

I chose Austria as a country to go on my first exchange experience because I was drawn by the fact that many Human Rights conventions were held in Vienna.

So I applied to Austria without realizing what an incredible adventure was on my way.

CIF gave me the opportunity to visit the Old Continent, pack my bags and start a journey on my own, thousands of kilometers away from home.

The first person to meet me upon my arrival was Ricki. I had been traveling for 24 hours, on a pretty long and exhausting trip. She was super warm and kind, asked me how I was and she told me that we had a really nice experience ahead of us. Of course, Ricki was right!

We spent the first few days outside of Vienna, in Judith's country house, which looked like taken out of a fairytale with beautiful landscapes. I got the chance to meet my partners Ozer, Nagia, Samuel and Aigul, who were all really nice.



Gabi, president of CIF Austria, gave us super interesting classes on Vienna's social system and public policies, in which we all had to be really focussed as we were getting used to live day-to-day in English.

During my stay in Vienna, I had two host families. With the first one I felt I was staying in India, because they loved the country and all their apartment was decorated in that style. They made me feel really welcome all the time.

I had the same feeling of being welcome with my second hosts, as they made me feel just like another member of the family. With them I learned a lot about Vienna's culture, I taught them to drink mate so they become a bit argentinian, while eating alfajores de maicena and dulce de leche.



As the days went by Martina, another CIF member, came with us to every visit they had arranged for us. And when I say every visit I mean literally every one of them, she was one of us. She was super hospitable and kind to all of us, taking care of every need, and explaining us how to move around the city. Most of us still ended up getting lost a couple of times - which was really fun.`



During these visits to many institutions I learned about their social policies and I had the chance to have a theoretical critique of different argentinian institutions in comparison. This exchange made me rethink some practices or the way I perceive the Social Work.

What caught my attention the most was seeing Social Work applied to the refugees crisis, as we don't have that problem in my country. That was very interesting.

Along the trip I saw many ways on which Social Work and it's methodology can be applied and many times I wondered - "can this be also applied in my country?".

I think that's what's enriching and nurturing about participating in a professional exchange program, to have a chance to rethink our practices, to hear and exchange ideas with professionals from other countries and to keep thinking about different social realities.

From this trip I take home many fond memories of all the wonderful people I met, all of them with great potential. They made me realize that our profession of Social Workers can be lived and practiced in many ways, and there's not just one recipe for interventions.

I thank CIF Argentina for accompanying me in this process, Cif Austria for allowing me to make Vienna my second home, my two host families for opening their doors and making me feel part of their families, and my exchange partners, for becoming great friends.

