

Thanks to the cooperation between Catholic University of Applied Sciences (KH, Freiburg) and the University of Labor and Social Affairs II in Vietnam, I was one of the first two Vietnamese students to join the exchange student program at Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Freiburg.

In Vietnam, my Bachelor's degree is Business Administration, but a third year student like me cannot help being curious about Social Work because my university is quite focused on training that field and I find it is quite interesting through what my friends are studying. Above all, I am truly fortunate to have approached this opportunity. It does not only give me a closer look at the Social Work workfield, but also provide a promising experience in Germany under the looks of the admiration since I was a child, why wouldn't get it?

However, because I do not participate in the parallel study program both universities, so I always assumed that I would return after the end of the winter semester to complete my studies in Vietnam. But everything I experienced this time, seemed to make me change my mind over time. I can just call it amazing, even though the pandemic is still going on, and the attendance of all the classes are only via the computer screen, which I never expected.

Before I came to Germany, I expected life in Germany wouldn't disappoint me, but I also did not forget to prepare mentally for the so-called starting a life in a foreign country, and according to many sources, the German character is totally different from Vietnamese, I have to really pay attention to that. But the things I am going to point out here, surely make my friends in Vietnam say "That's great".

First, Trinh and I were both welcomed and helped from our first destination - Frankfurt airport, to the first place where we waited for the results after the Corona test, a hotel in Frankfurt, to later settle in dormitory in Freiburg and the necessary paperwork and bureaucracy - which have to be said is extremely complicated - in a secure country like Germany. Why is it important? The biggest reason I must mention here, is because both of us have not yet reached A1 level in German.



*Photo by Naomi*

Second, all of the friends in Germany, whom we have met, are the miracles that I have to thank life for bringing them to us. In a cozy building, despite of the cold weather outside in the winter temperatures I have never experienced in Vietnam before, we cooked together, celebrated birthdays and Christmas, played as if we are friends with no cultural, linguistic or personality differences. We organized picnics and exchange culture with everyone, because it's interesting that here are not only Germans, but also Japanese, Ukrainians, Bolivians, Indians, etc. I feel like everyone knows how to treat each other very well and respect their time, I should learn a lot from them. However, people who drank too much beer and alcohol made me quite surprised at first :). I also often choose to cook Vietnamese food and everyone cooks German food so that we all can enjoy the taste of the food, listen to music, dance together. Especially, we'd love to play UNO, we can play for more than 10 hours, without getting bored, because we are not only playing cards but also talk and share many things, from the people, to the culture, to feelings or even the universe.

Even though we sometimes make a few mistakes, we have gone over them all. We feel safe and protected by everyone. I believe that as long as the spirit of friendship is strengthened, all difficulties can be overcome. In addition, I told myself, what I was concerned about how to behave around Germans, I wasn't wrong, even in Vietnam, people can not get along successfully with all relationships. We can only cherish relationships which we feel precious and worthy in our life.



*Photo by Tuyet*

Third, the teachers and friends at the KH are always ready to help us in our lessons, because both Business Administration (me) and Human Resources Management (Trinh) students really need help in Social Work areas. We also got free and proactive translation from our classmates when there were contents difficult to convey in English and teacher need to use German. I call that another German cuteness.

Fourth, German architecture is admirable with many classical churches, nature is no exception, it is so beautiful. I have not yet explored lands other than Freiburg, that's why I don't know if I can say Germany is so beautiful or only Freiburg is so beautiful like that. Therefore, I must experience more in the future, whenever I have chance after the pandemic goes down. For example, I have seen snow for the first time in my life in Freiburg, because Vietnam only has very light snowfall on highlands in the north. I see myself as a kid that I always scream by the excitement to Freiburg.

I look forward to the summer semester at Freiburg when I can do a lot more, at least I can take more direct classes.

Thank you to the scholarship fund, Catholic University of Applied Sciences, University of Labor and Social Affairs II, the teachers and all my friends.

*Writing by Tuyet*