



CIF

International Professional Exchange Program (IPEP) 2025, March 11th - 28th

This document is written with the objective of sharing my personal and professional experience as a participant in the IPEP 2025, organized by CIF Switzerland.

IPEPs are exchange programs that combine practical and theoretical information about the social and cultural environment of the host country. (CIF website, 2025).

CIF is an international nonprofit organization, which main purpose is “*to promote professional, cross-cultural and educational exchange for those working in the field of social services*” (CIF website, 2025). It aims to contribute to peace and understanding among nations.

Peace and understanding may sound like an ambitious goal in these times worldwide, but ...after being part of the IPEP Switzerland...I feel more hopeful about it. I found out that the starting point for global achievements is knowing and respecting each other, embracing and celebrating diversity. And I am sure that the IPEP Switzerland brings that, and each participant will take this learning to their home country, and “every drop helps to make an ocean”.

Some remarks of 2025 program...

If I had to choose just a few words to summarize the highlights of the IPEP Switzerland I would say: organization, human values, wide professional experience (focused on children, youth and families).

Organization: every single detail of the experience is planned, with a clear objective. People in every institution are aware of our visit and available to make everything so easy for each participant.

Human values: either CIF members or institutions members and CIF participants offer a respectful and empathetic environment all over the program.

Professional experience: either CIF members or institutions members and CIF participants have wide experience on the social field and generously share their knowledge and experience.

But...what is the IPEP like?

Up to this point, this description may sound very abstract for those who have not done this experience, so I will go through some concrete activities done during my IPEP program.

Before the beginning of the program...

- Personal and work arrangements
- Travel arrangements (visa, insurance, flight)
- Personal research (about the country, institution, social policies).
- Zoom meeting with board members and participants (January 2025). First “get to know” activity.
- Informal contacts via email and WhatsApp with board members and participants.

During the program...

The program has a quite loaded agenda; however, time goes so fast and each of the activities proposed are really worth doing.

Personal growth activities

- Exchange with participants, host family, board members and members of the different institutions
- Leisure time
- Theatre work

Cultural growth activities

- Dinner with board members and friends of CIF
- Cultural evening
- Exchange with participants
- Presentation about the history of the country and its cities.
- Sharing Swiss Traditions (Fasnacht, typical holiday in Basel)
- Sightseeing in different cities (Bern, Baden, Geneve, Basel, Uster, Luzern, Zurich)

Professional development activities

- Input about the host country: Social, economic and political system. Social Security System. Educational System.
- Input about the participant´s countries and professional experience:
 - Climate Change and its implications to Social Work education (India)*
 - Children Living with HIV/AIDS in Indonesia*
 - The status and challenges of single unmarried women in Mumbai (India)*

Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support in Indonesia

Positive Behavior Support (Australia)

Child protection in Ghana

Medical Social Work in Turkey

Being a Social Worker in the Health Care System in Argentina

- Social intervention with childhood, youth and families:
Institutional contacts: Home for children and youth in difficult situations, Home Based Social Work, Child Protection System (KJZ Center).
Professional tools: work with traumatized refugee children.
- Approach to the Health Care System: Social Services in a Hospital.
- Approach in Educational System: dVET (Dual Vocational Education), Higher Professional Education. University of Lucerne (School of Social Work). Exchange with students. Closer exchange with students, making a video for CIF
- Social Work Disciplinary Field: Discussions about challenges of the profession in the country: Social Work Association (Avenir Social) and International Federation of Social Work (IFSW).
- Social projects- Protected places to work: Die Libelle, Wärbrogg
- Human Rights organizations: United Nations-International Social Services (ISS)

Ending the program...

The last session of the program is dedicated to different evaluations tools, individual and groupal.

This is an unvaluable opportunity not only for pointing out good practices and suggesting adjustments needed, but also to take into account the long road we took together.

Conclusions (Personal input):

Even though this report was not requested by any employer or organization, my principal motivation for writing it is for sharing and socializing this experience.

Following CIF values, I consider that learning, listening and understanding can lead us to respecting and accepting each other, and living in more peaceful environments.

Also, I think that our knowledge grows if you share it, instead of keeping it just for ourselves.

Focusing on what I've learned during this experience I would say that even though the context for social interventions can be quite different, Social Work around the world finds its way in the Human Rights perspective.

And, personally I think that the main difference is made by human resources more than by economic resources. All through the days we have heard of different socioeconomical situations in the participant ´s countries, but compromise and empathy with our clients is our common point.... maybe our “professional signature”?

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