



“I have learnt to learn by watching and imitating, which has meant a lot to me in my personal development, and I am really hungry for learning now.” (Anne, 20)

Project granted by the Youth in Action National Agency in: Denmark

Hosting organisation:
SOS Kinderdorf Berlin-Moabit
www.sos.kinderdorf.de
SOS Kinderdorf, Schulhort www.sos-kinderdorf.de
Nestwärme e.V. www.nestwaerme-berlin.de
urban-consult GmbH www.urban-consult.de

Sending organisation:
Faaborg-Midtfyn Ungdomsskole
www.fmusfaaborgmidtfyn.dk

Activity dates:
01/05/2009 - 01/11/2010
(7 months)

 DENMARK: Anne, 20 years / Camilla, 20 years / Lina, 20 years / Thomas, 19 years
 GERMANY



WORKING IN A KINDERGARTEN IN BERLIN, GERMANY

Anne (20 years) from Denmark, spent 7 months (2009/2010) working in a kindergarten in Berlin. She joined three other volunteers, also from Denmark: Camilla (20 years), Lina (20 years) and Thomas (19 years).

Their sending organisation, Faaborg-Midtfyn Ungdomsskole (informal education centre) in Faaborg, Denmark, has a long-standing link with four organisations running kindergarten and day-care projects in Berlin (urban-consult, SOS-Kinderdorf Berlin-Moabit, SOS Kinderdorf Schulhort, Nestwärme) and for some time has been sending young people to volunteer their time. The kindergartens and day care centres are often located in fairly run-down neighbourhoods and the children looked after by the volunteers are from a variety of different social backgrounds. Although some are from stable, supportive families, a high proportion are seriously disadvantaged. Some have parents who are unemployed. Others have been diagnosed with HIV or severe behavioural problems.

Anne and her friends were well prepared for their work. Before leaving Denmark they made two visits to Berlin and former Danish volunteers, still working or studying in Berlin, showed them around the city, explained practicalities and discussed German culture and society. They also gave them tips on how to build up networks. By working in the kindergarten Nestwärme Anne provided extra care for the individual child. A special bonus for the children was when she talked to them about her family back home in Denmark and taught them Danish songs and games. In fact, Anne used Danish lullabies to calm the children when they became boisterous. After school hours, she met the parents and became involved in the local community by attending meetings and other events.

Every step of the way the sending organisation in Denmark made sure that the young volunteers received the maximum benefit from their volunteering. A mentor from Denmark visited them several times during the year. They learned a lot about how to work with children, particularly those with the sort of problems encountered in the kindergarten. And of course they learned to speak German fluently and to live successfully in a multicultural setting. The experience changed their lives and made such an impact on Anne that she decided to move to Berlin to take up her studies there.

Anne's volunteering took place within the framework of a well-established relationship between the organisation in Faaborg and the hosting organisations in Berlin. Both have shown how much they value the arrangement by creating a network of former volunteers who help to recruit new volunteers and to train them before they start their work.