

Volunteer report by Ali SAPAN

European Solidarity Corps volunteer at Naturkindergruppe Gatschhüpfen From October 2024 to July 2025

Servus 😊

I am truly happy about the 10 months I spent in the Naturkindergruppe Gatschhüpfen kindergarten in Vienna as part of the European Solidarity Corps program.

The kindergarten has a unique concept and, unlike typical kindergartens, it is located in a forest in one of the most beautiful and green areas of Vienna.

We spent most of our time either in the kindergarten's garden or in the forest. It was a very special experience for me because, although nature-based kindergartens exist in my home country, Turkey, this was the first time I actually worked in one. In today's modern world, where our lives often take place among concrete buildings, it's truly wonderful for children to attend a school that's in nature.



This experience also gave me the chance to compare the educational approaches in Austria and Turkey, and to see the differences between them. I observed that children in Austria are much freer and more recognized as individuals in school.

It was very valuable to see how the children's opinions were taken seriously in the kindergarten. At the beginning, I was especially surprised to see children using hammers, chopping wood, using knives, and climbing trees on their own. I realized that in my own culture, we tend to be much more protective and guide children a lot. However, at Naturkindergruppe Gatschhüpfer, children have much more freedom to define their own personal boundaries.



The pedagogues working in the kindergarten were very understanding and always supportive. The parents were also very warm and helpful in the same way. My mentors always supported me and I always felt their sincerity. My coordinating organization, Grenzenlos, was very helpful and caring in every matter. They supported us in everything we needed. I would especially like to thank Samira and Gloria.



I would also like to talk about Vienna. Vienna is truly a lively and energetic city. It is a wonderful city where people from different cultures and countries live together. It offers unlimited opportunities for entertainment and exploration.

I really loved Vienna, and being a volunteer there and having this experience was amazing.

Vielen Dank 😊