

My Sozialpraktikum in the Hospiz Siloah in Herrnhut

During the years of 2018 and 2019 I participated in a Youth Exchange Program, therefore I left my homeland, Brazil, to live in Berlin for a year.

While studying at *Evangelisches Gymnasium zum Grauen Kloster*, I had the privilege to take part in my class's *Sozialpraktikum*. During the project I would be working in the *Hospiz Siloah*. At first, I had little to no idea of how such an institution works. My expectations were to basically find a dark and sad environment. Gladly, such expectations were not fulfilled, for I was to find a place filled with happy and hopeful people.

On our first day there, the director took me and my partner through the building and its concepts, the first concept being the most important. It consists of a bowl filled with water, on which candles are lit every time one of the people going through treatment passes away. He also helped us understand which activities and chores were to be executed through the *Praktikum*. At first, our contact with the patients was little, but that would gradually change.

The first week involved interesting activities, which presented little to no contact with the patients. Between cleaning and paperwork, some interesting chores came to light, such as programming the spreadsheets that list the number of people that have deceased every month, their gender, reason of death, and previous treatment places.

Slowly, we were introduced to some of the patients. One of them really intrigued me, for he was always interested in everyone, constantly seeking contact to people. Even though he presented a difficult condition, he was, most of the time, the most cheerful and hopeful person in there.

Once, I was asked where I was from, so I gladly answered and explained how my motherland works and how my life is there, including the key explanation that Brazilians speak Portuguese, and not Brazilian. A few moments later, the same person asked me what the language spoken in Brazil was, and that was when I realized how things worked in there, so I again explained everything about life in Brazil, and that felt extremely fulfilling. I also understood then, how difficult it can be to work in such an environment, and how much attention is needed from the staff. For that, I've started to really appreciate and understand their work and dedication.

Through the course of the next week, our contact to the patients kept increasing, and our chores started shifting from the simplest, such as cleaning work, towards taking care of the patients directly. We had moments to simply interact, listen to stories and give them attention, but also to bring food, disinfect the rooms and help moving them through the house.

One man particularly caught my attention, for he kept a very strict daily routine. His routine consisted mainly on cleaning the outside of the house (even though he was never asked to), painting, and always being present in the common area for the meals. What impressed me is the fact that he was never shaken by his condition, that even though he was in a difficult situation, he kept moving forward. I feel deeply inspired by that man's will.

I can only say that it was an amazing experience, filled with learning and comprehension, both from the patients and learning ourselves. I never thought that such a place could bring me so much hope and harmony, and I can say that I left with nothing but happiness and courage whatsoever.

Eduardo Pita, UIIC

Hinweis:

Die beiden Praktikumsplätze im Hospiz besetzen wir nur auf ausdrücklichen Wunsch der Schüler_innen und nach Rücksprache mit den Eltern durch die Klassenlehrer.