



School Farming on the “Hutzelberg Farm” (Germany)

Workshop reflection

Description of the workshop:

The workshop was run by Hanna Schirm, Anne Wiebelitz and Angelika Schichtel from the German Real World Learning Network team.

The program on the farm is all about getting students involved deeply in the farm life for one week – working on the farm, catering for themselves and spending a lot of time outdoors, also their free time.

To convey that, the workshop leaders showed pictures of the farm and described the farm life and an example-week that students would spend on the farm.

So the workshop participants could have lively images in their imaginations on which they could then reflect upon. In small groups participants reflected on a particular topic that students would deal with at the farm stay and related that to the RWL model. The objects that came up were later discussed in plenum.

The practical part of the workshop was to make butter – in a way how it is done on Hutzelberg farm as well: Into a small jar you fill cream and then you shake the locked jar patiently until in a magical moment the cream will separate into butter and buttermilk.



Inputs by the participants:

- ◆ They eagerly dived into different topics in small groups and had lively discussions when it came to connecting the topic to the RWL model
- ◆ issues that were raised and discussed in the plenum:
 - Farming / food production takes time: students can experience that and the contrast to the habit of instant gratification
 - Are the actions of the children put into a bigger context (food production, pesticides, etc.)?
 - Values: fine line between teaching and preaching



- Danger: children might leave the farm and think all food comes from farms like this one (organic).

- ◆ They were very excited about making butter themselves and tasting it directly afterwards („the best butter I ever had“); especially for one young lady, who is quite far off the fields of farming and education in her job, this was a magical experience that she kept talking about during the next days.



- ◆ This School Farming Case Study was checked against the quality criteria by a member of the RWLN Working group “Quality”. One important point that came up was, whether the program allows self-directed learning – which is an important issue, also in the RWL model (empowerment). As the course of the week is set by the farmers and the children are divided into groups which they have to attend in the mornings, with a prescribed program (according to the tasks on the farm), the level of self-direction seems to be not very high. Nevertheless, the quality of this program is within other important points, that can be found within these „boundaries“.

LINKS

- the website of Hutzelberghof <http://www.schulbauernhof-hutzelberg.de>
- the website of BaGlob (German Federation for the Farm as a Place of Learning) <http://www.baglob.de/>