

FINAL REPORT – VAVROUŠEK SCHOLARSHIP

NAME: Magdaléna Holmanová

YEAR OF STUDY: 3rd year of bachelor's degree programme

TOPIC OF THE INTERNSHIP: Volunteering in a community centre “Casa B” and qualitative research on the role of community-based urban agriculture in community development

SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT: 5 000 CZK

COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION: Colombia

PERIOD: 25.11.2019 - 20.1.2020

- **Brief description of the internship:**

I spent two months volunteering in a community centre “Casa B” which is a non-government cultural centre located in the neighbourhood of Belén in Candelaria, Colombia. The team of Casa B makes numerous workshops for children, youth, and adults from the sector, hold various events on the weekends and run urban gardens. Among the frequent activities are language classes of English, French or German, a skate club and much more (depending on volunteers and their possibilities). Once a month a local magazine is published by a group of youth called *Boletín Periódico*. Casa B also provides access to a place called *Mediateca* which can serve as a study room, a playroom, a classroom but also as a library. Sometimes during the week, lunch is given to those who participate in the workshops.

Part of the organization is a group of local women, called *Círculo de Mujeres*. There are usually meetings of 4 to 8 women during the week. They take care of the urban gardens and have various activities such as workshops on women's health or agriculture, where they learn how to cultivate, to process the crops, etc. Recently they have also learned to brew beer and established their own brand called *Estrella de Belén*. As most of them are professional cooks they also prepare food for events and members of Casa B.

- **Description of the activities:**

- Teaching English classes to local children and adults two times per week.

- Participation in women's circle, helped with organization of workshops and activities planning for the following year.
 - Assisting organizational needs during social events, where food and the new crafted beer are sold. On Saturdays I was helping with project "cinehuerta".
 - Preparing lunch provided to those who come to the workshops and classes.
 - Taking part in the urban gardens and general run of a house, which is open every day.
 - Data gathering process in form of 16 interviews with members of Casa B for the conducted qualitative research.
- **Benefit of the internship for student and partner organization:**
 - For student**

I had the chance to see how a non-governmental organization is run in a developing country, in one of the less privileged neighbourhoods. Even though Belén is part of Candelaria and the most touristic part of Bogotá, it is considered as a dangerous one with problems and in need for revitalization. Thanks to the internship I was a part of group of amazing people who work every day to provide children with a chance to do something with their lives. When I was doing interviews for my research many kids have told me, that because of this place they made friends became more social, gained confidence and hope.

During our English classes we have faced various difficulties, sometimes on every lesson came someone else, so we could not move with the teaching, and had to start from the beginning or we have chosen wrong activities. But thanks to the mistakes we were able to get better every day.

In general, I got the insight of the community. In the meeting of women's circle, I was part of many discussions about the future projects and plans. I was able to witness the difficulties which Casa B has including bad organization, planning or lack of economic resources.

For partner organization

The most visible benefit for them was a lecturer in English classes and extra help with events and workshops. My presence came as handy as well during

Christmas holidays when most of the classes were cancelled and we did improvised program for the kids from the neighbourhood whose parents had to work, and they had no other place to stay for free.

As my research has shown the presence of foreign volunteers provides multicultural environment which helps with development of social skills, improve communication in foreign language and support intercultural exchanges. I also believe that the results of my research will help the coordinators with organization of program and would allow them to see their work from another point of view.

- **Presentation of the outcomes of the internship:**

The research was a part of my bachelor thesis called *The role of Community-based urban agriculture in community development in Bogotá, Colombia, a case study of Casa B, community organization of the neighbourhood of Belén*. The research was focused on the contribution of the urban gardens to community participation and community life in the neighbourhood of Belén.

The thesis was accepted to the conference of International Sociological Association Research Committee 21 on Urban and Regional Development in Antwerp called Sensing the City where it was supposed to be presented as part of the session “62. The Sensing and Shaping of Time in Urban Gardens”. However due to Covid-19 outbreak the conference is postponed to 14-16 July 2021.

FINAL BUDGET:

Budget	Price per unit	Number of unites	Total	Contribution from Vavroušek Scholarship
Visa	8600 CZK	1	8600 CZK	
Accommodation	4500 CZK	2	9000 CZK	5000 CZK
Food	3500 CZK	2	7000 CZK	
Consumables, equipment	500 CZK	1	500 CZK	
Total			25100 CZK	