**Report Internship 2018 – Miki**

Hello! I am Miki from Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong. Few years ago, I read an article about Germany education system and I was so curious on it. Therefore, I have already decided to visit Germany in my lifetime since then. Fortunately, I received an opportunity to come Germany Siegerland as an internship trainee from Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong with my partner, Ying, for one month.

The internship period is very fruitful and meaningful. We were assigned to work in the YMCA hostel for the first two weeks and participated in the children camp as a helper on the third week. Besides the education system, we explored some common leisure activities for family, social and church services in the region. We joined children children’s groups and teen’s group in different YMCA center. Sometimes, we had exclusions experiencing the German family activities, trying some German cuisine and observing some unique housing style in villages.

Working Experience

Most of the time we worked in the kitchen of the hostel, helping them to wash dishes, clean the dining room and prepare for the ingredients. Sometimes we would also do some gardening work together, like watering the plants in the hostel. The staff members here are very nice and friendly. Although we would not speak German, they were very willing to communicate with us. For the children camp on the third week, we worked as the media team to capture the remarkable moment of the kids. Ying was responsible for taking picture and I recorded the videos and edited them into a 7-minutes short film. We were so delighted that both the children and the organizing committees liked it. It was quite upset that we could not speak German so we could not talk with them. Luckily the kids were very willing to teach us some German vocabularies. Besides, I was glad that the children loved my souvenir and snacks from Hong Kong. I believe that this will be one of the most unforgettable time in my life.

Voluntary work and Christian Service in YMCA

The life attitude of German people reminded me “to serve, not to be served” which is the mission of The Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong since 1901. For the most part, the work of YMCA Germany is organized by more than 64,000 volunteers. For YMCA Siegerland, including the board members and the leaders of both teen’s groups and children’s groups, they are all volunteers and put great effort to serve in YMCA.

We visited the teen’s groups in YMCA Büschergrund and children’s groups in YMCA Wiederstein-Zeppenfeld and YMCA Wahlbach. The group leaders would share the message of Jesus Christ by playing creative games with the youth such as stone-painting and city game. In the children camp, there was even a detective game for the bible study period. Therefore, the children could be fully concentrated on reading the bible.

Social Service in Siegerland

We were so surprised that the Germany government provided a lot of resources of social service. We visited the ambulance and therapy center for alcoholic addicts in Fredenberg. The equipment and the medication on the ambulance are so sufficient. There is even a doctor working specialized for the emergency service team. In the therapy center, the addicts are provided with occupational therapy, psychological support and complete facilities. In addition, the education system is totally different from Hong Kong. We were invited to have a school day at Dietrich Bonhoeffer Gymnasium with and experience German students’ school life. Because of the grading system for examination, students are always encouraged to have discussion and analysis on given materials like literature text and film. I believe that help students train up their oral organization and critical thinking.

Leisure activities in German family

It was so amazed that there were so many activities for the kids, especially outdoor activities. We had a canoe tour at river Lahn and participated in Elspe festival with Thomas’s family. I was very excited because it was the first time I tried canoeing and watching an outdoor drama show with a lot of explosion and fire effects. For weekdays, the parents love to explore the nature world with their kids in the forest. Parents here are always willing to spend time with their children. Yet, Hong Kong children are not usually having free time to enjoy their childhood. Most of the time they are forced to study at home or join tutorial classes to boost up their academic performance. Undoubtedly, the experiences here remind me to treasure my family time.

The beauty of Germany

We were having a great time to visit different wonderful places here, such as Atta-Höhle, which is one of the largest dripstone caves in Germany and I truly loved it. By using our imagination, we could saw a beautiful animal world here. We visited a zoo in Siegerland displaying those common animals in this region. The most special thing is that the zoo is free-entrance and people can feed the animals with their hands. We had a good time in Herborn and Freudenberg. Their houses are built with a unique pattern for the whole village. I really appreciate that the government protected the special housing culture here with plenty of efforts. We visited the Bergpark of Wilhelmshöhe Palace in Kassel and were being stunned by the artificial cascades. The water runs down on Sunday and Wednesday afternoon and last for ten minutes only. The fascinating water features completely presented the saying of ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’.

All in all, I experienced an unforgettable and amazing time in Siegerland. I am so thankful to the friends we met here, especially Thomas’s family, Jochen’s family, Bernhard’s family, Annette’s family and the colleagues worked together in the hostel and children camp. They are all very friendly and tried their best to introduce the German culture to us. We tried the local beer, tasted the German cuisine, visited a lot of place other than the tourist spots under their guide. I enjoyed the time here and I believe these are one of my best moments in my life.

**Report Internshiop 2018 – Ying**

Hello! This is Chan Kong Ying from Hong Kong. This year, I am glad that I was given the opportunity to join the Global Y Trainee Program 2018 organised by the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and was sent to a YMCA hostel in Wilgersdorf, Siegerland during 30th June to 29th July. During my stay here, I did my internship work in my hostel, attended YMCA events, went sightseeing and visited different social service centres in Siegerland.

Internship work In our hostel, we mainly worked in the kitchen. We were mainly responsible for drying up the cooking utensils and tablewares; as well as setting up the tables for banquets. In the rest of the time, we would do some gardening work, namely watering plants and weeding out the weeds. It’s a good experience for me because I have not tried these kinds of jobs before. Also, while working at the kitchen, we have also learnt some German of the tableware and some common drinks.

YMCA events We have joined children’s group, teens’ group, children’s camp and also visited the YMCA headquarters of Germany in Kassel. The most unforgettable experience is the 6days-5nights children’s camp took place in the Adventure village Wittgenstein. In the camp we saw a big difference between camps in Hong Kong and Germany. There are always a lot of free times for the children here, so they can just do whatever they want e.g. ball games, swimming and table soccer, as they like. However, camps in Hong Kong usually have packed schedule, and won’t allow that much degree of freedom for the children on deciding what to do. Personally, I prefer a camp with more free time, because this allows the children to explore their potentials more and more time for them to socialise with others, which is more beneficial to the children.

Sightseeing We have visited different places in Siegerland, e.g. Freudenberg, Herborn and Kassel. These places are very nice and we enjoyed visiting them a lot! The place that impressed us most is Freudenberg, which is a village with houses of the same pattern - white houses with brown timber on it. It is good that the government pays effort on protecting such a beautiful and unique village. Another thing that impressed me a lot is the artificial waterfall in the Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe in Kassel. There is only waterfall on Sundays and Wednesday at 1430, which last only for 10 minutes. This is worth seeing

because it is really a nice waterfall, and couldn’t imagine how people build this in the past. Also, we have visited many tourist points in Siegerland, despite the fact that these tourist points may not be as famous as those in Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt, yet it is equally worth going and astonishing. Sometimes, I really hope that there are some route that these less famous yet worth-going tourist points can be introduced to the world.

 Understanding the social services in Siegerland We visited a police station, a drug addicts therapy centre, an occupational therapy centre, an emergency station and a high school in Germany. All of them are good experiences to me, especially visiting the emergency station, because I saw the difference between the emergency service in Hong Kong and Germany. In Germany, there are of cause ambulance for paramedics, they even have a car specifically for doctors. The doctors will go to the scene when the patient has to do some procedure with sedation e.g. intubation. It is good that the patient can be intubated as soon as the he/she is suffering from respiratory arrest, so the patient can be ventilated even if the trachea is collapsed, which is safer for the patient. Moreover, the teaching style here is also very different from Hong Kong. In Germany, there are always a lot of time for discussion between students and teachers, and also the students are really eager to share their thoughts. However, in Hong Kong, there are not so many time for discussion, because teachers usually have packed teaching schedule, also, students are not so active too, even if the discussion is mark-bearing. Maybe it is because Hong Kong’s teaching style is to provide knowledge to students, while Germany’s teaching style is to let students integrate their knowledge since their are small. For me, I believe that discussion is necessary during a learning process, because it helps students to think in more perspective and also reinforce their knowledge during their discussion, which I hope that Hong Kong’s education institutions can try to adjust their teaching style.

 Last but not least, I feel so thankful here because I have met nice families and friends here - Thomas’ family; Jochen’s family; Bernard’s family; other colleagues in my hostel; and children, teens, leaders and staff in the YMCA centres we visited. It is glad that all of them are eager to share their culture with us, teach us German, bring us to different places, recommend local food for us and arrange activities for us. All these made my stay more fruitful and interesting! Dankeschön!