

Visiting Colleague

Experiences abroad: Sao Paulo - Brazil

Two years ago during my masters, I had a unique internship experience in Sao Paulo, Brazil, at Ahimsa, a school for children with multiple disabilities. The school was suitable for me, as a master student 'Communication and Deafblindness'; since the school provides education as well for children and adults with acquired and congenital deafblindness. It took time and preparation in advance, although it was worth it. I had the benefit that I could share this experience with another master student. Together we had a month full of activities at the school and we discovered the beautiful culture and nature of Brazil. Looking back, I immediately remember the hospitality of all the teachers towards us and their motivation and enthusiasm towards all the students. I want to mention that it is not easy; establishing a school for children with multiple disabilities in Sao Paulo, although there are facilities like transport for the children in wheelchairs. It is not comparable to our facilities in the Netherlands.

I admire Ms. Maia and Ms. Ikonmidis, the principal and the education coordinator of Ahimsa. They are not only striving to give guidance to the teachers and providing education for the students; they are collaborating a lot with other schools and institutions in Brazil and abroad. They are determined to give all the best to their students. Regarding the students with deafblindness; they work with objects of references, making use of touch flows naturally, it is part of the Brazilian culture! That is, in my opinion, a benefit for who is deafblind. Our Dutch culture could benefit from that!

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