

**Just a chat with a student**

**PETER BACK** Switzerland

**What's your name and where are you from?**  
I'm Peter Back. I was born in Basel, but I lived in Pratteln for 3 years when I was 27, because my previous girlfriend was a teacher there. The way to work for her was not long. When I lived in Pratteln, I worked in Binningen; and I went to work by car, but now I live in Basel and go to work by bicycle.

**Tell me about your job.**  
The correct title of my job is, "Social-Cultural Animator". Before this job, I learned to be a cabinet maker and I worked as a cabinet maker for three years. I worked in a special furniture firm. I built tables, chairs, antique tables and I repaired furniture, too. Then, I did a practicum in a social institute and I took a course in social work for three years in a school in Luzern. Three years ago, I started to work in the place where I now work.

**What is the age range, the youngest and the oldest?**  
The youngest is 4 years old, but she comes with her parents. Most visitors are from 6 to 12 years old in my section. We have another house for people from 12 to 20. On a daily basis, I have about 20 to 40 visitors. Normally, there are two workers and a trainee – someone who is learning the job.

**What sorts of things do you do with the young people?**  
The place is an area for children to meet other children, and they can experience life together working, playing. They learn to be sociable. We have a big workroom with wood, colors, paper, a lot of things, and the children can use their inspiration. I give them ideas but many children, at first, are bored but slowly they get ideas of what they can do.

**Do you try to get them to make perfect pieces of furniture?**  
The quality of the work is important, but the quality of the children's work is different; and that's OK.

**It's the experience that the children have which is most important.**  
That's correct.

**Do you only do this work?**  
Yes, 90% – It is a lot of work – there are a lot of elements. We have animals. Animals are an important part in the area.

**How do you manage problems, like when the children have fights?**  
I speak to them, but we normally have a good time. There are conflicts every day, but they are small conflicts.

**Are you learning English because of children at the center?**  
Yes, but my motivation is to have fun and to enjoy learning English; the second point is these children who speak English.

**Do you have children who speak other languages?**  
Yes, children from Germany, which is no problem, children from China, Japan, Spain, Italy. It's international, but most people are from Switzerland.

**Are your work colleagues also cabinet makers?**  
One person is a carpenter, but today it is important to have schooling in social work, to be an animator.

**Why did you decide to switch from cabinet making to social work?**  
I like contact with other people, communication, and the creative work with children, with other people. As a cabinet maker, I worked alone, and the communication was minimal.

**Will you continue with this work for years? Is it your life's work?**  
I don't know. I will see what's coming. Now it's OK. Two years in the future, I don't know. I think I want to change, but I don't know what. I like creative work. I play in the theatre. I have many interests. Maybe I can change to this side.

**Do you mean that you like to act in the theatre?**  
I have a program with my brother. We go from one theatre to another in Germany and Switzerland in the "Kellartheater" or Basement Theatre. It's a small theatre with atmosphere. Our program is perfect for this area. We do cabaret, situations from everyday life.

**Do you do improvisation?**  
No, it's text I have in my head. I write this text with my brother. But not in English; that's too difficult.

**When did you start the theatre work with your brother?**  
18 years ago. In the beginning, we were a theatre group and we played at many theatres with other people. We did plays: comedy and drama, a mixture.

**How do you balance your work, your theatre, your home life?**  
Sometimes, it's difficult. I was younger 18 years ago and now I look for my resources, my energy. We now do cabaret six to ten times a year. Each performance is two sets of about 45 minutes. In the past, we did more, but now, I'm older and my brother, also.

**Does your girlfriend like performing in theatre, too?**  
She doesn't play in the theatre, but she enjoys the theatre. She's a kindergarten teacher, and that's OK for her.

**Do you have time for sports?**  
A little. Every morning, I do some toning exercises; I do some stretches. I spend about 10 to 15 minutes doing that every day. Sometimes, I must make myself do it.

**Do you have a favorite word or expression in English?**  
There are many words. The sound of the word, "beautiful", is nice. It is a word that I understand. When I was a child, I knew this word.

**Does anyone in your family speak English?**  
Yes, my brother. I have three brothers. The brother I play theatre with speaks English at a higher level than me.

**Could you speak to him in English, to practice English?**  
Why not? My girlfriend speaks English better than me, and we sometimes speak in English.

**Do you live mostly in the present, the past or the future?**  
Sometimes, I live in the future. Sometimes, there is a lot of planning at my work. Some people who work with me leave the organization and one person, a good friend, retires in 2013, and I often think in the future.

**How do you feel about the conversation we had today?**  
It's difficult for me, but OK; with hands and gestures, it's OK.



**LIA'S EXCEPTIONAL DOG SHELTER**

*Just a chat with Karin Braun Switzerland & Italy*

*Karin Braun has set up a fundraising foundation to help Lia continue her life-saving shelter for dogs.*

**Does Lia have any kind of similar foundation in Italy to encourage people to donate money to her shelter?**  
20 years ago, most of the Italians did not know what a vegetarian was and did not care about animal protection. Nowadays, there are organizations all over the country and they do networking, using Facebook and other social media. Lia has some volunteers, and they all belong somehow to an organization.

Lia lives off donations and her own money, and she takes in dogs as boarders, for example, from Italians who move house but cannot have a dog in their new home. These kinds of people pay a monthly amount for dog boarding, 80 euro a month for food and veterinary treatment. About 50% of Lia's dogs are paid for, but 50% are not, and that can be up to 70 or 80 dogs.

Lia's volunteers are very active in searching for adoptions: they find out how the people live. If the volunteers think it's ok, they make a contract, they give the dog and they keep in touch with these people all the time. It's not just, "have the dog, and goodbye."

**How do new dogs arrive at Lia's dog shelter?**  
Lia's quite famous. In 2010, the Italian TV station, Rai Tre, broadcasted a report about her and her project.

Most of the existing dog shelters in Italy are hell on earth. Since 1991, it has been forbidden in Italy to kill stray dogs. Before that date, they were killed, like in Spain or Greece. Nowadays, stray dogs end up in dog shelters called "canili". Nearly all dog shelters are subsidized by the government and so are big business. They get between 3 and 7 euro per dog per day. So, a "canile" can make several hundred Euros a day. The keepers of the "canili" try to hold the costs as low as they can, which means a minimum of food and medical aid for the dogs. A lot of dogs are starving in the "canili" and are in a horrible state of health.

Lia's shelter is THE alternative to the "canili". The dogs in her hands are loved, cared for, and provided with food and medicine when ill. Her dogs are brought to her by people who find an abandoned dog in the street, or by animal rights campaigners or they come from one of the "canili" that had to be closed because of the extremely miserable care given to the dogs.



*This is Bosco then. He came from one of the "canili".*

Most of the dogs are living in packs in a huge garden, but she also has kennels of generous dimensions. Sadly, what has happened is that she has to pull down all of the kennels, because she built them 20 years ago without permission. She has to modify all her existing buildings, move over to the former indoor riding arena the ten horses she is giving charity to, and the kennels are being re-constructed in the former horse stables.

**What sorts of fundraising activities have you done?**  
We have done three projects so far.

The first, and the biggest one, was a benefit dinner. We cooked a high-level seven-course vegetarian meal in the newly renovated Restaurant Zum Seiler in Liestal which we could take over for our dinner events. We were all amateurs but the result of our labor gave a lot of pleasure to our guests. We attached importance to a fresh, authentic and honest cuisine - lemons should taste like lemons, not like bottled lemon juice, so we squeezed 20 kilograms of lemons to make the sorbet.

The next event was at carnival time, our "serata veneziana", a picture show of the carnival of Venice. We served drinks and snacks. There was no charge, but "gestures of help" were put in our donation box.

Our last event was a first-aid course for dog owners. Gilbert, my co-president, is a veterinarian and he shared part of his knowledge with interested course participants who wanted to learn how to act and react in case of an emergency. Many subjects were covered during this very interesting and informative day.

Our next event will be an Italian Pasta Festival at the English Center Basel School of English.

**Do you have a financial target for Lia's dog shelter?**  
The first target is to help Lia through her building phase. So far, we have been able to cover 50% of the costs caused by the reconstruction. When this is done, we will serve as a 'carrying column' helping financially to keep her project alive and realizing new establishments, such as a (hospital) ward for instance. Her costs are high. She needs 80kg of dog food a day, not to talk about vaccinations, de-worming, sterilizations (every dog is sterilized), operations and other veterinary interventions.



*This is Bosco now. He's living at Lia's dog shelter.*

As for our fundraising efforts, we will just continue and we avail ourselves of the opportunity to thank our members, friends, benefactors, sponsors as without them our efforts would be fruitless.

On our leaflet, we quote Sören Kierkegaard who said that "Life offers a lot of possibilities to love". We have chosen ours. And we are more than open for help and "possibilities" in any way. One possibility is a membership in our association for 25.00 Francs a year or help with a donation. Other possibilities are to visit our events, choose one of Lia's dogs as your new family member, or to help Lia in Umbria with her daily work.

For more info: [www.hundehilfemittelitalien.ch](http://www.hundehilfemittelitalien.ch)

We look forward to being guests of English Center Basel and hopefully meeting as many of the students and teachers as possible under a nice and warm summer night sky above the roofs of Basel.

**Top tip for learning English**

**SIX-MINUTE ENGLISH**

*by Mireille Nägelin Switzerland*

Wide spread is the phrase: I don't have time to study English, life is too busy. Does this sound familiar to you? If yes, then don't worry, it is not hopeless because the BBC has created a unique website. You need only 6 minutes. Go to [www.bbc.uk/worldservice/learningenglish](http://www.bbc.uk/worldservice/learningenglish). This website has many helpful exercises such as 6-minute English where you can listen while you are walking outside. You can download a free podcast and listen to the dialogue. After every program, they mention all of the special words and they give easy-to-understand explanations. There is also an app available but it costs you 2.50 francs, which is money well spent. Try and enjoy ☺

**ECB crossword contest**

**WIN A PRIZE!**

**First prize** is a unit of English studies at English Center Basel School of English for a friend of the winner, a value of 450 CHF.

**Second prize** is a year's subscription to "Journal de Bale", a value of 78 CHF.

**Third prize** is an "English Center Basel School of English" T-shirt, a value of 35 CHF.

In order to qualify for any of the prizes, you must complete the crossword and answer the questions below, and then photocopy the crossword and answers and hand it in at reception by **16:00 on Thursday, July 19**. All correct entries will be entered into a draw. The winners will be drawn at our **Speaking Practice Apéro** on the same day, Thursday, **July 19**, at English Center Basel School of English.

1. What is the name of a fruit found in New Zealand?
2. How many club tables are standing in front of reception?
3. What is the title of computer lesson 15 (A1)?
4. What is the simple past form of the verb "eat"?
5. What is the international distress signal? (three letters)?
6. What is the name of the river in London?
7. What is the first name of the male teacher from England?
8. What is the capital city of France?
9. What is the title of the computer lesson 106 (B2.1)?
10. What is the color of the notice board at reception?
11. What is the capital city of England?
12. On which floor is the school's reception?
13. What is the name of the ship which sank 100 years ago?
14. What is the German street name where the school is?

**PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY**

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**Finalist questions:**  
*Answer these last questions in order to qualify for a prize!*

How many computers are in the computer room? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the name of the teacher who comes from Los Angeles? \_\_\_\_\_

How many *Selecta* beverage dispensers does the school have? \_\_\_\_\_

What's the name of your consultant? \_\_\_\_\_

**Your contact details**  
*Please fill in your details:*

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

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