

Report of Incoming Students from Mikkeli

During my first year, the International Coordinator from Bielefeld, Germany, took part in the international week in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. She introduced Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences for us and that was the first touch for my exchange place. Before the exchange, our International Coordinator took contact to International Coordinator in Germany. I did take contact to Germany's international coordinator later.

We were planning to do two practices in Bielefeld, Home care and Pediatrics. Our international coordinators did the planning and it worked out. Home care practice was in Bielefeld and pediatrics practice was in Minden. Bielefeld is a city of 327 000 people. Minden is located about 1 hour away from Bielefeld. Minden is a city with 80 000 people.

Before the exchange I did received 80% of the supporting money of Erasmus +. After the exchange I received the remaining 20%.

I asked my friend who was in Bielefeld before our exchange. How to get there best way? Me and my exchange partner ordered tickets from Tampere-Bremen. From Bremen we went by train about two hours.

For my travel I did get insurance from IF.fi. I took tetanus booster- vaccination before going exchange. All the other vaccinations were okay. I paid 246€ for semester ticket which I could use the whole three months. The semester ticket covers North Rheine Westfalica area. I can use it to bus, train and trams.

Before the exchange I was not able to speak German. I have had only one course in high school. I tried to study German before we leave. I did learn some basics.

My international coordinator organized an apartment for me. First I lived in Minden. The apartment was 25m² and cost 340e/month, with 680€ deposit. Other apartment in Bielefeld was 28m² and cost 280€/month and no deposit. The apartments were very good and clean. The apartment in Bielefeld was in the down town almost, only 1 km from center. Price level was cheaper than in Finland. Food was very much cheaper. Also eating and drinking outside was cheaper.

The ward of Pediatrics was in Johannes Wesling Klinikum-hospital. The ward was very good organized and very high quality of caring. I did learn a lot and also saw many new operations and caring ways. I was allowed do all the things as well as the nurses there. I did some of their tasks.

Organization of home care was in Bielefeld centrum. It was called Zentrum für Pflege und Gesundheit. We did take care of old people who need help in home. We were driving around the centrum by cars with our mentors. Home care was interesting because we visited in people homes. Caring tasks were both easy and also hard. Easy was the basic care and hard were some operations like taking care of tracheal cannulas.

In free time we were traveling around Germany and meeting new people. We visited in Cologne, Düsseldorf, Dortmund, Münster, Minden and Bielefeld. We organized evenings

with our new friends. We were visiting German family. The family cooked traditional German food for us. They will keep in our minds for long time.

Living in new culture was easy. I think that Germany is not so far away from Finland living culture. I find that people were more open and friendly. Always when I asked help they tried to help. Of course there were some differences. One barrier I find was the language barrier. People in Germany are afraid to speak English even though most of them can speak. In Finland I think people are more open to speak English for foreigners.

I think that I didn't have so much expectation. I thought that I am able to speak better German. Then when I started to try speaking, I was not able. I thought that I understand better than I do. I was trying very hard to understand and sometimes they translated everything in English. So you can manage with English but I prefer to study more German basics before!

About living I thought that it is cheaper and that expectation was right. The apartment was cheaper and also the food. A bag of food was about 20-24€ including meat and vegetables and bread and some basic needs. Sometimes I didn't find from the supermarket what I was looking for but I feel that was a small problem. Eating rhythm was different than in Finland. Germans eat breakfast and then lunch and in the evening some bread. That was the thing that I had to get used.

Straight when we came to Germany we had our buddies. They were volunteering as a tutor. Buddies were awesome. Every time we asked for help they tried to help. We had some problems with semester tickets and with health care.

There were no other exchange students in University of applied sciences on that time we were there. I saw a guy in the train the end of the period and he invited me to University's exchange students evening. I was so hurry on the last weeks so I was not able to go there. I think for the future is good to take contact to the University.

I learn from myself that I am able to survive in different country. I learn that I have to always ask if something is in my mind. If I don't know something it is smart to open your mouth for asking. Germans are very helpful.

The culture is very hierarchical. People have a value of the order. Higher values people must be respected. I think this was a good point, because in Finland we have gone a very equal. I think it is important to appreciate older people.

I didn't experienced greater difficulties when I was in exchange. I think the attitude that counts a lot. When you have a positive attitude and positive things correctly gets a lot more useful. Attitude counts.

I improved my German language considerably. I learned a lot of health vocabulary and learn to listen to a ward report in German. Of course I had to ask from time to time, but I think I improve a lot. I am able to manage in everyday conversations in German. I learned to read German.

I made many new friends. One really good friend with whom we will certainly keep in touch. We already have, using Skype.

Improved my children's medical care during the training professionally. Before training I was really scared how is the caring in the ward. I worked there and stop being afraid. I like working with children now more than ever. In home care I also learned a lot. I liked a lot the idea that the care of the elderly family helps a lot. I would like to develop in Finland, the importance of close care of the elderly.

I learned to behave appreciate the behavior of the German model. The Germans are nice to the neighbors and often know them well. I will in Finland always greet my neighbors, because it is a good way. My attitude changed and I appreciate the courtesy of Finnish activity habits. Today also I question my behavior and Finland behaviors. I want to develop the use of polite and respect other people.

My tips are:

1. Learn German basics before heading out to the exchange.
2. Semester ticket is really worth the cost.
3. Visit a number of German cities' because the cities are very different. There are a new and cool while the old and romantic.
4. Remember, a good attitude. In Germany is easy to work and operate and the things will always work out.
5. Remember to have fun and have an open mind to everything! The Germans like the Finns

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