An additional attraction was the Railway Museum⁹. The spiral tunnels on the train line down the Albula valley were a major attraction which we could not be overseen because they were frequently announced through the public address system of the train (UNESCO World heritage¹⁰). In the evening most of us were just as tired as on a working day.



Church in Bergün by Susanne

⁸ <https://segantini-museum.ch/>

⁹ <https://www.rhb.ch/en/blog/a-visit-to-the-albula-railway-museum>

¹⁰ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1276/>

9.4 Fuorcla digl Leget / Alp Flix, Wednesday, 25. August

On our last free day, Wednesday in the second week, the group split. Not because of a conflict but because of different needs: Some longed for a relaxed day on Alp Flix, others had the ambition to stand on a mountain top. I was in between these strives: together with Susanne and Emilio I walked from Julier Pass to the Fuorcla digl Leget, where we climbed to the Crappa da Tocf (2766 m) and I descended in my slower pace over the Kanonensattel, Alp Flix to “our” house in Sur. An attraction on the way up was the “Himmelstor” (Gateway to heaven) at present the site of an artistic installation: A yellow clock dial.



9.5 Credit for cultural activities

Parc Ela granted us an allowance of sFr. 400 for cultural activities. We used sFr. 296.10, mostly for cable cars, public transport and museum tickets. The sFr. 103.90 we have not used equalled almost the sFr. 111.35 which we exceeded the food budget.

10. Work 2: Clearing two cattle drives in Val Faller: 26. /27. August

The last two days in the second week, we worked in the Val Faller. Our task was to clear a cattle drive up to Scalottas and a path into the Val Gronda. Especially the first one needed to be cleared from alder shrubs that tended to overgrow the passage. It was also strenuous work, but not so heavy lifting as before while building walls.

In this work site we not only worked together with the professionals from Parc Ela (Felix, Petra and Thomas) but also with some of the farmers which are sending cattle to this alp. They are obliged to work one day per year for a common maintenance. Some of them were quite willing to talk, if not in English so at least in Italian and German. Otto even showed us the cow bells he is using for his hobby: Trychlen.¹¹

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcbAOoTnvGM>



To the disappointment of many even on this alp we didn't see cattle at close range, only across the valley higher up on the alp. But there was a recompense: Felix sighted the bearded vulture¹² that was known to nest in Val Faller. It was passing by a great height first but then returned and circled downwards over our group, obviously inspecting a group of humans, it was not used to see. And a bit later we saw him (?) together with a smaller individual (her?). This close sighting in Val Faller was not only a premiere for us volunteers, but also for the professionals of Parc Ela and the local Farmers.

On the last day a lunch we had finally the opportunity to light a campfire some of us longed for. Unfortunately, we already had eaten the Sausages (Cervelats) the day before. Still, the fire gave us some warmth on this coldest day of the two weeks



Boys gotta do, what Boys gotta do

11. Study

11.1 Inputs by Duri Albin on the work site

Three times a day, always after the break, Duri presented some a short input. First on the previous use and present ecological function of dry stone walls, its construction principals and later on the large mammals and birds of the region: roe deer, chamois, capricorn, eagle and bearded vulture.

Especially the use of reconstructing dry-stone walls lead to questions and discussions: Why should we do this Sisyphus-work, we can't we let nature take over, when their function of fencing in cattle could easily replaced by an electric fence? Have the following answers convinced all of us?

We do all this hard work:

- To preserve a habitat for small animals, insects, plants and lichen, that can't live in the pasture.
- To keep alive an old craft that stands for working with the materials found in place.
- To make the old medieval paths more attractive for sustainable tourism.
- To provide physically tiring work in a healthy natural environment and
- To get the satisfaction of seeing a physical result of our labour that will last 150 years.

One evening Duri joined us for dinner and presented us a lecture about the Rhaeto-Romance language¹³, its origin and the efforts to keep it alive in schools, in a newspaper (La Quotidiana), a radio channel and a TV-window within the Swiss German TV. Of special interest for the group was the relationship to Catalan, Italian and Sardinian languages.

¹² <https://www.vogelwarte.ch/en/birds/birds-of-switzerland/bearded-vulture>

¹³ http://www.liarumantscha.ch/?changeLang=_en

11.2 Information about the SCI

On one evening I told the group a bit about the SCI¹⁴ and its origin as a peace movement after the World War I. And we discussed the relevance of SCI in modern times. It kept its pacifist orientation from the early days but it acquired a feminist and gender-conscious approach and got involved in a predominant challenge of today: the climate change. The group could easily agree on the great lines of this policy, but it appeared difficult to translate them in everyday behaviour. E.g., it seemed hard to avoid to buy biscuits in elaborate plastic wrappings in the shop or to resist the craving for strawberries in August. (Fortunately, there weren't any in the small local shop.) Or in the participation in household and kitchen duties, if there hasn't been a gender gap, so yet a clear gradient between women and men.

The group considered cultural exchanges and experiences of cooperation between people of different cultural backgrounds as essential for the abolition of prejudice and for mutual understanding. In our group especial we had the chance for an intergenerational dialog, a rare event outside the family or hierarchical systems.

11.3 Impromptu discussions before and after dinner

As mentioned before, after work most of us were exhausted, had a beer or went to take a nap, that could dure till dinner. Others were occupied with dinner preparations, listened to music or drew. So, there was not much time and energy left for organized study. But it happened on occasions that a spontaneous discussion flamed up in which the participants shared their life experiences and opinions.

On marriage and long-term relationship for instance and on the difference between romantic love and love as the base of a social contract between partners. I opined that romantic love is not a sound base for a marriage, it has to be overcome and turn into a mutual commitment for a common project: rising children together, mutual support in old age, etc.

Another subject we discussed, was the importance of a professional career in relation to family life, political engagement, volunteering, leisure and sports. And of course, this lead eventually to the still unequal chances of men and women to make this choice.

Interestingly enough Covid-19 was not a predominant theme, as is often was lately in the media or private conversation. It seemed to be clear for all in the group, that vaccination or frequent testing is sensible and a basis for the freedom of movement and meeting other people.

12. Play

In the evening we also played table games in groups of four or three: Malefiz, Uno, Halma, Qwizz, etc. Some of them emotionally quite demanding and long. Three of us relaxed sometimes by quietly drawing sketches of their impressions during the day from a photo. Others listened to music for themselves or presented their favourite music to the group and it happened that a song known in Italy was also known in Catalunya and in the Swiss Romande which led to a common sing along. Two of us had excellent voices (by my humble judgement) and it seems a missed opportunity that we made not more of it.

¹⁴ <https://sci.ngo/about-us/our-history/>

13. Group Dynamics

A word of caution first: Describing group dynamics is always subjective, especially if the observer is also part of the group. So, the following is not the objective truth it is only one truth of seven. The use of the following description is mainly to animate the other members of the group to reflect on group dynamics and maybe comment it from their perspective.

13.1 Objective Facts

This is what we know about each other after the first contact or in our case after an introductory round. These categories can easily lead to prejudices, that later in the group process hopefully will be relativized by live experiences with each other.

Countries of origin:

Germany	1	Catalunya (Spain ?)	2
Switzerland	2	Sardinia (Italy ?)	1
Turkey	1		

Sometimes regional identities are more important to individuals than nationalities. So, what is objective? The colour of your passport?

Gender:

Female	Male
3	4

Age Groups / Generations:

Over 60	Between 20 and 60	20 and younger
63, 73	39, 48	18, 18, 20

Nobody in the group wanted to be perceived and addressed as non-binary

Marital status:

single	in a relationship	married
3	1	3

Household experience:

Owen household	living with parents
3	4

Workcamp experience:

None or 1	2 and more
3	4

Chosen location in the house:

Ground floor	living room	gallery
3	3	1

The choice of the location in the house at the first evening showed a pattern, that became significant throughout the week: The older generation with Marziano, Ahmet and Nadine choose the two rooms on the ground floor. Ahmet couldn't decide a first but eventually settled himself in the living room using the bed there. And the younger ones used the open gallery in the attic.

Professional orientation:

STEM ¹⁵	Social	Commercial	Law & Order
3	2	1	1

13.2 Formal role: Group coordinator

I volunteered as a group coordinator and was accepted by the SCI Office in Bern. So, the group had no say in it and just had to accept me in this role. My motivation was mainly to gain the full experience of preparing, taking part in and evaluating a workcamp as a experiential background for my participation in the board for SCI Switzerland.

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science,_technology,_engineering,_and_mathematics

I understood my task as to manage the preparations together with the local partner, Parc Ela. During the camp I organized the meals for the first two days and on the last managed the cleaning and handover of the house together again with Parc Ela. After the first two days I announced that I would withdraw from my role as coordinator as much as possible to leave room for the group to organize itself. I tried to act thereby as a group member, addressing things to be dealt with, when it seemed important.

13.3 Informal roles

The most overt informal roles were mentioned by group members during the mid-term-evaluation: They assigned Nadine and me the role of mother and father of the group. This was certainly meant as a compliment and recognition for our caring in the early days of the group. They however did not enounce the complimentary roles: that of children; children to be cared for and entitled to be cared for. And this claim I did not want to fulfil. This put me in an inner tension: Wanting to be a good coordinator, but wanting to avoid to pamper the group members and thus obstructing them to participate fully in the shared responsibilities of the group.

Marziano observed that for the second time, his was not the “Nonno” of the group. A negative self-definition, which he replaced with the role of the “witty agent provocateur”. Some of the touchier discussions would not have taken place, if he had not provoked them with a witty remark or a very personal question. With this he contributed a lot to a spirited and light group atmosphere in which we could also discuss serious matters as politics, personal relationships, religion etc.

A distinct role also had Ahmet in the group. Due to his lack of fluency in English he was often silent, in group discussion and at work. When we talked to him directly, it became clear, that he understood almost everything but was reluctant to speak in front of the group. In face-to-face talks he showed interest in his counterpart and readily talked of his life in Turkey. This withdrawn role became even more emphasized when he got the message, that his aunt and her grandson died back home in a traffic accident. He mourned and stayed at home the last day.

13.4 The Task

The members of the group came together for a twofold task:

- to renovate dry stone walls and
- to experience and learn cooperation in a group of cultural diversity

The **primary task** was given by the local partner and formally accepted by the group members already when they registered. But that doesn't mean automatically identifying with the task. This took much longer and was a process during the whole two weeks. What was the sense of what we were doing: Taking an apart an overgrown tumbled down stone wall and rebuilding it with the same stones? Especially when we heard, that its original function of fencing in livestock could nowadays easily be replaced by an electric fence. We want to preserve nature, so why not let nature take over? This thought turned the discussion in the group to the question: What around here is nature and what is culture? For some participants it was a surprise to realize, that the whole landscape up to the vegetation limit was man-made, ergo culture. And that the beauty of the landscape they admired would not exist as it is without agri-culture and forestry. So, what we were preserving and restoring was habitats for biodiversity within an agriculturally used landscape. Without herding cattle on the alps, they would overgrow in a couple of years by shrubs (we have seen in Val Ferrer) and eventually become forest. And without forestry the forest would over-age and loose its protective function against avalanches and land-slides.

Here are the Remarks to the six aspects of group live:

1 Group	2 Kitchen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + nice people and inspiring atmosphere +wide age-range: discussions about life-style and attitudes + everybody comprehensive and flexible + healthy atmosphere + We are so different and I like seeing all the points of view respected :) +youngs, middle-aged and older + quite good atmosphere - sometimes we are, especially in the morning, like in a monastery ? I'd like with more volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + increasingly sharing of responsibilities ? Maybe we need some organization about washing dishes + good cooks - small fridge + much variety - pas facile a tenir le budget de sFr. 12 + temiz ve farkli kültür geneklermi ta diguruz + always people helping - we should split chores
3 Household	4 Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? just one toilet - only one bathroom + comfortable :) + Maison comfortable, o.k. pour moi + nice house - there is no sauna + enough privacy - bedding didn't fit - manque de drap de lit double> + Nadine gibi bir memiz vor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + very good :) (work leisure time, household (?)) + it's very good, here are people of different countries + perfect coordinator + Ok. Très bien Peter aide, mais ne prends pas le pouvoir ! Je déteste cet exercice +self-organiztion is developping +everyone's preferences are respected and there are no misunderstandings
5 Work	6 Free time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + le "chefs" sont très bien, bonnes explications calmes ; difficile de voir a quelle place va quelle pierre, Efficacité très limité de ma part. Bonnes collaborations ? I would like to work with local people of the village + hard work, but well organized - too far away +instructions + help + anybody push us to do none or have any time limit → no pressure - little dependency +Zor ana walled ilceck bir !? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + o.k., bien organisé, mais aussi beaucoup de liberté + Malefiz + Drawings + having 4 days of work is so good and good activities on free days Z.F.7. of workdays were only day at home (third) (+ indepnamne of query mchalo you like) +right amount of free time and many ideas + Cable car + enjoyed the excursion with cable car + hiking + enough free time - no pubs in the village (may be to expensive)

From the subsequent discussion I retained some points on slips of paper that we could improve in the second half, but made it clear, that the initiative had to be with the members of the group:

TV	Fruit Juice	Karaoke	BBQ
sit around the Fire	meet the locals	Sauna	Pizzeria

Of these we implemented:

- Fruit Juice for breakfast (once)
- Karaoke (well almost: singing to well-known songs on a music platform)
- sit around the fire (the last day, with one sausage left to share)
- meet the locals (not from Sur, but members of the alp cooperative Val Faller)

For the other points the group did not find consensus or they were too complicated to accomplish.

14.2 Final Evaluation on Friday, 27. August

On the last day we did a final evaluation, unfortunately with two separate questionnaires, one by SCI, the other by Parc Ela. Something we should coordinate better in future camps. The participants took it with indulgence and filled out both of them. The overall results were very positive, it was a good experience for all of them. The detailed results are shown in the attachment 18.6. Some suggestions for improvement are retained in the last chapter (17) of this report.

15. Clearing and cleaning the House

On Thursday, two days before departure, I asked the group, how the cleaning of the house should be organized and proposed them three alternatives: a) the group organizes the cleaning; b) we don't organize the cleaning, everyone does, what she/he thinks is necessary; or: c) I organize the cleaning. After a short discussion, the group decided, that I should organize the cleaning. I assigned chores to all group members for the cleaning of the common spaces. In addition to that everyone should clear and clean her/his own sleeping space. This was a bit complicated by the fact that two had to leave early and therefore had to do their chores on Friday evening but on the whole it worked quite well. Nobody spent more than one hour cleaning and equally important: nobody had to hang around for too long.

16. Departure

On Saturday morning Duri came to get the linen and to hand over the key to Mrs. Cotti, to say goodbye to the group and express his gratitude and that of Parc Ela with some gifts and souvenirs. The subsequent farewell in the group was rather prosaic, since two of us had to leave early and the rest took two different buses down to Tiefencastel and then got split up in crowded trains to Zürich.

17. Suggestions for Improvement

“There is always a better stone ...”

Even if the assessment of this work-camp is predominantly positive, there is always room for improvement. Here are some suggestions for future repetitions:

- Suggest a WhatsApp group already in the preparatory email for the possible coordination of travel, e.g. meeting in Zürich.
- Use the bus alpin¹⁶ for the transport of the initial food supply up to the house.

¹⁶ <https://busalpin.ch/regionen/alp-flix/sommer>

- Enough beddings that fit all the different sizes of the beds in the house. There was no fitting stretch-linen for the room “Engelzimmer”
- From the point of view of group size 10 participants would be ideal, from the point of view of comfort it would be less comfortable, but still manageable.
- Someone suggested a dish-washing plan, why not, but not by the initiative of the coordinator, it should be left to the group to organize itself
- Review medical emergency pack of Parc Ela by a professional from time to time (there was disinfectant missing)
- Maybe the complex shopping procedure at the local shop needs more explanation, but I would not try to avoid the difficulties by naming one liaison person to the shop or to make one large shopping list for a whole week. The experience of planning, shopping and cooking for a larger group is too valuable.
- The two questionnaires of SCI and Parc Ela should for next time be integrated into one.
- It appeared that there was a misunderstanding about the cleaning of the house: The owner organized a cleaning woman and Duri thought that we had to clean the house. If there is room for negotiation I would recommend, that it in the responsibility of the group to clean the house. This would round up the experience of being self-reliant as a group.
- There was among the volunteers a strong wish to meet the professionals of Parc Ela also socially. We invited some of them spontaneously on two occasions for dinner. This could be planned beforehand made into a social event.
- Some volunteers suggested there should be more than one bathroom for a group of seven. On the other hand, the group learned to accommodate to sparse infrastructure, e.g., by drying one’s hair outside of the bathroom.
- “The camp-coordinator should have organized a bit more, what the group did in its free time. “Well, that wouldn’t be in line with the idea of self-determination of the group. I could address next time address this issue in the group and let the group decide to what extent they would want a readymade program.
- “I would have liked more social activities like meeting with the locals.”
- “I would have liked more explanations about the local culture, the parc and nature”
- “Maybe you could pick us up in a bigger city and try not to make us climb all the village at the end of the day.”

18. Attachments: (in a separate File)

- 18.1 Info-sheet of the work camp as on the website of SCI
- 18.2 Preparatory E-Mails to and from the participants
- 18.3 Covid-19 Schutzkonzept
- 18.4 Notfallblatt und Sicherheitskonzept, Parc Ela
- 18.5. Preliminary Information from Parc Ela concerning cultural activities
- 18.6 Final Evaluation SCI and Parc Ela
- 18.7 Financial Report for food and cultural activities

Bern, 13. September 2021
Peter Keimer, Camp-Coordinator

