

# Final Report about my Voluntary-Service

**Name of the volunteer:** Eva

**Name of the project:** Lukas Community

**Period of voluntary service:** 12 months, 2011-12

## **1. How did the image of your hosting country change after living there for one year and now returning home?**

There is way more sympathy when it comes to the States. I was always aware of us Europeans having a different world view than e.g. people from the USA which is normal even though we both grow up in the "western world". But now I got to experience that. This does not mean that I agree with everything the U.S government does, there is simply a better understanding on my part.

## **2. What did you gain from your voluntary service (e.g. language skills, intercultural learning ...) What was good/bad during your voluntary service?**

No language skills... but there is surely no better practise than having English everywhere around you! As I already mentioned in my last report, I mostly worked with German and just two non-German speaking volunteers. While you always speak English during work, of course you switch to German if there are just Germans around and besides only native speaker can really help you improving. Sure this would have been a pleasant side effect but it was never the point for me. Instead I learned a bunch of other things like knitting, weaving, bookbinding, gardening, taking care of sheep, feeding a lamb... And overall you learn a lot just by living with so many different people and spending every day together. I mean in general you never know with whom you end up working with, but there you work and live together, you spend all your free time together. And it is fun to hang out with people you probably would not have liked right away but now you really enjoy their company. At the same time I must say that it can be hard to be so close all the time and lacking social contacts from outside the community, which comes due to how this lifestyle works, the rural area and being underaged.

## **3. Would you advise future volunteers to go to your project? What advantages/disadvantages do you see?**

This is not a disadvantage but I would like to mention it since it is important. Seeing that I never really had contact with the Waldorf movement before my service and because my project just stated that it draws inspiration from Rudolf Steiner I concluded that it's like the schools and therefore not religious. So it was educational to finally get to know the movement. And I surely had an awesome year!

It felt like home right away, I really enjoyed living with my residents, co-workers, houseparents and their three little kids. There was always so much life in the house and when all of us were sitting at the table for lunch it really felt as if we would be this weird but loveable family ☺

I do recommend my project, but as with all community projects keep in mind that houseparents change from time to time and even though in my case the executive director and his wife are nice people who do their best to provide a great place for the residents, it is also quite important that you get along well with your houseparents.

**4. How do you look at your home country? Did your point of view change due to your life in another country?**

I think it always does. In my case nothing major but I do realize while talking to people that I often draw comparisons and if I say out loud that I would prefer the States or for me NH over Germany when it comes to random topics like the scenery for example, some people really give me attitude about even considering living there. Well....it's so much easier to have a bad picture of something that you don't even know.

And in the end I really appreciate living in Germany, since we do have public health insurance and I don't need to worry if I can afford certain treatments (though I noticed that there are more and more you have to pay for extra). And I am able to study here, since education is not yet that much connected with money. And I prefer our political system, our variety of choices even though we often don't realize how free and autonomous we are.

**5. How was your relationship to your sending organization?**

Good! I never had a problem for which I contacted my organization but every time I needed information I got it right away.

**6. What are your plans after the voluntary service? In which ways can you use your voluntary experiences?**

I'm going to work the next months till school starts. Right now I'm not sure what to study, I mean I applied for several things in different cities so I'll see where I get accepted and will do what feels best.

**7. Anything you want to add:**

I know the SCI is not the biggest organization, so it was such a coincidence and simply awesome that I worked together with a Swiss and a Japanese member of the SCI!