



## Mutual Capacity Development Grant Application

### Demographic Information

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### GRANT INFORMATION

#### GRANT SUMMARY

I have just finished a three months' traineeship in a nice university town named Itajubá in Minas Gerais, Brazil. There I worked for two special educational organizations, practicing my knowledge in Psychology.

One of my work places is CASA DE GUADALUPE, which is an organization offers free art classes and day care to impoverished children aged from 8-14 years in the city. The education system in Brazil decides that children only have to spend half a day in school. For the rest of the day, children from rich families with caring parents are usually sent to music, sport or language classes. However, those who are from poor families may end up wandering in the neighborhood all day. Some of them, after being exposed to a relatively dangerous and violent environment, may intend to commit crimes at a very early age. Therefore, CASA DE GUADALUPE tries to keep these children from all the negative influences as much as possible by giving them a half day's free host with interest classes. In the theatre class which I worked in, children got instructions from a professional actor and rehearsed a mini play on their own. My job was to observe the children who participated in the class and evaluate their performances by several psychological indicators. I reported to my supervisor once every two weeks and communicated with the psychologist in the organization as often as possible.

The other work place CEDEDCAI (Centro de Defesa dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente de Itajubá) is more exciting, as all the students there are minors who have actually committed crimes from drug trafficking to murder in self-defense. In CEDEDCAI I assisted in an acting workshop with a teacher from TV industry. He works with teenagers in CEDEDCAI to film a mini TV series casted by the students. He and some other teachers tried to train the students and then make them work as film crews. We expected the students to obtain a better cognition of the society as well as team work spirits. They would also improve their self esteem after seeing their own product being broadcasted on the local TV channel. In CEDEDCAI, I not only evaluated the performances of students, but also helped the teacher to carry out workshops.

Both my works are quite challenging. I had to work with a hundred percent passion and patience as the groups of students I worked with were somehow different than I expected. There were times when the idea of giving up flashed over my mind, as some students were not cooperative all the time or the organization refused to support me for what I needed for work. But looking back now, I am really glad that I made it through and brought some positive changes to both organizations and their students. Moreover, I brought up a Christmas project for CASA DE GUADALUPE to raise funds and public attention. This traineeship is a wonderful learning experience

#### PROJECT IMPACT ON GRANTEE AS WELL AS MF

The three months' traineeship is an incredible venture for me. It was my first time living outside my On the MF community. country and I came to a place opposite on the globe. Many people ask me why I choose Brazil. The truth is that I have been longing to visit this country since high school. I have always been fond of this beautiful and open country with its unique warm culture. My major is psychology and I have a strong interest in development psychology. As a result, when I found this chance to work for a youth educational organization as a psychology trainee, I simply grabbed it without too much thinking.

My traineeship in Brazil is a great training experience in my profession. Among all the valuables I got from this traineeship, the most precious one is the opportunity of getting along with groups teenagers

who behaved in very different patterns. To be honest, I was scared at the beginning when stayed with the students. One boy in CASA DE GUADALUPE threw chairs made of steel at other kids as if chairs were soft toys. After knowing what kind of families they were from, I found it easier to understand their behaviors. Then I wasn't too shocked to see how the students in CEDEDCAI handmade wooden rifles as stage properties in the performing workshop. The reason behind such phenomena, I believe, is the negative environment, which consists of their families, the neighborhoods and the Brazil society. Most teenagers I worked with were either from big families or single families where their parents were too busy making a living to take care of them. Joining gangs and making money from drugs are the only things they can do in spare time. Understanding the relationship of environment and personal development from real cases is an important psychology lesson for me, not to mention all the observation, evaluation and communication skills I learned through work.

Besides work, I had a great time in Brazil embracing the lovely and vivid culture. it was a cross-cultural learning process for me, as I had to deal with local people all the time. Though in the MF, we have members from five different countries, no one expects me to be 'German' or 'Indian' as all of us try to act internationally. However, in brazil, everyone wanted to me to be a Brazilian. Which means that I had to pay more attention to the way I behaved in order to reduce conflicts. For example. I had to 'endure' frequent body contacts from time to time. This is one of the most common characteristics of Latin American nations but I had never really 'suffered' anything from Chilean fellows. fortunately, thanks to the nice, happy and hospitable Brazilians, the adaption process was faster than I imagined. On weekends, I was often taken out by new friends or my host family to farms, beaches and other places with marvelous natural sceneries. During my trip to other cities in brazil, I received lots of help from strangers. Take the security guard I met in a museum in Sao Paulo as an example, I talked with him for 10 minutes after he gave me an extremely detailed direction to my next destination. This is the kind of thing I could never have in china. When I returned to china, some part of me even felt a little bit uncomfortable with how Chinese are distanced from each other.

Some of the other impacts on me including improvement of ability of independent living, level of Portuguese, communication skills and the ability of analytic thinking. In addition, I also had the chance to look at China and our culture out of the box. These are benefits that everyone who lived in a different country would get, so I will not give any further explanations.

Now I would like to explain the impacts of my traineeship on the MF community. First of all, the work that I did is related to MF guiding principle. I was applying my knowledge to help those who need and trying to bring positive changes to the world, though the changes may be very limited. To these teenagers who I worked with, I was not only an evaluator but a Asian young girl who lived differently. I believe my presence at the organization influenced at least some of them. Moreover, I'd love to share my stories in Brazil with other MF fellows who are interested. Most junior fellows in ZU had already heard my adventures in brazil and all of them were fascinated. I gave them a brief introduction to this country together with my own interpretation of it.

Finally, as a Vice Lead Fellow and a Lead Fellow-to-be, skills like communication and independent think as well as cultural awareness are often required from work. What I learned in Brazil can be used during my junior and lead fellowship in the MF. All in all, I believe my traineeship in brazil has positive impacts on me as well as the MF community.

**PERIOD OF ACTIVITY: 13-08-2007 to 08-11-2007**

**AMOUNT GRANTED BY THE MF : USD 1200**