

Volunteer report by Meltem Görgülü
European Solidarity Corps volunteer at Wohngemeinschaft St. Martin in Klosterneuburg, Austria
from May 2022 to May 2023



I started my project in May 2022. I worked in St. Martin Wohngemeinschaft. My main task is to offer to (re)integration into the society for adults with disabilities. I contribute mainly through leisure time activities and by offering a working place. As a volunteer I supported them in the daily routine at Wohnheim St. Martin, creating leisure time activities for the clients, helping with meal times, art activities, supporting about writing and reading skills, accompanying the clients on excursions.

On the other hand, I developed my German skills. I did not speak and write in German at the beginning of my volunteering; I am now able to speak and write in German. Also, I improved my existing English level. I find out to work with foreign team. I gained organizing plan and to decide activities together by speaking foreign language. I started art and educational activities. I built art workshop about painting the wall with clients. I know how to manage people who have disabilities. I supported them and we created many activities.

I attended photography workshops supported by Grenzenlos and WIENXTRA, and at the end of the workshop, there was an exhibition of photographs describing my volunteering.

After the photography workshops, I realized that the experience of volunteering in Austria opened up new horizons like how I commit myself to my project and touching lives to leave my comfort zone and express myself in new languages, and it was the best way to express this with photographs. It was an instructive and entertaining experience to present my volunteering story and being in Austria with the techniques I learned. Seeing my experience again with photographs brought new perspectives like looking at details of nature, changing perspective, seeing everything more colorful. Seeing everything with photographs was as exciting and intriguing as a traveler discovering a new place.

Experiencing abroad has been one of the most enriching experiences in my life so far. The feeling of passing borders as if they weren't there, learning new languages to understand each other and experiencing other cultures as if you were a part of them. It all changes my perspective on life, community and the future. Thanks to project, I learnt a lot. I recommend everyone to part of ESC projects. I would like to thank Samira and the entire Grenzenlos team, the Topluma Destek Association and my host organization Wohngemeinschaft St. Martin, whose support I always felt during this process.

