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“That’s how we found our son” said Simone Pedron’s mother.

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"We have done everything alone and we have been able to find our son". Maria Rosa Corda is the mother of Simone Pedron, the boy from Brebbia that has been away from home for 5 months and was tracked down by his parents to the South of Portugal, in a community farm where he worked in exchange for board and lodging.

Simone left last August 22nd with a backpack on his shoulder and the idea of trying out a solitary life experience, "forgetting" to advise his family who, for weeks and weeks, have been with their heart in their throat before embracing him again.

The 17 years-old boy has walked through the St. James' Way, and then travelled to Portugal where he has been found by his parents and another pilgrim, that met the boy on the way. This is how.

"In December we knew that he was actually in Santiago, as we imagined and hoped. From there we moved until the decision of the last weeks: Let's leave and bring him back, wherever he is" said Maria Rosa, Simone's mother **"we started off from Madrid, my husband and I, with another man from Turin, a friend by now, who had met Simone during the St. James' Way** and gave him a hand (money and clothes). Simone told him that he was an orphan and his name was Pedro. The man believed in that and helped him, but when he discovered the truth after his return in Italy, he got in touch with us and wanted to join us in this "adventure".

One thing at a time. When did you leave and how were you organised?

"On January 8th, it was Wednesday, we left. In Madrid we hired a car and traveled the North, to Ponferrada, where we were in contact with a sergeant of the Civil Guard. We didn't know where Simone was and we tried here and there. We knew that until October Simone has been on the Way, going South, and we tried to recreate his movements".

Where did you go after Ponferrada?

"thanks to that Spanish policeman's help, who I'm gonna be grateful to for the rest of my life, we travelled to 20 km from Leon, in an ecovillage where Simone spent some time. There, they told us that he talked about his idea to head toward the South, toward the heat and so we entered Portugal."

We guess that tracking him down hasn't been easy...

"No, it hasn't. **To find him I' searched in the web sites of every community farm** which gives hospitality to several young people that want to have a life experience with

few money. They make them work in exchange for board and lodging and there are experiences like those. **I called the numbers I found and at the eighth, ninth, tenth phone call I found a man in the south of Portugal that told me they host a boy called Pedro who coincided with the description of Simone.** And so we went to take him back."

How did he react when he saw you?

" He was surprised, he would have never imagined it. **However he was happy. Maybe because he was tired from running away**, but not from pretending to be someone else. He liked pretending to be an adult. He decided to come back home with us and we didn't force him. If he hadn't wanted I think we wouldn't have insisted, but there was no problem about that."

And you? How did you feel and react about that?

"**Happiness at first.** We have spent time, money, energy, everything. But we've done it. He knows that he made a mistake, that it wasn't the right way to do a thing that he wanted to do at all costs.

He made us suffer, but there will be time to talk to each other and understand. Do you know what? **I'm happy because he did well**, he proved to be a mature and polite boy, all the people that met him said the same thing: he's a good boy."

There is some dark point in what happened?

" I'm not angry with anyone, but **the credit to have brought Simone back home is only ours, of my husband and I.** The Unit of crime risk prevention's staff gave us a hand proposing us a lawyer that would take care of us, but my only aim wasn't knowing how the investigations were proceeding, but find my son. It was unsuitable when they said us that Simone has been arrested in Spain in October. He ran away from an inspection and he spent a night in jail (it has been comfortable for him to have a roof over his head and a hot meal.), **but the disconcerting thing is that even if he hadn't his documents and he was visibly young, they didn't make any alerts**, in fact the Interpol didn't have my son's profile."

How did you bring him back home without documents?

"That's another little adventure in the adventure. I had a copy of his ID card. We had to go to the consulate and do all the procedures, but we didn't have any time to spare so, with a little stratagem, I've persuaded the Airline staff to let us leave. **So on Tuesday morning (January 14th) we took off and came back home. We're all together again, and this is the most important thing.**"

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