

Description of the different working places in Humanitas, Siza and de Glind.

In the following text the working week of all the volunteers is described, this was written down by the volunteers themselves without correction or interference of the organization. Of course, one volunteer is more gifted than the other in expressing themselves on paper, but in general it gives a good overview of how they experienced their work after 4 months in the Netherlands.

There are 2 descriptions of the volunteers, one from the team of 2017-2018 and one of the team 2018-2019.

De Glind:

1. My life in de Glind at a short stay house

Hi my friend, let me tell you a bit about my work place "the short stay house" at De Wijde Mantel. This workplace is a living place from persons who have physical and mental disabilities, it focuses mainly on children and teenagers and every clients has their take carer so this means that everything happens one on one not in groups, which to me is very unique as the worker can give their full attention to the client.

What I mainly do is help the children with their daly basic life needs and play some games and activites with them, I usually have 5 children to take care of but each day it is only one child. These children can't eat, walk, speak or clean themselves that's why I am always there to help them, I prepare some special food for them and help feed them, I am helping them when they need to take a shower and then I help dress them. Sometimes we have to change the child's diaper but if you can't do it then you can ask for help. Other than those basic daily chores I am doing a lot of fun activities with them such as walking, playing some games, reading a book, watching cartoons, playing an instrument and so on.

Almost every Friday I cook dinner for the children and the other workers so this is a fun good opportunity to show your cooking skills and your food culture. Also, on some Wednesdays I clean my workplace like sweeping the floor, moping and folding the laundry. Oh and I hope you love animals because there is a dog at my workplace and he needs to go outside and be walked so sometimes that is a part of my scheudele.

My working hours are different and very much varied; sometimes I work four hours and sometimes eleven and a half hours it all depends on the week, days and the children's needs. I work 2 weekends per month and I get Monday and Tuesday of every week off.

2. My life in De Glind at a Family House:

My life here is very nice, the people are really kind and if we need anything they help us and they get it ready really fast. Living in De Glind is very peaceful and life here is all about the children but at the same time it has a nice balance with the other citizens.

I work with the family house of Bianca and Davy and they have 7 children at the house and their ages range between 7 and 16 years old. And this is how my week usually looks like:

Monday:

- Early Dutch lesson in Lunteren where we go all together by car.
- Drum lesson where I teach some children how to play the drums.
- Play all together.
- De Glind battle: games and different sports.

Tuesday:

- Take care of my family house; where we play different games, do some handcrafts, cook together, speak, walk with the dogs and just live life together normally.
- Go to football training or Judo class with some of the kids.
- Go to fun sports at the Glindster.
- Go with one little girl to gymnastic class.

Wednesday:

- Take care of my family house.
- Cook dinner for everyone.
- Go to football training with some of the children.

-Go to Badminton alone as this is my personal activity.

Thursday:

- Take care of my family house.
- Go to Trefball with some children.
- Go with one little girl to gymnastics.

Friday:

- Teach Spanish in Archtevel School.
- Take care of my family house.

Weekend:

Take care of my family house and sometimes we go to different events and places to just have fun together.

And keep in mind that sometimes you can volunteer to help with the village activities.

3. My life in De Glind at a Family House:

I work at the "Evemar family house", I usually work 5 days a week mostly after 14:00 and I stay till 21:00 and I also work on one day of the weekend but that is up to me, the family house and my sport activities to decide which day of the weekend I would be working on.

My work consists of playing with the kids some table games, doing different activities, playing football, cooking with some of them, helping them in washing the plates and together we learn Dutch and sometimes my own language which is Ukrainian.

Some days we just walk together with the dogs, visit the cinema, the theatre, the park and we even went to Germany once for camping so basically I spend all of my time with the kids playing and having fun.

In Glindster, where all the sport activities take place, I'm a coach assistant and what I do is play sports with the kids, get them moving, interacting with me and the other kids and just try to have a good time. You shouldn't be scared of this because there will always be someone who has more experience than you and will help you in case something goes wrong. And a small tip is that you always need to be strict with the kids and be ready for everything so it is a good thing if you know how to be strict but still have a good time with the kids.

4. My life in De Glind at a Family House:

I work at a family house that is made up of 6 disadvantaged children where two of them can speak English while the others only speak Dutch but my bosses usually help me in getting an idea across or translating what the kids want. I am playing some games with the children and usually the children choose which game they want to play and sometimes if weather is good we are playing outside games otherwise board games and indoor fun games. I help them with washing the dishes and cleaning around the house and if there is something you don't like or if you are facing some issues with the children such as bad behaviours or hearing them say bad words you can always talk to anything with the family house parents. Generally I leave my workplace between 20.00- 21.00 and I work 5 days per week and all weekends are off but it is up to you if you want to work 2 weekends and get some days off in the week.

I don't want to talk much about my boss's personality but I can say that they are very open minded and that is a great opportunity to do something with the children and everyone in the house. I mean they don't restrict you and whatever you want to do it is possible so if they accept the idea you have then they will help you with it. For example I am cooking for them once a week a traditional dish from my country and they love it.

I HOPE YOU LOVE ANIMALS because we have 3 dogs, 2 cats, several chickens, 1 rabbit, 1 donkey and several horses. You can ride the horses and you can also feed them if you like to.

5. My life in De Glind at a family house:

Hello, I will try to describe my working week but it's going to be quite abstract as my working place is a little different from the rest so I need to explain the rationales of that.

Every Monday two other volunteers and I go to the Glindster and we do music activities with the kids, we sing songs, play the guitar and so on. Then we join the Glind battle where we play team games like football, trefbal and other fun games. We are not the people in charge but we help the people who are responsible of the activities and at the same time it is fun for us as we get moving and jumping around.

My working hours are from 14:00 – 22:00 from Tuesday to Thursday as for the weekend; I get one weekend off and the

next weekend I work and so on but almost every Friday is free. Children in my family's house are between the ages of 13 and 18 years old and they are disadvantaged kids. The family house parents don't expect me to do one to one activities with the kids. And at first it was necessary that I don't approach the kids and wait for them to approach me.

In my family house, I bring a new experience and culture as well as stability since every day I am there between certain hours doing the same things. We have a little language exchange as they teach me Dutch they get to practice their English with me. I also try to cook different foods other than they are used to and bring a bit of my culture to the house. In general me just being there or 'living' there is my primary task. I'm being myself doing my own things; I exist as an individual in the house which is super nice as you feel you are part of the family. I read, I study Dutch, do school work on the computer or keep myself busy with some crafting or projects for the house. When they want to talk they come to me and I give them my time and attention and they tell me something about themselves, their problems, how their day at school was and whatever they want to talk about. Based on the feedback I got from my family house parents, I am the third eye or the added value to the house. As me being there gives more time the parents to sit one on one with a kid or they have more time to address any problems they are facing as I am watching and sitting with the rest of the kids. I also spend some individual time with girls; for example I play the guitar with one of the girls or she talks with me when she needs to. The family also have their own daughter who is 5 years old at the moment, I try to play games with her, do some crafts and fun things. The most important role for me in this house is to just be there as an adult or as a sister figure because we have to stabilize and normalize their lives as well as give the kids emotional support when they need it.

6. My life in De Glind at a family house:

I work at a family house in De Glind, a small village where travel hours are nearly non-existent as all our working places are just a couple of minutes away, mine to be exact is a 3 minute walk away. I usually work from 14:00 to 22:00 but the family house I work in is super cool and very understanding so on many days I leave an hour earlier (if there is nothing left to do) but other days I might stick around till 23:00 just because I like to sit around with the parents and have a talk with them about mostly anything in life. I get 2 days off per week and 2 weekends off each month and if I ever want to travel or go somewhere the family is super understanding and they allow me as long as I let them know ahead of time.

My family house consists of the 2 parents obviously, their young daughter who is a real cutie and 3 teenage girls but more girls come in every year so it might not be the same when you come. What I do at the house is usually helping around with the dishes or if anything needs big cleaning or something like that. As for the young daughter I usually help with her baths, pick her up from school and to swimming lessons. I personally like to spend time with her playing or walking/cycling around the village as I get to learn basic Dutch words from her and help teach her basic English words. As for the 3 teenage girls it is always different, the most important thing is to try to get them to talk to me and be comfortable around me. At first they wouldn't speak to me for many reasons but mainly the language barrier but the more they are comfortable around me the more they talk to me so the only way to achieve this is to act like you are part of the family. I drive the girls around and pick them up from school or their parents' house a lot of times but I also do Yoga with one of the girls, and go to the gym and running with another girl. We usually take a lot of family outings together, go shopping, play card games or just watch a movie.

It is always so different at this house as some days are hectic while other days are empty and I'm free most of the day but on the days I am free I try to just be there and be myself. I help with stuff around the house like cooking or cleaning or just hang out with the girls. A lot of other teenage kids come to the house so usually it is a very busy house and we sit down and play games (most teenagers are shy to speak in English so I also try to engage with them in Dutch as much as I possibly can but also I try to give them the chance to practice their English).

If you ever end up working at this house, then you are lucky! Sometimes you will get super bored but other days you wish you had a couple of free minutes but all in all; the love, appreciation, friendships and knowledge you get is amazing and very touching. You really do feel like home (at least, that is how it is like for me!).

7. My life in De Glind at two family houses:

My working week goes as this:

On Monday mornings I attend the two-hour Dutch class in Lunteren.

After that we, the volunteers from De Glind, have a meeting with our mentors. In the afternoon until the evening I go to the youth center "Glindster" to give guitar lessons, join the music hour and participate and supervise in the "Glind-Battle".

Since I'm working in two Family Houses here, I am split up for the rest of the week. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I am usually at the Gezinshuis Franse. My main task there is to spend time with a ten year old boy who has ADHD and autism. Mostly I play games with him, come up with my own games, craft something or dance to his favorite music. When he is not there, then I also do similar things with the other kids and teens. Occasionally I bring my guitar or ukulele and we all sing together.

On Wednesdays and Fridays I am at my other working place Gezinshuis Zwanenburg. In this family home I also do likewise things: play with the kids, think of and make my own games and bring the kids to their activities or pick them up from school. Furthermore I work two weekends a month, and that is usually at Zwanenburg. Besides spending time with the children I also help and assist the parents in with the household chores like doing the laundry or cooking the dinner for

everyone.

8. My life in De Glind at two family houses:

My name is Olya, I come from Ukraine and I work in Youth village De Glind. The village is quite small but makes a very close and kind community. Most of the houses in the village are family houses – which means that there lives a family with their own children + several foster children that they take care of. I am working in two of such houses – at family Franse and family Zwanenburg. Both of their houses are no more than 10 minutes by walk from our house and 3-4 mins by bike.

I spend a little bit more time at the Zwanenburg family house, because they have a lot of small children (the youngest is 7 and the oldest is 12). Family parents (Marjolijn and Ijsbrand) have three children of their own – Job, Monique and Daan, - and also two foster boys – Santieno and Danjemir. Usually my working day starts at 14:00, when kids come home from school. Then I may play with them, do some crafting, take them to the classes in the nearby village Achterveld or do something outside. When children are busy or don't need my company, I help with household chores – mostly folding the laundry and sometimes cooking. At 17:30 we have dinner altogether, and then it is TV time. Children go to bed at around 19:30 and that is when my work finishes (unless Marjolijn needs my help around the house). Rarely the parents may go out in the evening, and then I stay longer to watch over the kids.

Family Franse is a little bit different, because I mostly spend time with one boy only – Gynno, who is a foster child with troubled past (like most of the foster children in De Glind). The parents, Ada and Richard, have two teenage kids of their own – Niek and Vivian, - plus three foster kids – Karlijn, Hope and Gynno. Gynno is the youngest one (12 y.o.) and requires a lot of time, because all other children have classes, work or internship and like to spend time on their own. My working day begins at 14:00, and then I play with Gynno – inside or sometimes outside, if the weather is nice. I also may take him to the sport classes. Often I help Ada and Richard with cleaning, cooking and laundry – to take a break from playing with Gynno. Then at 17:30 we have dinner and after that I spend a bit more time playing, and at 19:30 Gynno usually goes to bed and that is when my workday finishes.

All in all, the families are very friendly but of course it will take some time to get used to their daily life and to make contact with children (especially in the beginning it will be hard because most of them do not speak English).

Humanitas:

1. My life working in Humanitas, Amersfoort and living in Lunteren:

For Humanitas in Amersfoort there are three different locations: De Teut, de Nieuwstraat and Amersfoort Vathorst. The Clients that I am working with are from different ages, starting at 20 years old and going up to over 80 years old. Usually my tasks include: cooking, baking and eating together with clients, going on walks or cycling, drawing pictures or coloring something, making music, having coffee, playing games, helping clients with changing their bed sheets and occasionally joining them on different events such as an evening out to a pub or to the Bible club or Zumba lessons.

There is an office in the city center, where meetings with my main Mentor at Humanitas take place and sometimes other activities as well.

2. My life working in Humanitas, Amersfoort and living in Lunteren:

I work in the three different locations of Humanita Amersfoort Vathorst, Amersfoort Hooglandseweg and Amersfoort De Teut (Eetclub). My traveling time to those workplaces usually takes from 45 to 55 minutes depending on the workplace via train, bus and walking. And each working place has different working hours so in Vathorst I work 4 to 5 hours, in Hooglandseweg I work 3 to 4 hours and in the Eetclub I work 3 hours.

I generally work with handicapped people who suffer from autism, depression, anxiety, phobia and so on. I don't know what the clients exactly have but in some special situations the colleagues tell me so I can have the right reaction to what is happening (in case something happens). This isn't a problem to me as with time you get to know your clients and what they are dealing with, some clients have heavier disabilities than others, some has less problems but all of them can speak and walk but some of them use a rollator to walk.

Because of the three different workplaces, I have quite a lot of clients, so I spend more time with some of them and see them regularly while others I only see at dinner. The age range is quite big as it starts from 18 years old to 80 years old but most of my clients are middle aged.

The activities that I usually participate/help in are talking, cooking and eating for my clients, playing games, watching tv with them in the evening, drinking coffee, I sometimes do the nails of some of the older women, going for a walk, helping them with grocery shopping, changing their beds with and so on. Some of these activities I do on regular basis with one client or even more but it varies a lot each day depending on who is there and who wants to what.

I also share my own ideas of what I can do with the clients and discuss it with my colleagues and if it is doable then I try to make my clients feel comfortable and have a good time with whatever I bring to the table. At work, I am an “extra hand” so I don’t do the healthcare things like giving the clients a shower or cleaning them as I am so the clients can have some company. It is a really nice line of work as it makes me feel thankful when I see that the clients are happy and excited to see me and my colleagues are very appreciative of me, openminded and are helping me all the time.

But that doesn't mean that you won't face issues, and one of the most important issues is the language as most of them don't speak English and they like to talk a lot although they try to communicate with you as much as possible and try to make you understand. Some of them do speak a little bit of basic English but don't think of this as a real frustrating issue as it will only motivate you to learn Dutch faster. All of the colleagues can speak English, even if they are not really good at it but it is enough to have a small conversation and most of them are really good at and have no problem in talking to you in English. When your Dutch gets better most of the tasks/activities become easier and more fun. Clients become really talkative, they joke around with you and are super proud of you that you are speaking their language.

So, the bottom line is although some clients have heavy mental issues you will get to know them with time better and better and you will know how to deal with them and how to act so whatever happens just remember that you need time to get used to it and always be patient and motivated!

3. My life working in Humanitas, Odijk and living Lunteren:

I work four days per week and I spend, at least, two hours to get to my working place and back home so I use two trains, one bus and a bit of walking for that. My usual tasks are cooking, helping with cleaning, walking around the village and going grocery shopping, playing board and card games, visiting ambulant clients at their homes and occasionally organising interesting events such as national culture week. Everything I do is for the clients and I do it with them.

4. My life working in Humanitas, Odijk and living Lunteren:

I work 4 days per week and 6 hours per day, some days I fixed working hours; usually from 13:00 till 19:00 but if there is an appointment with the clients then working hours can change (this is managed with the mentors) and if you want to get days off then it is really flexible but also depending on the week and the work load.

It takes around 2 hours to go to work and get back home and I usually take two trains, a bus and then walk around two minutes to the working place.

My tasks are cleaning the office; putting in the dishes and taking them out and doing the laundry and tidying around. Playing games with clients (mostly board games), cooking, going out with the clients for shopping, watching a movie the cinema, go bowling or go to do some kind of sport. I also organize events for the clients such as making a movie night, a beauty night and also some fun parties and some create workshops like handcrafts and drawing. I also observe and support the clients when they are doing their own tasks.

5. My life working in Humanitas, Ede and living Lunteren:

I work in one of Humanitas' locations: Ede where the clients there are people with low mental abilities, intellectual and light psychiatric disabilities. Humanitas rents living places, in small blocks with around 15-20 flats where clients can live autonomously in these flats, and if needed, they can receive assistance at any moment from the staff of Humanitas. I have my own tasks with helping them with their daily activities and creating some joyful leisure time activities. I usually help my clients with cleaning, folding clothes and organizing the living place. I go to the nearby supermarket with them so my tasks are not difficult but I am trying to do everything I can to improve their self-abilities and letting them be independent. So what I do is basically just give them some help when they really need it otherwise I am just supporting, encouraging and observing them.

Every day at 14:00 my colleagues and I have small talk about the day of the clients and if everything is okay and this is really helpful to me as it helps me organize and know how to help my clients. At 16:00 pm we have a coffee break so clients who have jobs come back around that time, it is a very nice time to have a conversation and talk about the day is going as well as socialize all together. Few of them can speak English but after 2-3 months I started to actually speak Dutch and have conversations with my clients which make my clients and me so happy. At 18:00 pm we have dinner and there is always one person cooking for the group so each day it is a different person, the majority of the group eats together while others eat at

home. And sometimes I cook or help the clients with cooking. At 20:00 we have coffee again where we all just sit and relax together.

So as you can see I start work at 2:00 since the clients are at work before that time and I finish working around 20:30 on weekdays as for the weekends I work on one day of the weekend per month where I organize a fun activity for us to do together and I have a mentor who helps me with this and anything else that I need. Some of the activities that I do are handcrafts, coloring and baking.

6. My life working in Humanitas, Ede and living Lunteren:

About Humanitas DMH:

We support our clients where necessary to ensure that they can participate in daily life activities based on their own capabilities. We are doing this sincerely in the form of one on one contact with passion and courage. Humanitas DMH (Services to People with an Aid Question) is a humanistic care organization and supports people with intellectual disabilities and/or a psychiatric disorder in a large part of the country.

Core values of Humanitas DMH:

- We work together on the development and interpretation of our own management.
- We take responsibility for ourselves and for other people.
- We feel equal and connected with other people in society.
- We think it is important that people with an (intellectual) disability can and should participate in society within their own abilities, just like all other people. We stand next to people with disabilities and teach them to do more and more by themselves and be more independent.

Location and how to get to the location:

From Lunteren (the living place) to your work place is really easy; there is a train every 30 minutes that goes to Ede-Waheningen and it's a 10 minute ride and after that you just walk for 15/20 minutes and you're there. There is a healthier option also; take the bike and cruise around the neighborhood between Lunteren and Ede for 30/40 minutes.

Mentors and Team:

You'll have 2 assigned work mentors during the project and the whole work team behind you during this project. The working team and mentors are there with many years of social work and experience and they all speak English and are ready to help out in any situation or challenge, don't be afraid or shy to ask something you don't know. Every moment is a learning moment there so try to learn and enjoy as much as you can. The mentors are there for you anytime and in every situation, to motivate you, to support you in a hard working day or just when you need a buddy to talk to. They are there for you, to make your stay there more pleasant and positive, so use them well. There is no stupid or wrong question for them, just a different approach of work. When you come to work, come prepared, know why you are there and what you want to do. Be passionate, take initiative and most of all, have fun. ALWAYS HAVE FUN 😊😊😊

Duties and tasks of the volunteer:

- You and the team are responsible for 17 clients
- You're working 27/30 hours per week – on weekends you are free
- One working Saturday per month, two days off/vacation per month (total 24 vacation days)
- The working hours will mostly be in the afternoon till the evening because the clients are working during the day, but more about that you'll talk with your mentors
- There are 2 coffee breaks at work – 16:00 till 16:30 and 20:00 till 20:30. During that time it is expected from the volunteer to help out with the preparation of the coffee and snacks

- Lunch and Dinner – 12:30 till 13:00 and 18:00 till 18:30. During lunch and dinner time the volunteer is expected to help out with cooking the dinner, setting the table and cleaning the dishes after the meals
- The remaining work time is dedicated for the activities that the volunteer will plan: there are many board games, card games, soon to be an open gym for the clients and much more. Plan the activities to include yours and the clients' needs. You can help them by going to the supermarket with them, take a walk with them in the park, do the dishes and some home cleaning with them (NOT FOR THEM). If you are into sports and yoga they will love that but if not some handcrafts, mandala coloring and origami will do the job. They love food, so making them some traditional specialties is the perfect way to bond with them.
- Some of the clients can already speak English while others want to learn the language so that will be a great opportunity for you to make more contact with them
- Be good, be great, be awesome and most of all HAVE FUN and ENJOY 😊😊

7. My life working in Humanitas, Nieuwegein and living Lunteren:

I am working in Humanitas at the Nieuwegein location. At my workplace we accompany 24 clients with mental disabilities. All our clients have their own apartments, but we also have one kitchen and a living room for everyone. The help that every client gets differs based on their type of disability. My normal working week includes 4 working days, which I could choose for myself as for my tasks they are very versatile and I can choose them together with my mentor. Every day I am going to our kitchen that is open at specific times for the clients and I take part of the cooking process for some of the clients and the workers. Also I talk with the clients and have fun! I have no specific/fixed time to see the clients, sometimes I am going there spontaneously or I am going there together with my colleagues for fixed appointments in our day program. Also I try to get my own appointments with my clients, for example to go grocery shopping, for a walk, to draw something and so on. Every month we have a group activity and everyone is invited to join.

8. My life working in Humanitas, Nieuwegein and living Lunteren:

This green residence (Near the center of Nieuwegein, Utrecht) is the home of 26 people with an intellectual disability. They are between the age of 23 and 55 years old, besides their mild intellectual disability they also suffer from psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, borderline or anxiety disorders.

Most residents are spending their time outdoors; working or doing other activities that's why I usually start working in the afternoon. I work 4 days a week around 6 hours without traveling time of one hour and a half, mostly I start work at 14h so I take the first train at 12:35 from Lunteren station to Ede- Wageningen, the 2nd train to Utrecht and then the tram from Utrecht station to fokkesteeg, Nieuwegein then I just need to walk 3 minutes to the residence. Don't worry about the long travels because the public transportation in The Netherlands is easy and so comfortable and the travel hours are included in the total of the working hours but sometimes I work extra hours just because I like being there.

When I arrive to my work place I usually go directly to the community center to accompany one of the colleagues for a contact-moment with the clients, discuss personal issues and provide guidance where necessary.

After that I go to the office to help in some office work (I chose to do that as I studied management so I want to combine what I studied with what I enjoy and love to do), I go shopping with some clients, watch TV or go for a walk in the park/ petting zoo that is near the working place, I also organize workshops and assist the residents during those workshops, I accompany them in trips and I try to bring new ideas to the work for example every Monday after dinner I try to do an activity with the clients like having a group walk, watching something and soon we will start some Capoeira workshops.

Now that I am here for almost 3 months I can say that I am really grateful to be here, this experience is really good for anyone that loves social work and wants to grow personally and professionally. This experience helped me learn more about social work and helped me decide that this the line of work I want to pursue in the future.

Siza:

1. My life working in Siza, Klaverkoning 3 and living in Lunteren:

My Workplace is Siza, Klaverkoning 3 it is a group with 12 clients that have mental disabilities. I work here 4 days a week 7 hours a day (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: from 13:00 to 20:00 and Friday from 12:00 to 19:00). What I do at work is usually help with cooking the meals, preparing the food and giving them to the clients. After this I clean the kitchen and do the laundry, fold the dry clothes and put it into the wardrobes, and then I help with putting the client to his bed for a nap and do some activities with the other clients (give them hand and feet massage, read a book and go for a walk), or on Wednesdays, I go to the swimming pool with a client and swim with her. After those activities I prepare smoothies for the clients and go on with the activities. When we finish the activities the workers and I have dinner and after the dinner break we give dinner and drinks to the clients.

When the dinner ends I join the clients who have a not so heavy disability in activities like puzzles, memory games and rhythmic line. If there is still time I help to clean a client and put her into bed.

2. My life working in Siza, Klaverkoning 3 and living in Lunteren:

My name is Flora Mair and I work at Siza, Klaverkoning 3, s'Koonings Jaght. My working hours are in total 28 hours per week so 4 days a week and 7 hours per day. It takes me around 70 minutes to get to work via a train to Ede then another train to Arnhem and lastly a bus to s'Koonings Jaght and it takes me around 55 minutes to go back home via a bus, then a train and another train to Lunteren.

A bit about my workplace: since my workplace is divided into small groups that are all divided into different houses at Kooningsjaght, the volunteer always works with the same clients and colleagues. There are also some general buildings, where a swimming pool, a disco, a snoozel room and a skills lab are. There is also an animal farm and some paths in the nature to go for a walk with some clients. Our workplace is in a forest outside of Arnhem and Siza is quite big that is why it offers a lot of space for various activities.

A bit about the activities that I do: In the first weeks I mostly did householding tasks like doing the laundry and the dishes but I also watched a lot of what the other workers were doing and got to know all the clients. After a while I started to do more activities with the clients, like cycling, taking a walk around the area of Kooningsjaght, swimming, going to the disco on Wednesdays, playing guitar, giving the clients a massage, reading a book or going to the snoozel room. And then after I became a bit more familiar with the work field I started to do things such as changing the clients diapers.

Klaverkoning 3 is a house with 12 clients, divided into two, nearly similar sides of the house. The clients have physical disabilities and have the mental Level of babies (3-9 months).

I usually work from 11:00-18:00 or 13:00-20:00 o'clock. I, normally, start my work with going cycling with a client in front of the house and after that we are sometimes taking a walk or doing some other activities with the clients. At 12 o'clock it is lunch time which means the volunteer assists the clients during their meal. After that we have a lunch break and then the clients get their drinks and then I'm doing the laundry. It usually depends on which day it is, f.e. on Wednesdays and Thursdays we are going swimming in a pool in the general building at Kooningsjaght. And sometimes I bring a client to bed and change the diaper of some clients (it was my decision if I want to do it or not). In the evening there is the dinner for all the clients where I also assist during their meal and feed them. After dinner, I fold the laundry and put it in the closet of the clients.

All the things you want to know before you start working there:

In the beginning I started with small and well-known things like doing the laundry but then everyday I got to know more and more new, challenging and interesting things by watching the colleagues at first and then by trying on my own. And then I got to know the clients more and better, what they like and how they express themselves.

3. My life working in Siza, Hartekoning 6, and living in Lunteren:

I am working for Siza by Hartekoning 6 s'Koningsjaght and it is a big kind of village with many houses for clients that are on different levels and types of disabilities. The people at my house are very heavy disabled and my main task is to accompany my clients with their daily routine. They have a fixed program, for example going to swim, going to the snoozel room, to the disco or to go for a walk. I am eating together with my clients and I am also changing their diapers. In the evening we are spending time by drinking coffee, watching a movie and of course eating. I am showering the clients and bringing them to bed and there is always a lot of laundry to do. I am always working with two or more colleagues, the team is very nice and open and also very flexible with my working hours. I really enjoy my work, it is really relaxing and I like to have contact to the clients and to take care of them.

4. My life working in Siza, Hartekoning 6 and living in Lunteren:

Hi my name is Lisa Klinglmair and I am working in Siza, it takes me 80 minutes to get here via two trains and then a bus and 60 minutes to go back via a bus then 2 trains. My working hours are 25 hours a week (4 days a week and sometimes on weekends); normally you start working in the afternoon and maybe once every two weeks in the morning.

The 12 clients in the house that you will be working in suffer from heavy disabilities and almost all of them cannot talk and some cannot walk, they are mentally and physically disabled. Your daily tasks are drinking coffee with them, picking them up from the activity center (this is a place where some of them spend their day), going for a walk with them (most clients are using a wheelchair), eating with them (this means that most of the time you have to feed them), washing them and changing their clothes. In the time between those tasks you can do the laundry or just relax with the clients.

There are also different activities that you can do with the clients like swimming, listening/playing some music, going to the disco and snoozelen (which is relaxing on waterbeds in a dark room with music and special lights).

5. My life working in Siza, Kastanjelaan Velp and living in Lunteren:

Every Monday my week begins with the Dutch course where the other volunteers and I learn some grammar and vocabulary in a quite nice and interesting way by reading stories, singing songs, watching some clips, etc. After the course I can enjoy the rest of my "working-free-day".

Thus, my working week starts at Tuesday. Normally, I work from 15:30 till 21:00 but am free to change the times whenever I want and once a month I work on the weekend.

Concerning my tasks, my creativity and initiatives are demanded. So my clients and my colleagues are very happy when I come up with new ideas for activities like baking, cooking, going to the City Centre, playing some games, drawing or crafting. But it is important to know that most of the clients living at this location are not able to be part of these activities due to their disability; some of them are afraid to have personal contacts and others cannot move, speak or even hear you. Therefore, my tasks also include feeding some clients, changing diapers, showering them and helping them to change their clothes. Furthermore, I prepare their food, wash their clothes and clean their rooms but these tasks are nice when you see the clients smiling or when you get hugged during the day.

On the weekend, I usually travel around the Netherlands because of the possibility to use all the trains for free in this project. Moreover, I enjoy spending time with the other volunteers. We are often partying, cooking together and of course we are talking a lot about our experiences during the EVS.

6. My life working in Siza, Kastanjelaan Velp and living in Lunteren:

I work four days a week around 6 and a half hours (without the travelling time of one hour) and mostly from 14:30 to 21:00 or sometimes from 7:00 till 13:30. Once a month I work on the weekend which is mostly from 9:30 to 16:00.

When I arrive at my workplace I usually start with taking the clothes out of the washing machine, sorting them in the different rooms and refilling the cupboards with diapers and other medical stuff. After this I start heating the food and have some more time for the clients. Then I can play some games such as "Domino" or "Memory" with them, varnish their nails, draw something or simply sit next to them, talk, watch TV or be present so they don't feel lonely. Sometimes I also go for a walk with some of them or bike a bit with one of the clients. At dinner I usually help my colleagues with feeding and preparing the dessert. After that we start putting on their pyjamas and also changing their diapers.

When I work in the morning I also help washing the clients and prepare them for breakfast. These caring tasks may, in the beginning, be a bit intimidating and may also seem as not the most pleasant tasks to do but I really learned these tasks step by step; by first only observing what my colleagues do and then slowly learning to do it myself. I actually think that it can be also quite nice to do because you really feel like you can help them by doing something they just can't manage on their own and enabling them to still be clean and keep their dignity which made me feel really proud of myself after the first time I managed to do it on my own. But in the end that is also something you can choose not to do if you feel too uncomfortable. After they're in their pyjamas they go back to the living room, drink some coffee and we eat dinner ourselves. Around 20:00-21:00 I brush their teeth, bring them to bed and shortly after that go home. The travelling time is around an hour in which I usually spend listening to music or reading something.

To me it is a pretty rewarding job because even though they do have heavy disabilities and some of my clients really cannot do a lot it makes me really happy to see them smile and enjoy something especially when they didn't feel so well.

7. My life working in Siza, Bennekom and living in Lunteren:

When I go to work it's usually lunchtime so I prepare for them some toasts and some snacks and I help them eat because some of them can't eat by themselves. When it is coffee time I am the barista and I actually like making coffee. I cook Turkish food or Dutch food on Wednesdays. We do some puzzles, play a Dutch word game (one of my clients is teaching me Dutch and I'm teaching her English) and I'm also drawing pictures with some of the clients. I go walking with them in the streets sometimes Nordic style, I accompany them to go hospital dentist or barber, and sometimes I'm going to do an activity in the Centrum (usually) on Thursdays. In the future I want to organize a museum trip for my clients.

8. My life working in Siza, Vossenhol and living in Lunteren:

Hello, my name is Mehmet INCE and I am working as a volunteer at Siza Vossenhol that is located in Bennekom. It takes 45 minutes to go there from Lunteren every day (this is the shortest time in comparison with the other Siza locations). Firstly you will take the train from Lunteren to Ede Wageningen and it takes around 12 minutes (if everything is okay) then you can walk for 25 minutes or take the bus but you will have to wait 20 minutes for it.

My workplace consists of two floors and I am working in the first floor but sometimes I visit the clients that are upstairs, my floor has 13 clients and only one of them can actually speak English, so learn Dutch fast if you want to communicate with the clients but don't worry as all the clients and workers are kind and very helpful.

I work 28 hours total per week (4 days/week-7 hours/day) without the travelling hours. I am an early bird and because of that I am working two days from 7:00 till 14:00 but I don't advice that as it is really cold in the morning and the train from Lunteren is at 5:59 as the next train is in the rush hours (you can't use the train during those times unless you pay for it from your own money) while on the other two days I am working a bit later (usually from 12:00 to 19:00).

I spend 80% of my time at work in the kitchen preparing breakfast, lunch, coffee time and dinner. Those meals have fixed timings everyday every day and keep in mind that the clients have different eating and drinking habits and some of the clients can't eat by themselves so I help them. When I am not preparing the meals I am doing some social activities with the clients like playing board games and card games (if you spend your time with them and just for them they feel really so happy). If the weather is nice we walk around the location for about an hour and sometimes they need something from the supermarket so we go shopping. We go to the city center sometimes, we watch a movie together, listen to music and just help them with whatever they want to do. I even visit them in Duursam which is their workplace it is about 15 minutes walking from our workplace.

I have 2 mentors who are also workers at Vossenhol and they are super nice and helpfull so if I want to ask something or if I need help I reach to them. I am really enjoying my time at Siza and if you are keen on helping people and like to learn things from the people around you then a great EVS year at Siza is waiting for you.

9. My life working in Siza, Vessenhol and living in Lunteren:

I'm working upstairs where we have 13 (soon 14) clients who are mentally and physically disabled. Two of them are able to walk on their own and the rest has either on an electrical wheelchair, a normal wheelchair or a walking frame. Some of them have both a walking frame and a wheelchair.

Most of the clients are able to speak and some of them can even speak English. Also, those who can't speak English can understand it. Of course it is difficult that you can't communicate with some clients at the beginning because of the language but that is a motivation for you to learn the language and it doesn't take long. If you genuinely like the clients and want to make them happy then the learning process would be faster and you will enjoy it as it is super nice to spend time with them.

My daily routine depends on my starting time so sometimes I help with preparing breakfast and lunch other times I help with lunch, coffee time and dinner. Helping in this case means feeding the clients and making sure that everyone has something to eat and drink (most of the clients can eat on their own but still you have to help some of them to prepare it). Between the meals and coffee time I often just spend time with the clients. This means that I take a walk with them and also if they need something from the city I go with them to get it. For example, once a client's glasses from were broken so I went with her to the city to repair them. Sometimes I watch TV, read a magazine with a client but mostly I just talk to the clients.

I am also helping the clients to get in and out the bed, helping them to go to the toilet and showering them but if you don't want to help with the health care then you don't have to but I personally enjoy it.

My Working and travelling hours: in total it takes me about an hour to go to the working place and back home. I'm working 7 hours a day and 4 days a week.

10. My life working in Siza, Klaverkoning 4 and living in Lunteren:

My working hours are 27 hours a week without traveling hours, with traveling hours I have two more hours per day because I work in Arnhem and live in Lunteren. I work 4 times a week from Tuesday to Friday, on Monday I have a free day because of the Dutch language course. My working hours are usually from 11:00 to 19:00, on Wednesday from 12:45 to 20:00 and on Friday from 10:30 to 15:00.

I work with 12 heavily disabled people mentally and physically who are living in Siza that is some kind of a village. Normally when I come to my work I start to give the clients something to drink (usually coffee) and then I do the laundry as the earlier you do it the less it would be during the day. Most of my clients are in a wheelchair and are also not able to talk, so most of the time I do an activity with them and that can be going for a walk, putting them to the waterbed with relaxed music and play music with them. At around 12:30 there is always lunch, so we have to move everybody to the table and prepare the food for every client, as they are all a little bit different, after that we drink coffee again. After lunch time it is always relaxing time so the clients go in the waterbed, the bed box, or in their own sleeping rooms where they can relax on their own. I am also changing the dippers for the clients.

At around 14:30 the first clients are coming home from the day care; an activity center for the fitter clients as it would be too busy if everybody is at the house. The other clients from the day care come home around 16:30 and before they come in we have to prepare dinner so everyone can eat at 17:30 and after that I help put the pajamas of the clients on. On Wednesday at 19:30 there is always Disco night where I normally always go with some of the clients. On normal days I just put a movie, TV or a CD on to relax. On Tuesday there is also a theatre where I go with one or two clients.

11. My life working in Siza, Klaverkoning 04 and living in Lunteren:

The KK04 is a house in a beautiful forest in Arnhem and is a very big location; inside the campus we have a farm, a swimming pool, 2 activity centers, a camping area, a sport saloon and a football area. I am working there around 25 hours.

About clients and activities:

Kk04 has 12 clients, some of them can walk and none of them can talk (just one of them can say his name), that's the challenge for you, you will learn how to communicate with them. It's limited but not impossible.

On daily basis, I first check and do the dishes and the laundry, do the regular tasks like cleaning the ovens, filling the cleaning sprays, putting the groceries in the closets etc. After that I am eating with Sigrid (one of the clients), then I go for a walk with Julia, come back check the laundry and the dishes, take Jan from the activity center, then take Gerty and Matje from the other activity center, eat with Sigrid again, prepare dinner for side A of the house, eat with Niko, put the dishes into the dishwasher, prepare coffee for all the clients and then my work is finished.

The tasks can be more or less it depends how long you are working that day. For example every Wednesday they have disco nights for the clients at 18:30-19:30 I am going there with the clients and every Tuesday they have music day, I can't sing but I can dance with them.

As a volunteer:

- Before the work start take a coffee and read about everything about Siza.
- When you are at KK04, try to actually be there by watching the workers and asking them questions.
- Don't be afraid of making a mistake.
- Share your opinions with them.
- Don't forget you are at work.
- Let them know as early as possible about your plans for your free days or Christmas, New Year, etc.
- Call everytime you are not able to go to work.

Do you want to help the house?

- Prepare foods or drinks before ahead of time.
- Watch out for the dishes and laundry.
- Refill diapers, towels, washing gloves.
- Refill the cleaning sprays in the kitchen.
- Put inside trash to the outside bins.
- Put the taps on for 5 minutes every Tuesday for each room.

Do you want to help the clients?

- Take them for a walk

- Attend the general weekly activities (swimming pool,theatre,disco, etc.)
- Help with the eating and drinking
- Pick them up from the day-care places
- If you want to do something else just ask (like cooking or going to eat french fries)

12. My life working in Siza, Kastanjelaan Velp and living in Lunteren:

My typical week starts on Monday with our language course. Next to the fact that it's really worthy to have the chance to learn another language, it's also helping to communicate in the Netherlands; with local people and at work with the colleagues or clients. Every Monday I'm free so I do things like groceries or housework and I also go to the gym in Ede.

My working place is located in Velp. The institution from Siza is the mentally and physically handicapped people's home. With some of them you can communicate easily and some are very difficult with their behavior. Their handicaps are very various and are often a mixture of several syndromes. Their age ranges from 45 to 70 years old.

My job is to the healthcare which includes showering and feeding the clients. Next to it I entertain them and we do activities together. Here I must also say that there are people with whom you cannot do this much because of their high level of disability. Nevertheless we do things like playing cards, listening to music, watching TV, going for a walk or go to eat something in the city center. Sometimes I also do crafting, cleaning the garden or painting a client's room.

On one hand my work can be challenging; for example when a client is not in a good mood he/she can get aggressive. But on the other hand I feel very much fulfilled when I can do them a favor or when they are just really happy that I help them at their shower or do the simplest things for and with them. They most of the times appreciate your presence and enjoy the very little things in their daily life. And this is why I like to be with them because sometimes regarding the mentioned point you can even learn something from them. My working colleagues are all very polite and you can communicate well with them.

Normally I work four days a week (from Tuesday to Friday) from 14:30 to 21:00, once a month I work on the weekend. Then my working times are from 9:00 to 15:30 which means that I do the morning shift. Of course I have two days off in the week when I'm working on the weekend.

On my free days I mostly travel through the Netherlands or even go abroad. I must admit that I fell in love with the Netherlands and genuinely enjoy my time here. When I'm not traveling I spend some great time with the other volunteers.