



SUSAN INTERVIEWS VERONICA IN ITALY

VERONICA

Hi everybody, I'm Veronica, I'm 23 and I'm currently living in my home town, that is a small town in Umbria that is in the centre of Italy and I'm currently living at my parents place with my family and I've been there during the whole pandemic time. I'm currently working as a freelance Italian tutor online teaching my native language to people from all over the world.

SUSAN

What's the current situation with the pandemic where you are?

VERONICA

Well, it's pretty much difficult here too, like in many other European countries, although the cases seem to be decreasing during these days but we don't have a national lockdown. We have a system with different colours. Now the majority of the regions have been declared orange zone. There are a few red where the situation is really, really serious and some other yellow, that are not so different from the orange one, and I am currently in the orange area. In the orange area we are allowed to travel inside our town without any document to show, but we cannot go outside our region. So, yeah, it is pretty serious in Umbria as well.

SUSAN

And are the restaurants open?

VERONICA

The restaurants are open only for the home delivery or the take-away service, until 6pm and yeah, until 6pm, and maybe now it was extended to 10pm. The same is valid for cafés, coffee shops. It's the same for the restaurants so we cannot go there and sit and have a meal there, but only for take-away.

SUSAN

Are all the shops open?

VERONICA

Yes, the shops, yeah, they are open to the public.

SUSAN

What about schools and colleges, are they open?



VERONICA

Now, no, colleges, college students are a bit forgotten unfortunately, so I think that it will be a while before college students can go back in the classrooms, but I know that primary school students until high school, they can go now. They can have classes in presence in the classroom. Also high school students, now they just got back to classroom but for college no, not yet. I consider myself lucky because I had the opportunity to finish my studies. Yes, I finished the second semester of my last college year during the pandemic in the first lockdown and then I graduated last summer. I was glad, at least, for being able to spend my school time on the school desk, not online, because I understand that it is difficult, it's a bit weird for young people not to be able to meet their friends, schoolmates. They miss out on the fun aspect of school.

SUSAN

What have you found that you have missed most?

VERONICA

Yes, of course, like I think many people during the confinement at home, I really missed, of course, the freedom. The geographical, physical freedom of choosing where you want to go. The freedom of travelling, because this is something that I think many of us take for granted, also before the COVID broke out, because we have the freedom to travel abroad everywhere. The borders are always open to us, European people, this was really difficult when the borders started to close down to Italian people. It was weird. This is something that I really miss so much because I wanted to go abroad after my graduation, and so my plans sort of fell apart, and then of course I miss the physical contact with my friends, with social activity, social events, social life, because you know that, in Italy especially, it is important for us to shake our hands, to hug people, to hold people. So this is something that is missing and is something that we are looking forward to doing again. The freedom of going out for a pizza, planning, yes the freedom of making plans, going somewhere, going to fitness lessons without wearing masks or social distancing. Yes, this is the freedom of what seems another era before COVID.

SUSAN

Have you discovered anything new during lockdown?

VERONICA

During the lockdown I found myself stuck here in the countryside, and at my parents 'home where I was born and raised so I had the opportunity to get back to nature, to walk into nature, and it was also really nice, especially during this time, hard times where you are constantly filled with negative news, it was really nice to connect with nature and walk around. Yes, I read more books because I had more time with me to read books and yes, reflect on what I usually took for granted during this time. I discovered myself to be also an online tutor and I never thought that I could work online and create an online job for me. So that was a surprise for me, because this COVID situation pushed me to find something online. I thought that it wasn't my cup of tea but then it turned out to be really interesting.



SUSAN

When the pandemic is finished, do you think you will carry on working online like this?

VERONICA

Yes, this is a good question, because I thought about it and of course I can't wait to, as soon as the borders are open of other countries, I can't wait to go, travel around Europe and beyond and find something in the travel/tourism industry because I really enjoy the interaction with people and exploring other countries, but I think that I will also carry on this online conversation with people because I really find it rewarding to help people learn my language and give this contribution with my, er with my skills that I have learnt during this time.

SUSAN

Well thank you very much Veronica.

VERONICA

Thank you. Thank you.