



## Straßensozialarbeit in Berlin

# Berlin: A Tale of Two Cities

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### Location: Berlin, Germany

I had the privilege of traveling to Berlin, Germany for my summer global independent field placement. Berlin, the capital of Germany, is of the largest city in the country with a population of 3.7 million (2018). The city has a reputation for being one of the largest art and party cities in the world. The city's unique history, stemming from World War II, has fostered a culture of political and social awareness. My work took place in various settings across Berlin that include schools, community centers, a prison, and "hotspots".

### Quick Facts

- Germany has the largest population and economy in the EU. The population sits at around 81 million (2018).
- Berlin has the largest Turkish population outside of Turkey.
- Germany's employment rate is at 76.3% (Adult Population).



### Global Field Agency: Gangway E.V.

In the course of my three-week global field placement, I worked with Gangway E.V. Gangway E.V. works with youth and adults on the streets of Berlin. The aim is to help individuals to take their own lives in their own hands. Gangway E.V. was founded in 1990 and is funded by the Senate, district offices, and donations. There are 14 different Gangway teams across Berlin. The primary team I collaborated with was the Street College. The primary populations targeted include refugees, impoverished individuals, incarcerated individuals, and homeless individuals.

### Activities/Outcomes

- Research on international educational paradigms in multiple settings
- Community empowerment through street social work in large urban "hotspots" (Alexanderplatz, Friedrichshain, and Kruezburg)
- Facilitating English workshops that developed the social capital of individuals from ages 6-26 (Gangway Street College, a local school, and at the youth detention facility, Friedrich-Olbricht Damm)

### Competencies Utilized

- Engagement:** Interacting with diverse individuals in various social settings (Schools, Detention Facility, and Urban "Hot Spots")
- Diversity:** Observing the differences in the public social systems in comparison to the United States
- Social Justice:** Utilizing community praxis with individuals to develop and empower solutions

### Connections

The experiences from the School of Social Work that prepared me were my SW 622 (Orientation Seminar for Community Based Initiative Scholars) course and my field placement at the James and Grace Lee Boggs School. Both of these environments were significant in developing a community empowerment based perspective for my practice methods in Berlin.



### Career Connections

My professional goal consists of working in the educational sector using a community-based curriculum. Hearing the diverse perspectives in Berlin and observing how those perspectives make a change in a community is one of the tools I will bring to my career practice.



### Advice

- Invest in good walking shoes
- Familiarize yourself with the culture you are entering
- Talk to your faculty advisor early and establish a plan
- Prepare mentally (asking multiple reliable sources for advice, journaling, and debriefing your experiences)

### Lessons Learned

- Respecting and collaborating with one another is crucial to making a better society.
- Social Work is a dynamic art that can impact any social domain.
- Good education can be more accessible in the United States if we want it to be.

### Acknowledgments

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