

Interview with a local activist – Andrea (Italy)

Interviewer: Name?

A: Andrea

I: Surname?

A: Vittori

I: Age?

A: I'm fifteen

I: Where are you from?

A: I'm from Latina, a tiny town below Rome

I: What organization are you involved in?

A: Well I'm not involved in any particular organization, but my activism is involved in platforms like Instagram and various social medias, while I often participate to the local LGBTQ+ themed meetings we have here in Latina.

I: What kind of activist are you? In which field do you work?

A: I'm an LGBTQ+, mental, physical, sexual positivity activist. I work in fields that require offering support, information and help about LGBTQ+, body issues, mental illnesses and general self-awareness.

I: Why did you choose this kind of activism/-this field?

A: I chose to do it because of two main reasons: 1. I really enjoyed to translate anything, and it came really easy for me to be done (my activism online is mainly composed by translations and adaptations, I sometimes create my own speeches too, about the topics I already told you) and 2. I long for the idea to help the world build itself through something that results pretty easy for me, or that I identify as something which doesn't require too much effort.

I: Do you remember the moment when you felt the need to get involved? Can you describe it?

A: I always grew up with the feeling of wanting to actively help and participate in people's (and my own too) lives. I felt like it was wrong to think with a neutral or passive mindset, because it could have actively destroyed the things around us.

I: Why is activism important for you?

A: I think activism is important because I see it as the only way to get the world together and act like a massive element. I'm talking about the feeling you have when you're doing a good action, and you know that there are many people out there, or perhaps just next to you, that may have different beliefs, thoughts, religions, identities, but that still have an ideal that brings them to do the same thing you're doing. I find it fascinating.

I: Do you notice homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in your local area?

A: I've noticed a general lack of consciousness about what respect is and how we should treat strangers, or even our loved ones (not just romantically). There is homophobia as much as there are people who are being discriminated because they might be wearing a €10 worth tshirt instead of an "expensive" one. But yeah, generally speaking we have many kinds of phobias about the LGBTQ+ community, still less than many countries or cities, but it still is an important issue.

I: What is the biggest challenge in your work?

A: It's probably to find the way to, as I said before, get together the world (many people) under an objective, an action, that can be interpreted in infinite different ways, but that keeps us close and makes us do a good action that might have a positive impact on ourselves, or the others, or the world.

I: What are your main goals right now?

A: Right now I'm trying to give a more serious, professional look to what I do. I'm a teenager, so I already know I might wake up one day and tell myself "yeah, I might not get really along with this kind of way to be an activist", and I might change many ways of how I do my activism, but I feel like there should always be a part of it in my daily life.

I: Do you think prejudices about lgbtqia+ community are decreasing?

A: I don't think that numbers and decreasing-increasing issues are something to keep an eye on. In the past there were almost less prejudices but stronger and painful, in a physical, mental and social way that literally slapped history with a ton of cruelty, but on the other hand, nowadays we have many lgbtq+ opponents, mostly thanks to social media interactions, that may right now be doing a different kind of harm than the one they did in the past. It's a painful, slow and constant one, which never finds peace, almost as we were comparing a violent and steady dearth to a slow and painful one.

I: Did you ever wonder if what you do is actually useful? Do you remember a particular moment of disappointment/hopelessness?

A: Actually, I have right now some insecurities about my activism and I'm not excessively ashamed of it! I often just put them away by thinking that, even if in activism I often help people, that's not people I long for. I long for having myself actively participating in live and actively changing this world into a better place.

I: Is there a person, an activist, a figure, that inspires you?

A: Yes, Gerard Way. I'm not really sure if he would define himself an activist and I don't want to mind his personal business. It was the way he always actively stood for a reason, he actively found a reason and actively helped mcr fans and his own ones to find it, that moved me to tears. He will always be the better part of me I always have to aim to; I remember listening to his speeches about gender identity, self awareness and mental health to his concerts while I was walking to school, and I always had to try to hold back the tears.

I: "A fair society needs no heroes". How much do you agree with this sentence?

A: I don't really agree with it. Not because of the stereotype that anarchy = mess, but because I believe that, by not having someone to follow, we would not have a rock, a solid thing to hold onto, while we might lose ourselves in every aspect of our lives, because we're human, too. I like to agree with the idea of many different heroes for whoever deserves and looks for them

This interview was conducted by the Italian team of participants of the Erasmus+ youth exchange Step 4 Change as part of their preparation.



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