

Interview with Leny Bootsma

Internship at Florence Nightingale Hospital

4 Feb – 20 June 2005

Leny Bootsma is from Drachten, a town in the northern part of Holland with 700.000 inhabitants. She says that it is quite a big city in Holland, but very small compared to Istanbul. She actually grew up in Frieschepalen where her parents are still living. When she was 19, she decided to live on her own, and after living in a terrible area for a while, she moved to a better place which she calls “my little paradise”. Before she came to Istanbul, she had three jobs to pay for her apartment.

Leny is studying Facility Management at the Hanze University of Groningen. She first started with social work in a vocational school, and after realizing that it was not an interesting area for herself, she decided to continue with facility management.

Leny is doing her internship at the Florence Nightingale Hospital in Istanbul. *“I have a twin sister who is a nurse, she is working with mentally disabled people. My mother is a nurse as well, and my other two sisters are also working in jobs related to health care”* she says.

Last year Leny took part in a development project building classrooms for little children in a small town in Egypt where she stayed for three weeks, and she wanted to go to Egypt again, however, one of her teachers told her about the Concordia internship program. She liked the change and all was arranged in a few weeks. *“I am really glad I did it. It is an amazing city and a wonderful experience for me. The Florence Nightingale Hospital accepted my application as they wanted a measuring system for the quality of cleaning. I also did an investigation for the procedures of cleaning that needed to be reshaped for ISO 9002.”* When compared to hospitals in Holland, she says that the private hospitals in Turkey are more like the government hospitals in her country. In her comparisons she finds some cultural differences as well: *“here, I have never met the CEO, the big boss. However, in Holland we go out to lunch with the CEO”* she says.

When we ask her about Turkey, you can easily notice how impressed she is: *“I have to say that I had some prejudices about Turkish people like all other Dutch people do. After one month, I put all of it aside. Turkish people are very social, even if they do not speak English, they are very interested and involve themselves with what you are doing, through their gestures and hand movements. In Holland, people are more individualistic, they have friends, but they also have their private life. For example, a Turkish girl that I met invited me to her wedding immediately, this would never happen in Holland.”*

Leny is staying at a house in Anadolu Hisarı on the Asian side of Istanbul, and takes the boat to Besiktaş every day to go to work. *“For the first two weeks I was feeling alone, but after a while I made Turkish friends on the boat. There is a group of people who take the same scheduled boat daily and seeing them every day after a while you become friends”* as she explains. *“Turkish people are very open-minded, they have a vision and get involved with foreigners easily. My colleagues are very helpful as well, it is amazing.”*

As the conversation goes on, we wondered if there is anything that she did not like about the people and the life in Istanbul. *“I liked everything. It is crowded yes, but it is a city going on 24 hours a day. There are really nice places and you can find everything if you*

look for it. I really enjoy the place I am staying at, every day you can see something different. You meet people with bad intentions sometimes, but it is normal in such a big city. And, I did not like the weather. It was rainy for the most time I was here, and unpredictable.”

Within 5 years from today, Leny wants to have a nice job with promotions. She wants to see herself in a job that gives her opportunity to explore herself as a facility manager. She also has some thoughts of doing an international job, and if the opportunity arises, she will definitely take it.

Interview by Aylin Sökmen
