

ImPulsTanz, Summer 2015

My name is Oihana Azpillaga. In the summer of 2015 I did an internship at the ImPulsTanz Festival in Vienna. This internship took place in the frame of the SuSy activity, hosted and organized by danceWEB. My internship started the 15th of July 2015 and came to an end on the 15th of August 2015. I was 18 at that time.

It was my first experience with the life of an adult. Of having to work five days a week at a regular rhythm. Of having responsibilities and making my own decisions. I was a bit scared and overwhelmed with the idea that I would live alone, make my own dinner and with having to find my way in a big, new city. But this vanished (or got less) with just living in the moment and enjoying the fact that I got this amazing opportunity.

On my first day at the festival I was overloaded with work (in a good way of course), I had to adapt really fast and so I had no time to think about my home or parents. I just went with the flow. The things I had to do were very diverse and included running around from one place to another to meet people and deliver messages or objects. One of my tasks during the internship was for example making fruit baskets as a 'welcome' present for every new artist arriving at the festival. I had to bring them to the festival venue where they would perform and at several occasions I personally met the artists. Most of the artists thanked me and said that it was a nice gesture. I really felt their gratitude, what made me feel useful and happy.

Making the invitations for the guests who were invited to the lounge (a party space organised by the festival) was also something I had to prepare before every evening performance. On every invitation card I had to paste the logo of the wine that would be served on that day. That sounds very easy, but - especially in the beginning - I made a lot of mistakes so I had to redo it a few times. That taught me that really every detail is important and that you have to execute and finish your work with a lot of care.

Another task was making personal bags with different gadgets for all the people invited by the festival, such as all the teachers, DanceWebbers, artists, and critics. As I mentioned before, every bag was personalized. That means that I first had to make stickers with their names on. After that every bag got an energy drink, a tea bag, chocolate, spices, the ImPulsTanz brochure/agenda with all the performances, so the 'where, when, by who, how..'. Shortly said: everything you needed to know about the festival. When the bag was made one of the three drivers who had to pick up the person from the airport took the bag with him, to give it to the one whom the bag was for.

I also really wanted to improve my (poor) German, what was not so easy, even though I speak Dutch. I found it very important to try to speak to everyone in their own language. In the beginning I was just trying to understand everyone, because there are different accents in German. I have to be honest too, I was afraid of making mistakes, that's why it took a lot more time than it normally should. At the end I learned the basic sentences and a few more difficult words which I will never forget.

After adapting for a week or so, I got used to the work and everything went smoother. I had more time and that made it possible for me to go and see performances and take some morning dance classes. My days: waking up, cycling to the dance class, cycling to the office, work (doing very diverse things), going to the theatre to see a performance and then back home where I fell asleep immediately.

My colleagues were beautiful, helpful and kind people. I know I could sometimes really irritate them with stupid questions and then I would apologize for my stupid question. They would answer first with a laugh and then they would say that there are no wrong, right or stupid questions. And after that they would 'take me by the hand' and lead me through my problem. They accepted me for who I am and let me make mistakes to help me afterwards.

I not only got to know the people from the office but actually everybody who had to do something with the festival. From drivers, teachers, organizers and critics, to DanceWEBbers and dance lovers. Everybody taught me something in their own way.

This month was one of the most instructive and challenging months of my life. And I am so thankful for the opportunity I was given. This will be something I will never forget. I lost a part of my heart to the city, the festival and the people.