

My stay in Cork

Hello ye all. I'm Bruno a participant of the KV Plus+ program. It has been nearly three months now since I've been here in Cork, the major city of the southern part Ireland.

In February I arrived here by ferry from France which was a new compelling experience for me. Now I'm the furthest point from home I've ever been in my life. I'd like to give you in my report here insights about the experience I'm gaining here.



I got placed in a host family in Cobh also known as "Queenstown". This little sweet town is quite far away from Cork itself. It usually takes me one hour to be in Cork from home. On the other hand, I get a daily view over the Cork harbour bay just to the sea gate. And I still don't get used to the fact that I am basically living with sea view.

My host family is compounded of a host mother and a host father at the age of about sixty years. They are both lovely and hospitable. I appreciate that I get the possibility to have a chat whenever I want or that I get help with my daily challenges.

Due to the fact that the Irish people are having dinner quite early in comparison to what we're used to in Switzerland, this is about 5pm in my host family, I regularly can't do it on time to eat with them together. This issue is solved conveniently by putting aside the dinner for me. This gives me full flexibility, if I attend Salsa classes once a week for instance or whether I want to grab a drink after work. Frankly speaking I'm fairly happy with my host family.



My working placement is in a charity named "Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland". They train assistance dogs for the use with Children with autism. Assistance dogs can facilitate the life of whole families with guiding and calming down the mood of kids with autism.

I work all the time in the office for the fundraising department. This department is

responsible for obtaining and managing donations from private and corporate donors. In order to do that we manage a big part of the public relations to our audience, this includes our website, social media channels or events we run.

My function is mainly limited to data administration. This means, that I transfer information from a spreadsheet to a dedicated program we're using. This task is needed because our department hasn't got the budget for digitalising this workflow yet. In the beginning I thought I could help them with doing that by providing my competences in this field, which however won't be the case anymore. So, I operate there with a fairly monotonous and boring work. Unfortunately, this workflow is intrinsically one with which I won't engage a lot with other teammates. They are always friendly and interested, but also somehow reserved at the same time.

My workload depends on the requests from our donors and fundraisers, due to that I also have time for personal liabilities I can fulfil, or I plan my next trips in Ireland.

My working hours are pleasant for me just from 9.30am to 4.30pm. Other than that, I like to have the chance to see how companies and especially charities do operate in Ireland. I got the impression that they're taking a more success driven approach similar to what I know from America. Whereas Swiss charities do seem to be more reluctant and focused on their purpose, which I consider more purpose driven and prefer.

One half day a week I visit our English school in Cork. After two months, our former class consisting of all participants of the KV Plus got split up into two classes of about 10 students. Now the quality of our classes improved drastically, and I get more personal feedback from our hilarious funny teacher, which I fairly adore. I must say that I get know here the best language classes I've ever had abroad.

During our stay we do have a lot of spare time to use for visiting the country. This enables us to experience numerous amounts of different encountering's. So far, I had the possibility to do a bunch of weekend trips to different cities and towns as well as seeing the Irish cliffs and beaches. A great area to do that is West Cork. We can get there more or less easily within two hours. The landscape there is stunningly unique, as well as familiar from a Swiss perspective. A thing we're less familiar to is the quality and availability of the public transport here. The system operates incomprehensive, not reliable and that for also for a quite high price. I feel sometime stuck here being a person without a car, even though I got a road bike now. This bike enhances my mobility and flexibility. Nonetheless it takes me as well at least an hour to get to the city. I was a bit disappointed about the infrastructure for cyclers, so are roads in bad condition or you have to share routes with cars where there are high speed limits up to 120 km/h officially!



In order to get in contact with the local community and to learn something new, I do attend in Salsa classes at least once a week. I got there by chance, never ever had I thought of going dancing. This is an example that we can rediscovers ourselves new abroad, and that this project is giving us exactly this opportunity.

But it isn't always as easy as it sounds. I got as well rejected or ignored for joining some local clubs or organisations.

After nine months I realise that I get a little bit tired. It does get difficult for me to maintain my motivation all the time. However, I see this as an opportunity to identify which desires are important to me. I can't stand, for instance, the standard narratives hold and the unconscious behaviour of much of the Irish society. This

direct and as well soring cultural confrontation allows me to figure out my own values which are important to me. This approach enables me to recognize the virtue of having this unique experience abroad.