

Hello,

My name is Clara, I am from Austria and from October 2022 to May 2023 I volunteered in a Kindergarden for children with social problems in Lisbon, Portugal.

Together with my friend Mirjam I decided to go abroad after Highschool and it was the best decision that I have ever made. I had months full of amazing experiences, new friendships and lots of happiness. Lisbon was the perfect destination and I fell in love with this city right away. Together with around 25 volunteers I lived in a house near the city. With eleven of them, I shared the floor, kitchen and bathroom, and even though it was hard sometimes to live with so many people, it was amazing to have a household with so much cultural variety and so many great personalities!



At my workplace, I was assigned to one group of 16 three-to-six-year-old kids. It took some time for me to settle in, as I could not speak & understand the language at all, but with every week it got better, I got used to the routines and formed relationships with the kids. My everyday tasks were playing with the kids, supporting the teacher, and helping with lunch, but I was always happy when I had the possibility to escape these routines and bring some of my ideas to my project.

Mirjam and me did an Austria Project with the kids from our groups. We cooked and baked traditional food, crafted a big "Austria-Scenery", taught them German words and danced to traditional music.

My favorite project was the wall in the playground, that me and the other volunteers painted. The Kids love it, it was so much fun to do that, and it is so nice to know, that there is something that I created, that will stay there even when I have left.



Apart from work I had many opportunities to explore Portugal and its incredibly various nature. There is so much to see and I loved travelling the country and getting to see so many new places.

At the on-arrival training, I met a guy who volunteers on Madeira and in January me and my friends visited him there. The island is one of the most beautiful places that I have ever seen, I still can't believe that I have really been there and that it was not just a dream.

In April, me and my two best friends here rented a van and went on a roadtrip from Lisbon to the Algarve and this was such an amazing experience too! Portugal has so much to offer, I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to live in such an amazing country! Lisbon became one of my favorite cities, I feel safe here and I love that it is so colorful and friendly. I am so thankful that I can call this city my home and I am already looking forward to coming back.



Doing a voluntary project abroad was one of the best decisions that I have ever made. I learned so much about myself, other cultures and life and if I could, I would do it again anytime.