

A new experience for life



My name is Daniela and I'm from Italy.

I've been in Piteå since 4 months and I'm going to stay here for another 7 months as a volunteer in the Repris centre for an European project called European Voluntary Service. This project gives all the people from Europe between 18 and 30 the opportunity to work in another country in any field they wish to work in.

I was so happy when I received the answer that my project had been approved! And from that moment on I could only think about my new experience in Sweden! When I left my country four months ago, I was really worried. Did I take the right decision? Is volunteer working something really for me? How will this impact my life? These were some of the questions that I was asking myself.

Before I came to Piteå I had never heard anything about it. However I choose Piteå because I was really curios about the Swedish lifestyle, especially the north part because it is so different from my country - the weather, traditions and to work in a field different from my studies. By staying so far away from home gives you some time to reflect and it might help you to really figure out what you want to do in your life. Every day I'm learning new things thanks to my work at Repris. I meet people from all over the world attending the SFI (svenska för invandrare) course. I'm trying to learn some Swedish and at the same time improving my English.

This experience is a huge challenge for me because I'm all alone here. Sometimes it is hard for me because I miss my family and my friends. It isn't always easy for me, of course there have been

times when you feel sad and down that alternated with moments of pure euphoria, but after a while you reach a balance.

Even though this is not my first time alone abroad, this time it is really different because I am much more mature and I understand which values are most important in my life. According to me there are five requirements to participate at the EVS: curiosity, willingness to learn, availability, flexibility and adaptability.

I am sure that after this experience I will participate in other European projects and intercultural exchanges because for me it means give part of myself and receive in return a lot of knowledge and human experiences. I believe that there are thousands of possible worlds within yourself and also a thousand different realities different from your country. If you want to have the chance to explore that, open a window to the world and to yourself. It's your choice.

/Daniela Di Matteo