

My Erasmus+ traineeship took place in the Netherlands, in Amsterdam. I was a trainee at the theatre organization Stichting Mime Wave, where I assisted with several different projects. The team at Mime Wave creates mime performances and cultural projects. Some time ago, they performed and worked with another organization in my home country. In addition, they have organized two editions of the Mime Wave Festival, and since their work is in the field I am passionate about, I felt it would be the perfect place for my traineeship. The director of Mime Wave was very kind and accepted me as a trainee, for which I am truly grateful.

Although I was lucky to find an organization that matched my interests, finding accommodation in the Netherlands—especially in Amsterdam—was a real challenge. The housing shortage is a well-known and widespread problem that affects not only international students and trainees but also Dutch residents. Moreover, the prices are extremely high. The Erasmus+ scholarship provides €750, which barely covers the rent. After several unsuccessful attempts to find a room online, I asked my Dutch friends if they knew someone renting out a room. Eventually, through personal contacts, I found a place in Utrecht, which is about 30 minutes by train from Amsterdam. Even though I had to commute every day, I was just happy to have a place to live.

Both Amsterdam and Utrecht are beautiful cities. Utrecht is smaller but has a cozy and welcoming atmosphere. It's a student city with many young people my age, and I really enjoyed walking along the canals and spending time there. Since it's located in the center of the country, traveling to other cities was a bit easier—though still quite expensive. Amsterdam, on the other hand, is larger and much busier. It's also very international, and while walking through the city, I sometimes heard more English than Dutch, but luckily I used only Dutch in all my communication with everyone so it let me practice a lot and improve my language skills. Nevertheless, Amsterdam offers a vibrant and diverse professional environment, with endless things to do and places to discover. However, it's also more expensive and often felt overcrowded, especially in the tourist-heavy city center.

Despite all the ups and downs, I have absolutely no regrets about choosing the Netherlands for my traineeship (even though it was quite an obvious choice since I study Dutch). It's a beautiful country where people and nature exist in harmony. There is a strong respect for work-life balance, and the biking culture adds to a healthier and more active lifestyle.

Regarding my work at Mime Wave, I was involved in three main projects during my traineeship: the performance series *Sprookjes van thuis*, the festival *Rizdvo*, and the discussion project *Theater during the war: facing challenges*. These projects took place at different times, and for each of them I had both similar and unique tasks. For the performances and the festival, I helped with preparations and also assisted during the actual events. I supported the actors, created content for social media, communicated with theater staff, and organized after-performance activities for children. I also took part in discussions during rehearsals and made sure everything ran smoothly on performance days.

For the third project, I was responsible for organizing a visit from international guests to Amsterdam. The goal was to plan a meeting and start shaping a future collaboration. My tasks included applying for an international arts grant, arranging travel, accommodation, and the program for the guests. I also organized the meeting itself and wrote a summary of the most important outcomes, which later

served as the foundation for a new project. In addition to all this, I also researched funding opportunities and subsidies that could support our ideas.

This traineeship gave me a great opportunity to experience how things work behind the scenes in the cultural field. I was able to see how a theater organization really functions—from the first ideas to the actual performances and events. I learned a lot about organizing, planning, and teamwork. It also helped me understand what kind of tasks and responsibilities people have in this sector, and gave me useful skills that I can use in my future work or studies. Thanks to this experience, I feel more confident about my abilities and more motivated to stay active in the cultural field. It also gave me valuable input for my future research and studies related to Dutch language and culture.