

2nd Report – Kaya Milena

Weltwärts Volunteer working at WasteLess

My time here in Auroville – it is full of new adventures, impressions and things I learn every single day.

To start with the first weeks or better month, I was a sort of overwhelmed with all the new things, which were there to explore. I needed a long time to settle down and don't see Auroville through the eyes of someone who came to a unreal new world, but to start to see Auroville through the eyes of someone who settled and now lives here.

With that new view a lot of new options suddenly became possible. I started to ask myself a lot of questions like: "What is Auroville? What does the concept of Auroville changes in people? What does it changes in me?" this questions lead to a conflict with the world I come from and I suddenly saw a big problem with continuing living at home in Berlin in a society where ideas and motivations aren't valued as much as here in Auroville. I was nearly sure about trying to extend my Weltwärts year and stay here for longer.

For some weeks I saw going back to Berlin to study as a nearly impossible thing to do.

Since then I changed my mind. This change was encouraged through a lot of different things: Different Aurovillians told me to go home and study to come back later, I figured out that studying doesn't mean to stop traveling, and some things which happened at home gave my the feeling that I am needed there. Plus the more I learned about Aurovilles structures and ways of community I got the feeling that It is possible to implement parts of it also elsewhere, and right now I am exited about going back home and trying to bring my before-Auroville-life and Auroville-life with all the new things I discovered and learned in some way together.

At the moment I live on Discipline Farm, with other wonderful people in our capsule commune, which is a little Weltwärts bubble. I love the mornings when some of us have breakfast together. I'm a fan of long breakfasts and even through I have to go to work pretty late I most times wake up much earlier to have a long breakfast which includes tea or coffee, porridge or muesli with a variety of different Fruits which I never tasted before I came to India, and some dates syrup or honey and of course the morning society of a lot of nice people.

I enjoy living with 4 (at the moment 6) others together and being surrounded every time by people is a completely new and wonderful experience for me. Especially cause of the opportunity to grab my bike and visit a silent place like the Matrimandir gardens every time I feel like it. This big contrast between being with a lot of other people or in a silent place just

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alone with my thoughts was very confusing for me at first. But I now arranged with it and see that it makes life very intensive.

The work at WasteLess is still wonderful. It changed my view on the world a lot – In some way which is not always enjoyable for the people who share my company when once again I look at their plastic bottle and comment “You know that stainless steel bottles are so much better” or looking at them after they bought paratha wrapped in several plastic bags in a way that they promise me to bring some container next time with them to use it instead of plastic wrapping. At the same time which my friends have to survive my “Waste and plastic sucks lifestyle” I try to be as conscious about my own consumption and shopping of things as much as possible, which is really not easy when once again this Hide & Seek cookies in their bad non-recyclable-multifoil packaging are in some way smiling at me. But I see a big change compared to the time before I joined WasteLess.

At work the atmosphere is most times simply enjoyable. Even through we are all a bit stressed out with the new game we are developing and with other projects. I sometimes sit longer because I want to finish something but this is my own ambition and never really demanded.

The best times are the ones where the whole team (Ribhu, Chandrah, Maya, Darius and me) decides that we sat too long in our office and we go together for some snack or coffee to continue work at a restaurant or at Chani’s place. It’s funny how with WasteLess I always have the feeling that my work is useful and I enjoy working and I never have to look on the clock waiting for the end of work.

We sometimes travel to a school in Chennai, which is always a pretty exhausting trip but also a great time for us.

Together with Maya I had my first lesson as teacher to test out new material we developed, and through I was terrified beforehand it went very well and I also enjoyed it. This kind of not “being thrown in the hot pan” but encouraging me to “jump into it by myself” is the wonderful thing WasteLess does and I’m much more open for new challenges then before.

I also had a teachers-training trip to Mangalore at the Malabar Coast and Mysore together with Ribhu. It was working and travelling at the same time and I enjoyed seeing a bit of Mangalore and Mysore and getting used to Indian night-trains. On the trip we trained teachers of five different schools in how to use Garbology. And maybe there are more WasteLess trips to come.

I visited several places in Tamil Nadu with friends and I am looking forward to visit other places in India. I just booked tickets to explore North India with two friends.

So at the moment my life here is in some way settled. I figured out that slowing down a bit and simply enjoying life and not trying to take in all things at once makes everything a bit more easy.

I think this year gives me so much of “learning to live”. I’m very grateful to be here. Please make something like this possible for many others too!

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