

## Greetings from CICD – a college for activists!

We are up and running with our Gaia team and Poverty Activist team since the beginning of October, and next week we are adding one more team: the Climate Activist team.

They are going full speed with their programmes, contributing with an unbeatable good mood and lots of actions to life at our college.

And they have already learned a lot.

Because learning is not just something in a curriculum – you can learn from everything in life, all challenges and new experiences and practical work and people you share life with....

Below some of the students tell about how they have experienced their first period here at CICD, and some of the things they have learned.

Enjoy the reading!



### **Fernando**

I came to CICD relatively recently with a couple of suitcases, some expectations and a great desire to learn and take on a new adventure. I finished my studies at the university and I needed a radical change, something that would make me leave my comfort zone and help me to discover and to learn new things, and that is why I decided to come to this school.

I have not been here long, but there are many things I have learned in this short period of time. From insignificant things that will probably not be useful in my future to really interesting things that I am sure I will never forget. From purely practical aspects to emotional aspects, without forgetting the social and theoretical aspects. There are many tasks that we do in this school from which you can learn many things. How to organize your garden, how to collect potatoes, how to change windows, how to make bread, how to cook for 25 people, well ... I would say how to cook, how to drive around England, learn by doing ...

But without a doubt, if I had to choose one thing among all those that I have learned, I would choose: to live in community. It seems simple but it is much deeper than it seems. Living in a community entails many things that we are not used to in our normal lives, even more as we do it here at CICD. Living in community means living with others, fostering empathy and respect.

Here at CICD, we do not have cleaning staff, cooks or gardeners, we are the ones in charge of

doing all these tasks and many more, if we want our house, the school, to run properly. And yes, there may be people with whom you have more or less affinity but we all work for a common goal. It's true that it may not seem like something to learn from if you see from a professional future, but if you think about it personally you can learn a lot. It's a way of knowing certain aspects of yourself that you did not know before.



### **Martin**

Since my arrival at CICD in UK, I think that teamwork is the most important in a community like our school. When we work all together, many projects can be carried out. I want to work for the community, so that we can all carry out our project in Africa when this pandemic, that has already been so many deaths, passes.

### **Giuseppe**

This is a new life adventure.

CICD is a magical place where space-time has stopped, here we are a big family.

Here in CICD I made many new friends with which I work, study and share my new life.

Here I am learning to apply my new life philosophy: "Don't worry, just be happy!"

I'm learning to open my mind, to see stuff with new eyes, with a more international vision, a 360 degree vision.

Thanks to this, here I live very happy. It allows me to learn from my new family everything about their life, their experiences, their personalities and also from our daily life together.

Here I can take care of my new big family, I love to see their smiles when I offer them coffee or chocolate or when I can help them in some way.

My wish is to leave here as a new person, ready to adapt my needs to any situation while always keeping me smile and ready to work for build a world with peace and love.



### **Aitana**

I've been here at CICD for a little over a month and a half, so not enough to have learned a lot, but enough to have already learned new things every day. The people here caught my attention, we are very different, but at the same time we are here for the same objective, to help. We are people of all ages, cultures and religions, you learn a lot by listening to others and mentally writing down different ways of thinking or seeing things. I learned to be patient, more than I was before, and above all to show RESPECT, whatever the situation, respect.

Every day I am "learning by doing", in a practical, emotional, community or personal way. I am curious about life, the environment, climate change, humanity, solidarity, poverty and the world... During the Gaia period, it helps to get to know each other as a team, how to work together, resolve doubts, debate... We learn to be human.

For the future, all that I am learning and what I'm going to learn will help me to work in the best possible way in the project in Africa, not only in the project but I will be able to make it use of it in my life.



### **Pablo Ariel**

Since I arrived the 28/10 I have learned much about what CICD does and how it works, the different buildings and functions and chores that they have to do to keep the college running. I have only had a class once, but I could see where this is going. It was about poverty and it was a really interesting point of view about poverty among English people. Up until now I have mostly been helping in the garden - which I have never done in a real farm, so the experience was enriching. In these few days I have learned how to prepare the chicken food and feed the chicken, how to make plants grow properly to get from them vegetables, and I realized that it is not as difficult as I imagined it, only takes time but it is worth it.

The people who are more experienced in gardening showed me the proper tools and some little details about each task. I think is very useful have this knowledge, as it can help anyone in the future who wants to save some money planting their own vegetables and fruits, or because it is more healthy than buying in the supermarket cause they are free of pesticides. In the future, if I have the opportunity, I might use this to serve more healthy vegetables and fruits for my family.

### **David**

What I have learned:

**Perseverance, motivation and problem solving:** Maybe now I feel really motivated for the first time in my 24 years. In my "previous life," I gave up in countless ways, and I also tended to solve problems by turning my back on them.. Here at CICD, I learned that the problem is a relative thing and it all depends on how you deal with it and how you try to find a solution. And if you don't know how, I can always ask a colleague!

**Humility:** Before I got to CICD, I didn't really understand the difference between humility and

humiliation. Thanks to the unity and community spirit that is present in our school I have learned to accept situations that at first could seem unfair. I learned to work with humility and live with others. I managed to understand what it means to be humble - and this is a very rare treasure in all areas of life.

**It can't be perfect every day:** I'm a maximalist, I don't deny it. Many times I make the mistake of giving up my day and just don't care about anything if everything doesn't work the way I imagined. In CICD, people just like me live with me. Many times I see that someone is having a bad day and yet they don't give up - that's what I learned from members of the community here. Because your day is not perfect, you can still move effectively and not give up.

**The concept of community:** I have not had any problems with community life so far, considering that I have already been part of numerous events in Hungary, as well as various community projects. However, many times I have made the mistake of approaching certain people in a selfish way, and I think that mistake was because I had not really lived with the concept of community. Here at CICD, we live together and work together on a daily basis, giving me an insight in the organization that I didn't have before. No one here is an exception, we treat each other in the same way.

Ah, yes! ..and I learned to drive a Tractor!



### **Pablo Martínez**

This task about my learning period in CICD, cannot be expressed as a consequence of the theoretical education that me and my team are expecting, just because we've not started this period of our 18 months experience yet.

So, I'm going to talk about some of the social moments that I already had here and one of my own experience by the time after two months at the college.

Firstly, as a new Gaia student of the college, I was just a lonely guy far from his home. But shortly before arriving to the school, Marie introduced me to another new student from my home town, and that probably made me change my mind about how to learn from other people, who actually lived really near me but I didn't even know. I have just realised that it's a good way of discover yourself by sharing experiences with many other people, then you can also learn from them. This increased so much when we arrived at the school, and met the other students. Then, that first feeling that I had before completely disappeared and the experience could really start.

The other experience that I'd like to share is the fact that everyone needs be active to achieve what he wants, in terms of social skills, knowledge, hard work... So this period has taught me to focus and understand that if I don't do something, I wont ever get where I want to be.

This could be translated in a lot of examples: reading books to be able to talk about it with someone who recommended it, doing the laundry or going to the gym after a busy day to feel fit and healthy. Those examples are just a few of the many activities that I want to do to grow in this period. This is learning that I also need to manage for the real goal I have with this programme: the next period to train and go as a Development Instructor where my help is needed.

## **Natalia**

My arrival at CICD meant for the first time I was in the UK. On my way to Winestead I traveled by train through the fields under the cloudy skies, that made me feel good, I found it familiar, like Argentinian Patagonia. When I arrived at the College I was well received, I remember that Marie invited me for lunch and the next day, Carla gave me a tour of the place for two hours. At CICD there are exquisite meals, fantastic people and a warm atmosphere!

During my quarantine, I went to help in the garden, separating weeds, preparing the land, collecting vegetables and fruits, sowing, it was pleasant and mobilizing experience, because How disconnected are we from the earth? What do we eat every day? We also had the opportunity to go sell our products to the Hull market, where I had a lot of fun and the customers were very friendly and were happy with what we were selling.

The first other tasks assigned to me were cleaning the common areas, I worked together with Pepe, were simple and fast tasks, which I like and know. Then started Gaia's classes with Noemi, an hour every day of the week and we had the weekend of the "Building Weekend", all very positive and fun.

For the last three weeks, I've been with our partners Planet Aid, with my partner from Gaia, Paloma, Argentinian as well. Here we are packing clothes in capsacks and collecting in the area, we make a good team, and Torben and Birgit in the Planet Aid are nice and transparent.

What I am learning in this short period as a Gaia volunteer is about community life and developing body awareness by doing manual , as well as developing skills that I am interested in increasing as a joyful spirit.



## **Matthew**

I learnt the importance of asking for help when you need it. Before CICD, I always had the mentality- probably influenced by school and male stereotypes, as well as my own desire for independence relating to a want of greater 'freedoms'- that it was unnecessary to ask people for help. If I wanted to do something, I would just do it, by myself, without asking, and get it done. The only time it was necessary to ask for help was maybe when I was trying something new. But that began to become a problem, in that I would start not trying new things for fear of not being good at them straight away or understanding that to get good would mean a decent amount of time being invested and I thought I had enough to be getting on with.

Arriving at CICD, and having to quarantine, meant I was pretty dependent on the other people here. Fortunately they are all very nice! But it was very weird and discomforting for me to have to ask people to, say, put my ice in the freezer and take it out when I needed it. Then it spilled over into the work: I've never used a strimmer before, but having to strim a tonne (non-literal) of leaves

meant having to ask people like David and Tomas for help. Then I learnt, could trust in myself to do it, did it, and it all works out. The fact is I was in an environment where I had to (I wasn't being forced at gunpoint but I mean there weren't any excuses for not doing it) learn how to trim. It's not a situation where I am in my bedroom thinking "it would be cool to learn how to fix the shed roof" but then thinking "I'll just try that another day".

I will use this to continue to build trust in myself and challenge myself to try out new things without being afraid to seek guidance when necessary, and not feel like a failure for seeking said guidance.

