

Volunteer report by Damla Kirarslan
European solidarity corps volunteer at Kindergruppe Teddybär
from October to July

It was a perfect year in every aspect. I feel so lucky about anything that this year had brought: friendships, a wonderful workplace, lovely co-workers, nature, culture, anything that Vienna had offered...

I was so happy about going to the Kindergruppe every day, playing with the kids, watching and observing them, and mostly learning with and by them. In the daily kindergroup routine, I was also preparing the snacks, warming up the lunch, and cleaning afterward.



1 A photo from one of the woods days with the kindergroup

I was really amazed by the methodology of the pedagogues in my kindergroup. Everything was so flexible and spontaneous but at the same time, everything was so well-thought and well-planned. All the things we do in the kindergroup were meeting with what the kids just needed. It was such an enlightening and fun experience for me.

Apart from the work, the other big portion of being an ESC volunteer was the social life. Since there were already many volunteers like me, I met so many people right away. I had the best flatmates ever whom I spent most of my free time. We discovered Vienna while living through every phase of it together; from the coldest and darkest days such as just after getting out from the German course, running to the subway or ice-bathing in the Donau to the shiny summer days where we just ride our bikes through the center to swim in the Donau (that time with a bearable temperature).



2 Rathausplatz ice-skating with the other volunteers



3With my flatmates and one of the actresses from the CATS musical.

KulturPass, it is the best thing to spend the winter with).

There are also so many things going on in Vienna which entertained me and fed me up a lot culturally and socially. Especially as the summer comes, every day another festival holds (you can check goodnight.at). But on the cold days it was nice to stay inside; being by myself, watching a film with friends, making a collage, baking together with my flatmates or visiting some museums (especially with the

I still can't believe how the time had passed. I should say that I am so grateful for everything that this year has brought.

Lastly, I would like to say a few things for the ones who are considering being a volunteer. In the beginning, I also had some fears and doubts about the language, leaving my comfort zone behind, and any other possible challenges. But it is good to know that you won't be alone, and you won't be the first one who got lost in those challenges. So, it is nice to remember that these are humane things that should not make you hesitate.

Take an action and enjoy!

Liebe Grüße
Damla