



Heeyja everyone,

My name is Larissa and... well how to introduce myself? I started studying social work at the Cooperative University of Education in October 2008 – and how all of you guys because we are all in the same semester J. So, what can I tell you? I achieved my final degree in Science of Education in the Black Forest and moved on with travelling around the world for nearly two years. I love to travel.

If you do as well or if you are interested in intercultural competencies e.g., you could easily attend a ZIK course – they offer a wide range of really interesting classes to join. My placement contact initially got transferred by ZIK as well. Honestly, never thought about moving to Scotland before but when the first thought came into my head and grew I kept on going and thought: well... actual why not? I tried to find someone to move into my flat in Stuttgart, successfully. I tried to find a nice room or house to share in Scotland and I did so successfully. And right now I am sitting in the office and just realizing that a "wee" (Scottish for little, small) dream came true: always wanted to live next to the sea, always wanted to have an open fire in the lounge and always wanted to hear sea gulls on my way to work...

My placement is located in yipworld (for further information please visit www.yipworld.org). The organisation was launched by Janice Hendry ten years ago. Based in Cumnock, a rural area, yipworld provides a wide range of services to children, young people and adults. A free drop-in service during evenings and weekends, an outreach service to schools and local communities via their high profile mobile internet satellite van – the T.A.R.D.I.S (training and recreation delivered in situ), delivering a wide range of recreational and educational personal development courses.

The most recent service is the PULSE full professional recording studio. Open to members of the public for com-

mercial use and free to local schools. The team I am working with is focused on disadvantaged young people. The team is specialised on the educational needs and aspirations for the future career or employment choice of these children. They are aged 14 till 19. Their work consists of supporting them to get back into the school daily routine. This can happen in one to one sessions or a course which includes online learning, lots of group building sessions and discussions about subject areas which matter to these kids. E.g. truancy, behaviour of teachers, private circumstances such as territorialism, family issues or even just talking about the latest news. These children get referred to yipworld mostly by schools.

After the courses, the young folk is able to attend the lessons in schools again or focus on finding a job. A wider understanding of the importance of education and employment as well as an increased belief in themselves, higher self-esteem and self-reliant which all attribute to them becoming confident individuals. These are some of the positive outcomes after a class with yipworld. I have seen groups on the beginning and on the end of such sessions and it's an incredible change the young people is going through. Differences: the first few weeks I worked in the U.K. I got more and more surprised at how many differences there actually are. But after a while I just realized that I made a mistake: to be quite honest I didn't expect that much differences because we are all looking the same. For example: if you are travelling to China or Africa the people look so different.

And I did not know what to expect or maybe haven't been aware of the fact, that it is still a different culture over here. What I have realised is how innate our own culture can be. When I have reflected on this, I have realised that it is the link to our own culture which make us more judgemental towards others. I didn't see this during all of my travels but the time over here gave me a lot to think about and trying to see my own culture from a bird's point of view which has allowed me to stand back a look at Germany.



It doesn't mean, just because you are used to something it's automatically the best... If someone told me I would have been in Scotland a year ago, working with a Social Enterprise company I would not have been able to picture myself but now that I have been I am able to reflect on

the best and live changing experience that has ever happened to me. I will miss the 'Highland Hairy Coos'.

And I am so thankful, can't explain... to everybody who pushed me forward!

