

Arriving at Shanghai Pudong Airport after a ten hour flight was very nice because someone of the agency will be waiting for you at the exit of the terminal. You'll be like me receiving a very warm welcome which makes the transition from Europe to China even more smoothly. If you go by bus you will see the astounding skyline like I did. I couldn't help it. I felt very small in a very big city. After a one hour trip by taxi and bus I arrived at the volunteer apartment where you stay for a week for introduction course. I was very lucky on this day because I wasn't the only one who just arrived. And so we all found something to talk about. Exchanging our experience of arriving in this big city. The introduction week was all about learning to get your way around the city. Which in the beginning wasn't very easy for me. So many people everywhere. A lot of taxis, buses and cars driving in the streets. Never ever cross a road without looking left and right at least twice! People drive even if there is a red light. So be aware and walk quickly!

During the first week there was a lot of time for sightseeing. So don't forget to pack comfortable shoes for long walks. You undoubtedly get very tired and sore feet if you spend your day running through the big city. I had to throw away two pair of shoes because I used them a lot. The 6 hour chinese crash courses helped a lot, too. They will teach you some basic sentences. Explaining how to take a taxi, basic conversation and how to introduce yourself. That really helped a lot because the chinese people warm up to you more quickly if you try to speak some lines. Just try it out! Most of the time they will understand what you want. Even if you make a lot of mistakes while you speak! Not only was the week spend with being introduced to speaking chinese, but also introduction with the chinese food. Which indeed tastes nothing like the european chinese food you know! If there are other volunteers who have been staying in Shanghai already for a while you can ask them a lot of questions. It helped me with getting around better and learning from their experiences. So I spent the week also with getting knowing everyone, exchanging chinese handy phone numbers and planning already the first weekend with things to do with the other volunteers. And let me tell you there is a lot to see and a lot to do. I spent 5 weeks in Shanghai and wasn't able to see everything. So make a plan before you arrive in the city.

I had a really nice time teaching on Chang Xing Island. The first week during

my stay I was allowed to watch several lessons of the other teachers. In this way I learned how to prepare and teach a lesson. It's quite different from the teaching technics in Germany. So while you watch take a few notes. These helped me greatly while I was writing my lessons plans.

In the second week I was allowed to teach the children. They were very nice and polite to me and listened to me when I spoke. I quickly learned to use very basic English. Always remind yourself that you are teaching children. I found out that they learned the quickest way by combining new vocabulary with some easy games like „Hangman“. While I planned my lessons I always sat in the room with other teachers. They were always very helpful when I had a problem but also talked with me when they had free time. They, too, are very interested in you and will ask a lot of questions. I was able to use Power Point Presentations for my lessons because in every classroom there is a computer with a screen. That was really helpful. But beware sometimes the computer won't work. On one day while I stayed at the island there was no electricity the whole day. So always prepare an alternative lesson or some things and games on paper.

The weeks went by pretty quickly. I spent most of my days teaching and planning lessons on the one hand. On the other hand I was invited by the teachers to eat dinners with them and even once or twice parents of children whom I taught. Chinese table manners are very complicated. At least to Europeans! It's ok if you make some mistakes, they won't judge you if you do. Just observe what everybody does and try to imitate some things like toasting to others. That worked pretty well for me. The goodbyes on the day I left were heartfelt and I miss the people I got to know while I spent my time teaching on the island. It definitely was a great experience. I can recommend this kind of adventure to everyone!