

THAÏNA MERENCIA

MY EXPERIENCE

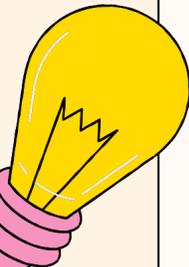
This is my experience working at stichting Felis in 2021.
Together with the kids and volunteers from the Netherlands

How did I find out?



I found out about this project from one of the workers for the organization. I had no idea Curaçao offered such thing as a volunteer service. She enlightened me about the purpose of the project and the goal for being part in such a big program. She told me it would be great for me to participate, since I am a local and I can easily share my culture and experience with them and also learn something new from the volunteers who are coming.

my first impression from the work and the volunteers



Working at Felis wasn't such a big new thing for me, since I have worked with kids in the past it was easy for me to get into the routine. The NGO targets the city of Otrobanda and its youth, so it was nice seeing the growth of the kids that came after school. Different kids with different backgrounds but they all want to have a better future.

I also work in my free time as a youth leader in my church so that was also an advantage in my work and bonding with the other volunteers, some of them were non believers but that didn't stop me from understanding them and get to know a different side.

The volunteers were really really curious, they were so motivated and knew their purpose coming here, it was such an inspiration. I was always teaching them new words in Papiamentu and the slangs we use on the island. They also wanted to help in any way possible and because they were young adults in their 20th or a little bit older, I could really relate to them.



Task and Accomplishments



My task was to work with the kids between 5- 12 after they come from school. I worked 5 times a week at Felis together with the other volunteers. One of my favorite tasks was to plan activities for the children, I wanted them to really enjoy their time at Felis not only educational but also to have fun and to be a kid. I tried being an example for them since some of them comes from a trouble background. And as a young adults and also a local I was sharing my experience and word of God not only to the kids but also the volunteers. Currently I just got accepted in the university, where I am going to study to become a teacher. So working at Felis was an experience I can use in the future and could have also see if this is the direction I wanted to go.



Task and Accomplishments

After we are done working at Felis, almost everyday me and the volunteers are going on an adventure, we jump in the car and go on a mini road trip or we are just walking in the city of Otrobanda and cross the bridge to Punda. Even though I lived on the island it's so nice seeing your own country through a new lens.

What I have learned?

What I have learned working with volunteers from the Netherlands is that they are very open minded, they are not scared to speak their mind. Because I come from a culture where it's not really polite to speak up, it was such a new thing for me and I had to get used to it. It was really nice to see especially since we all were in the same age group. What I liked the most is that they came here with a goal and were focus on it, they were so motivated to make a difference while they were here and influence the youth that they have bigger opportunities if they go in the right path. Because we all have different norms and values we taught each other how to tolerate others. Multi-tasking and to be independent is also something I got from my experience working at Felis that I am now using in my day to day life. Especially now that I am studying to be a teacher, these are important skills I should gather to finalize my work successfully.

Did this experience help you grow?

Ofcourse I have grown during these past month. I learned to be self assured of myself and my work and to be confident that I can be a good exhample and that I can lead others.

Before I started this project, Dutch was not a language I was comfortable speaking, even though I spoke it in school it was a different experience having to do it with actual people that come from the Netherlands. Now I became more fluent and comfortable.

I have also become a more compassionate, tolerant and I have grown alot as a person. Working with the kids from Felis is a experience I would never forget and it also gave me the opportunity and adventage for me to get a job.

