

Burj Al Shamali 1/11/2010

Dear Ingrid,

I hope you are fine and in a good health .

The subject : Report about the Palestinian Scout's mission to Germany .

Date of trip : 23/7/2010 till 7/8/2010

Number of participants is 19 within the leader .

First day, it was in the morning and the weather was so cold and rainy ,the nature was against us this is our luck and destiny wherever we go .

It was at King Street in Stuttgart city which was crowded with pedestrians , coming and going , people were carrying umbrellas to protect themselves from the rain and they were ready for the changes of the weather . What an active woman , who had the determination and strong character , she was trying to intercept the passing to give them the brochures of Beit Atfal Assomoud and the invitation card to the concert which was organized in the city . Some people responded and others refused even to take the brochure , she moved between them with a lot of faith in what she was doing ?

She was Ms. Ingrid and with her a working team consisted of Ms. Kathrina, Natali, Samer, and Samir Hamoud . They all were ready always to do what we want . Samer is a Lebanese man who decided to support the Palestinian issue .

We put the tables on the edge of the street , and put over them the embroidery and some kinds of sweets that we have brought with us from Burj El Shamali camp for Palestinian refugee . Our goal was to sell them and save the money to support the scout group . We hang the Palestinian flags in order to draw people attention , the music band started to play beside the tables . But the weather was so bad rain was falling and sometimes it became heavy to the extent that we could not even stay in our places . In our lunch time , Ms. Ingrid brought us some sandwiches , juices and cups of coffee and tea .

In the afternoon, they organized for us a tour around the city to discover the beauty of the place . The scouts liked to take pictures even for a simple places and things in order to show them to their families and friends there back home in Burj Al Shamali camp .

In the morning of the second day , we moved to Wiblingen City to meet the German Scouts' leaders . They were training on some songs that will present in the sponsor church for the scout movement . First , we introduced ourselves to the German scout and then reading prayer started . We had a speech there about Beit Atfal Assomoud , Palestinian issues , refugee camps and the difficulties which we face in these camps . After that we had a discussion about communication and cooperation between people to achieve justice and dignity .

During our time in church , the German scouts presented some songs and the Palestinian scouts also did the same .Our visit showed a satisfaction on all the attenders' faces and they all praised the cooperation between the scout and their noble mission . In the evening , there was a show for dancing and music and finally we thanked the German Institution which gave us the opportunity to meet them and to help our Institution in Lebanon .

The next morning , we went to place inhabited by political refugees coming from different countries , the place showed the harshness of their life .People from different countries , cultures and habits shared the same room with difficulties in communication and big social problems . They are deprived from many things such as work , contact with relatives . They got 40 Euro per month for everything they need and they spent many years in this place without any decision concerning their situation .

After two or three months some of those people got a temporary residence card till the troubles in their countries will solve , but in general the government refused their requests to stay in Germany for good . The supports for these people come from the NGOs who are very active and provide help through many programs like campaigns for supporting them , vocational training and fun .

Tuesday 27/7/2010 , it was our meeting with the director of the Social Affairs in the municipality of Stuttgart . The meeting in general was not useful because she wasted the time asking the children about their impressions about Germany .When we started to talk about Palestinian issues , she said that the old generation were militant and fanatic but the new generation are seriously believes in peace and looking forward towards it . She did not listen to us , we wanted to explain our miserable conditions and that we are suffering since 62 years .

During our meeting with her , she said that in Stuttgart the proportion of foreign communities from different countries is high especially the Palestinian refugees (20,000) and the government with the NGOs provide a good services for them . In the end , we asked her to support our programs and support the Fluchtlinge Kinder in Lebanon because they support Beit Atfal Assomoud in various programs . After that we viewed a film about Stuttgart city and she invited us to dinner .

We visited the high popular school in Stuttgart and we showed them our arts program . In the city , there is a committee works with refugees and it follows up with all immigrants but it can not override laws passed by the higher authorities in the government or laws of the European authorities .

Wednesday 28/7/2010 , the weather was windy and rainy , our program in that day was to visit the zoo in Wilhmla but the Palestinian scout was not ready for such weather and during our tour in the zoo all the group got wet . One of the children attacked by asthma because because of the weather and that obliged us to send him to the hospital by ambulance with Ms. Kathrina .

We met a man there , his name is Isam , he is from Lebanon but he went to Germany during the civil war in Lebanon , he did not know the name of his village only he remembered that he was living in Dawra in Beirut . He was a kind man , he invited us to eat pizza at his restaurant . The group got their lunch then went out to play football and we were waiting and worried about the child . Thanks God after one hour he got his treatment and returned back to join the group and together we all went to the hotel to rest after a hard day full of many events .

On Thursday 29/7/2010 , it should be the first day of the scout camp but the weather was rainy ,so we had to change the program . We stayed in the hotel and cooked a meal for the group it was a Palestinian traditional meal called Makloubeh (rice and meat) . After the lunch , we left the hotel to a playground . Again the children started to play football even the girls they threw the ball high with lots of shouting and laughing , our children could not play quietly but they were happy .

Friday 30/7/2010 , in the morning we left the hotel to the place where the scout camp would take place . After one hour we arrived to a forest where you could see only high trees , it was far away from people inside a jungle . We reached the place where the tents constructed to welcome the Palestinian and German scouts . In addition to tents , there were bathrooms made up from plastic and an equipped kitchen with tools to cook by fire . The members of the scout reached to 80 persons and the laws of the scout were very strict and everyone must obeyed these laws .

Some scouts started to collect wood for cooking , others started to carry the bags into the tents , the camp at that moment was full of energy and excitement , although everyone was wetted from the rain . After we organized our stuff , the scouts altogether made two circles inside each other to introduce themselves . Ms. Ingrid was so worried about the adaptation between the participants in the camp . On the other side , the fear was about the Palestinian scout from the cold weather because they did not have heavy clothes suitable for such weather . Because of this , Ms. Natalie collected some winter clothes and brought them to the camp . She distributed them to the group some as a gifts other we borrowed and gave them back at the end of the camp .

At the lunch time , the scouts sat in groups in order to take their meals . There was a rules in the camp we must obey through the meal time , no one could leave his or her place even if he or she wanted to add more food , they should take a permission from the leader to move out from his or her place . Before eating and after finishing , the group must pray for God blessing , we as a Plastinian scout read it in Arabic but we both have a common word which is (Amin) .

After lunch , we went to a castle far away 10 km , the castle was located on a hill around the plains and plateaus , it was not easy at all to reach because the scouts must go up down between the hills which were full of apple , pear , and cranberry trees . Sometimes to put limit to our hunger , we used to pick fruits from the trees to eat . The aim of the trip was to see the place which there was many kinds of birds like eagles and owls , also to see the birds show .

The show started with a man who mastered dealing with birds especially the eagles , he gave an eagle orders like to come and eat from his hand , to fly to the tree and also to pass over our heads without hurting anyone . In our culture , eagle is a dangerous bird and most of the people afraid from it , so it was a good lesson for our scouts to recognize that human beings have the ability to deal with dangerous birds whereas sometimes they do not know how to deal with each other .

After our trip , we came back to the camp and got our dinner (bread , better , jam , chocolate and hot tea) . At 10 PM , the scouts made a ceremonial evening around the fire , we tried to teach the German Scout some Arabic songs Ms. Ingrid tried to translate these songs to them in order to understand the meanings . The German scout sang nice songs as well accompanied with the guitar . It was very nice evening , after one hour , we went to the flagpole sang a song and then took the flag down and during this the group should be completely calm .

The long and hard day was finished , the scouts where so tired some of them went directly to sleep and others stayed awake but without disturbing others . In the mid of the night while it was raining heavily and the camp was completely dark , we woke up on the scouts' voices from inside the tents shouting and screaming because of the water which entered the tents and wetted the ground and mattresses .

At 8:30 AM , we woke up and made some sports after that we went to wash our faces and took the breakfast . In that day water finished so we should wait for a new coming tank of water , life in the camp was not easy at all but this was good for the scout's sake in order to learn how to face the difficulties . The camp was divided into several groups and every group had a specific mission to do . Some of our children were very good , friendly and cooperative others were not like that at all they liked to play and wasted their time for nothing , so we obliged them to do their missions and sometimes we treated them harshly because we need a goo generation and tried to work on that hardly .

One day a Christian man came to the scouts camp his native country is Sudan , also he could speak the two languages Arabic and German . He talked with us about the religions both Islamic and Christian and the meanings behind them like tolerance , love , mercy and forgiveness . He talked also about life and family relationships in the East which are not existing in the West society . The lecture had a wonderful meaning and carrying good values .

In the afternoon , parents started to come to the scouts camp and within them Ms. Ingrid , Natalie , Osolide and their husbands too . They were our families there in Germany also all the families showd a respectful attitude towards our shows and songs and they were astonished when they listened us repeating some German songs .

It was the last day in the camping and in that night we had march of the night under the name of quite snake , all the bands had flashlights and we should walk five kilometers far away from the camp . Rally game inside the jungle was a fantastic game , it was about who could collect more fruits and animals from each other but for sure they were not a real ones .

Next day we started from the morning after our breakfast to clean the place well , it should be as if there was nobody there . After that we collected our bags and things and left with an amazing

memories inside our heart and soul we arrived to the city , some of the families were waiting for us after that we gave the borrowed clothes back to Ms. Katherine but we faced a problem which was missing some of the clothes , Ms. Katherine said nothing about that she is so polite and active lady .

During our visits to the families we touched the happiness and we knew that there are many other kids whom are facing many problems maybe different than ours but our the general aim for all the families was how to make our children happy . Next day we met in the city center to advertise about our mission .

The final day of our mission was to visit the Alb Mountains , in the evening we prepared the vegetables in Ulia's house , this family was really very kind where I was with Hanan and Ibtisam residing ,but Ibtisam after one day obliged to change the place to join other family in order to take care of that girl who was sick . In the night we decided to make Taboli for the trip but our bad luck forced us to change the program because of the bad weather and instead of that Ms. Ingrid invited us to her home to take lunch there .

We can frankly talk about our trip to Germany , it was amazing trip full of meaningful experiences , people there are so helpful and friendly and they did their best to help our association . During our trip we achieved the following :

- The importance of exchanging cultures and experiences .
- Achieving our aim through showing our heritage and giving informations about our association , the Palestinian camps and the Palestinian issues .
- Exchanging informations about religion through visiting both the mosque and the church .
- Knowing the Boy Scout Ceremony .
- Getting some financial funds for both burj el shamali and al rashedeyeh camps and that by selling some of our products the amount reached to 520 Euro .
- Gaining some knowledge about archeological places .

Some points I must mentioned as a notifications :

- Choosing the children was not suitable .
- Difficulties in communication because of the different languages despite of that there were some Lebanese and Palestinian tried to help us in translation .
- The rainy weather .
- Some children can be scout leaders in the future and others need more care .

Thanks for Beit Atfal Assomoud / Burj El Shamali center / Ms. Ingrid and everyone helped her and last but not least thanks for the German citizens all over Germany .