

## Field Report Internship Nursing in Wil

August 2017 until January 2018

Psychiatrie St. Gallen Nord, Wil, Switzerland

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### My Experience in Switzerland

I am almost at the end of my internship here in Switzerland. It was a great experience, where I learned a lot. However, let me start at the beginning.

I had an opportunity to do an internship in a foreign country, not too far away, in a field where I did not have any experience yet, the psychiatry. I thought I could also learn another language, experience a new culture and try their amazing cheese fondue. The city where I would go to, Wil was relatively close to other cities and it looked like a friendly place to be.

Before I could go there, or even be accepted to this place, I had to have a conversation in German with people from the psychiatry, to see if I would qualify for this internship. Luckily not long after that, I heard that I was accepted for the internship and could start in August of 2017! I was happy that I was allowed the opportunity to have a foreign learning experience.

I received many papers, which I had to fill in and send back to Switzerland, before my internship even started. When I got to Switzerland, they gave me a bunch of other papers, which I had to fill in and bring to the municipality. There I received even more papers to fill in and give back to them. The lesson I learned there was; the Swiss really love their paperwork. However, everything went fine and I got a foreigner's permit for the stay of my internship.

During the internship in the psychiatry, I learned a lot. This was also because I never had any experience in this work field before. Soon I was accepted in the team and I really felt that I was in the right place, with the right colleagues. Before I knew it, Switzerland was feeling like a second home to me.

The difficult part of my internship was mostly the Swiss German language, in which I was certainly not fluent. Luckily, my team and even some of the patients spoke back in German, instead of Swiss German. However, over the time I managed to understand a



*Me and visiting the Swiss mountains*

lot of Swiss German, because it was spoken all around me, all the time. This was very useful for me because many of the patients that I worked with have Alzheimer and other neurologic problems. They are not used to speaking German, so the Swiss German was very helpful there.

The difficult part of my internship was that in some cases I was not allowed to do certain protocols while I am approved to do that in the Netherlands, but this was also

vice versa. Therefore, because of that, I was able to learn some new protocols, like taking blood from the veins of the patients, which I was not able to learn during my internship in the Netherlands.

The big difference between Switzerland and the Netherlands is the price of products and the importance of work. First, everything is relatively expensive, if you are used to other prices. In the beginning, I was shocked about the prices in the supermarket, but luckily, I found a relatively cheap supermarket, the "Denner". I did all the groceries there the rest of my internship. Secondly, the Swiss think that work is important, that you have to work for the greater good. The difference is that 100% work in Switzerland around 42-44 hours a week is, while it between 32-40 hours in the week is in the Netherlands. My personal feeling is that the Dutch think that work is not on the 1st place, but behind family.

To conclude everything; I had a wonderful time in Switzerland in which I learned a lot, experienced a lot and had a lot of fun. Of course, there will always be differences if you go to another country, but that is something you just have to deal with and if you can see past the differences, you will notice how much you have in common.



*Aukje and me with a donkey used for animal therapy*