

PROGRESSO-NEWS

Anniversary Issue

07 Intensive Pedagogical-Therapeutic Counselling in Portugal

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Progresso - Associação para o Apoio e Acompanhamento de Jovens em Portugal



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10 Years of Progresso



FOREWORD

It is hard to believe that Progresso has now been operating for more than 10 years. Time has gone by so quickly.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary issue, I have written an article that once again highlights all the emotional stages of Progresso over the past decade that mean so much to me.

We were especially pleased about the many great and positive feedbacks from youths with whom we worked and their parents. Unfortunately, we cannot print all of them.

In this issue, I would like to express my special thanks to our staff, who have shown extraordinary commitment in many difficult situations and without whose high level of professional competence and personal commitment Progresso and the children and young people entrusted to us would never be where they are now.

Thanks to all who contributed to the newsletter, I hope you will enjoy reading it!

Dorit Brandauer
Managing Director

Vicky`s Hiking Tour



I went on a walking tour for 2 weeks with different counsellors. It felt good to get away from "Quinta do Cerro" and see something new for a while.

The hike was hard, but somehow also fun. At one point I really didn't feel like walking anymore and didn't want to go on, but I did it anyway.

We walked about 13 km a day and after a while you actually get used to walking that far.



We provided for ourselves by preparing our own food. We slept in the tent. We had to find public showers. We even went out to eat in a restaurant sometimes. When I finally got back to the Quinta, I was happy that I had made it.



I felt stronger as well.

Vicky (Quinta do Cerro)

Fire in Monchique



During the summer of 2018, there were large forest fires in the mountains of Monchique, not far from Almodôvar. The Portuguese fire brigades ("bombeiros") were on duty day and night and also asked the population for support.

We helped - and so did many other people, fortunately.

We filled up two cars with our donations, such as water bottles, milk, cereal energy bars and 50 kilograms of dog food. Progresso helped along with "Café Boca Doce", "Castro Gym", Katia M. and Sara L.



By the time we all arrived in Portimão, many other volunteers were already there. Everyone offered to help unload the donations. Some were preparing to go to the big forest fire, where at this point over 1000 firefighters were still struggling to put out the flames.

We then drove a little closer to the fire to drop off the dog food. There we met more volunteers who did all they could to protect as many animals as possible from the fire. Everyone was very exhausted, including the veterinarians who were there to help.

A week after the fire started, it was finally successfully extinguished by the "bombeiros". Fortunately, everyone was saved.

João (Counsellor, Nova Sembla)



"Quinta do Cerro" and its Horses

When I first started at Progresso 10 years ago, our horse team was made up of very different horses than today. There was a horse family consisting of the mother Joana, which was already 28 years old at the time, and her offspring Curioso, Lesley and Nina. We had also received another horse from our neighbour - it was called Bob and had already been trained to ride. All the horses were distrustful and nervous around people.



Curioso and Lesley have had very little interaction with people so far. The horse training was carried out through the work of the children and young people entrusted to us. As horses are very sensitive animals which mirror people's feelings, it was a lengthy process. Finally, we succeeded in achieving mutual trust and at the same time working as sensitively and safely as possible.

About six years ago, the horse Quinten joined the group. He had previously lived in the "Fronteiras" project and was no longer accepted by his herd after the death of his companion Mel. Quinten is a very experienced and trained riding horse. With his down-to-earth nature, he has helped people as well as horses to build up trust and gain self-confidence. In the meantime, Quinten and Bob have become friends - they prefer to ride together.

Meanwhile, the two youngest horses, Lesley and Curioso, have turned into excellent therapy horses. Working with Melanie, Ana, me and the many children and young people who have gone through the project helped them learn to trust people.

Joana passed away on 31 May 2019 at the age of almost 40. She was the smartest and wisest of all the horses, because she had learned over the years to open the stable door by herself, even though we constantly tried different latches. She then let the other horses out of their stalls (but only the ones she liked ☺). Her three offspring learned the same trick from her and are now up to mischief in memory of Joana.



At the moment we have a team of five horses, each with its own character and special skills. It is always very interesting to find out between which horse and young person a bond will develop. You can read about this topic on the next page in Ana's report on "Therapeutic Horsebackriding".

Lisa (LG Quinta do Cerro, Counsellor)



Therapeutic Horsebackriding



Therapeutic horsebackriding is a therapeutic-pedagogical method that combines riding techniques, horse-related activities and scientific knowledge from the fields of health, education and horsemanship in an interdisciplinary approach.

Specially trained horses are used as co-therapists. These should be physically and mentally stable, as well as open in their interaction and self-confident in their bond with humans.

Of course, the question arose whether we at Quinta do Cerro would be able to build a stable bond with the horses at all. The horses' behaviour, which reflected an inner reluctance due to their previous experiences, was definitely an adverse factor. Despite this fact, the horses at Quinta do Cerro always manage to adapt to the young and mostly traumatised people.

In therapeutic horseback riding, we assume that the horse is a mirror of our personality - in every phase of the therapy: from the choice of the favourite horse and the formulation of one's own needs, up to the reflection on the relationship with the horse. Mostly, young people tend to choose a horse with a similar character, with which, however, they then find it difficult to achieve their goals and overcome (often the same) weaknesses.



In therapeutic riding, children, adolescents and horses often have similar goals. These goals are pursued in the behaviour modification therapeutic approach. According to Carlos Vasconcelos, the three most important tools for this are "communication, balance and trust".



It often fills the young people with pride and boosts their self-confidence when they achieve their goals with the horse. They understand that the greatest change takes place within themselves. The relationship with the horse expresses the positive life change and the associated positive feelings and characteristics that have been achieved (such as trust, patience, attention, and calm). Thus, the help provided at Quinta do Cerro is sometimes life-changing too.

Ana

(Therapeutic Horsebackriding Instructor)



Counselled Living



Hello, my name is Calvin and I have already spent over a year in Counselled Living.

When I arrived, I felt like I had more freedom and I felt much happier to be here, but I also had to be much more responsible for my own tasks and life.

I also felt like I was able to focus more on school.

This is my typical week in Counselled Living:

Monday through Thursday are school days and group dinners take place on Monday and Thursday. You also need to do sports twice a week, that's on Tuesday and Wednesday. Friday is workday. On Saturday we get our "weekly budget" and we clean the whole house together. Sunday is a day to relax. Sometimes we get together during the weekend to do something like going to the cinema, spending the day at the beach, shopping, etc.



Once we played paintball. We set up two 5-player teams. In order to win the game, a team had to be the first to hit all the players in the other team. We had a lot of fun, especially because we were also allowed to shoot at our counsellors.

This year here has been tough. I had to overcome some difficult personal challenges, both emotional and practical.

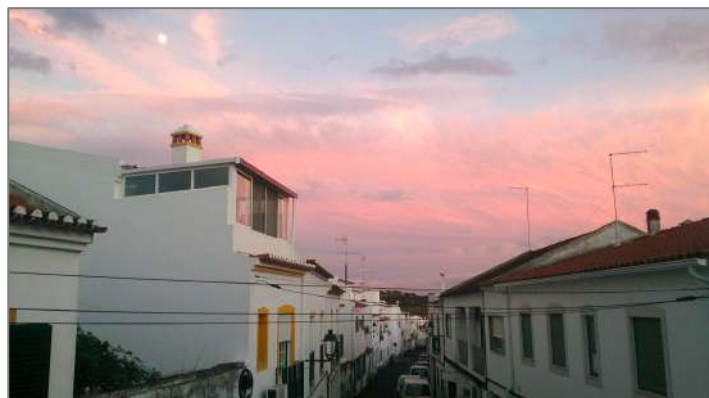


Fortunately, I can always count on our counsellors for support.

I have learned a lot from my stay here and I will use that knowledge for my future.

But now I will continue to work on myself in the Netherlands.

Calvin (Counselled Living)



HIIT - High Intensity Interval Training



Hello! I live in the Counsellled Living group in Almodôvar. Everyone who lives here does sports at least twice a week. I am in the HIIT sports class with two of the boys. We do this on Tuesday evenings and Friday afternoons at the "piscina" (swimming pool) in Almodôvar. The course lasts about 45 minutes and is very intensive, as the name suggests. There is a sports instructor who explains and demonstrates all the exercises. His name is António and he is always very enthusiastic.

There are a few different HIIT courses we can join. The first one we joined has four different "stations".

At each station you do a different exercise and repeat it four times before moving on to the next one. There are also weights at two of the stations. After you have gone through the four stations once, you do four new exercises. There are 3 rounds in total. The second round is a kind of circuit with about 24 exercises. You start with an exercise of your choice, repeat it twice and then move on to the next exercise until you have completed the entire circuit.



The last run involves everyone. Each of us holds a bar with weights on it. You can choose how heavy you want it to be. António demonstrates the exercise and then everyone repeats it. There are also three rounds. After each run, there is one minute of time left. In this minute we have to do the "hamburger". This includes four burpees, eight squats, four burpees, eight push-ups and four more burpees.

Of course, we have to stretch at the end of each class. The motivational music that is usually played during class is replaced by calm and relaxed tunes. Then we stretch our arms, legs, abdomen, back, hands, etc.



I can only encourage everyone to give it a try! It is not only very intense, but also convivial and nice!

Saar (Counsellled Living)

Walking on Fire

This spring, we wanted to offer our young people a very special experience. In cooperation with Dagmar Deubgen (qualified social pedagogue, experiential and nature pedagogue, master firewalking trainer, vision work), an experiential workshop took place in our living



groups Quinta do Cerro (girls) and Fronteiras (boys) on 4 and 5 April 2018, which ended with a firewalk for the young people in an evening with a dreamy atmosphere. The following report describes the workshop and is intended to give an insight into the experiences of the young people.

Workshop description by Dagmar:

During the workshop, perspectives change. Discovering one's own possibilities and scope for action opens up new views and new prospects. The workshop's uncommon challenges foster the young people's development. They are encouraged to find pathways that bring them closer to their goal.

Skills enhancement:

In order to be able to act competently in challenging situations, we need an inner skill that allows us to recognise existing resources, to use them and to expand them. Thus, the ability to deal with fear and uncertainty is anchored in each individual. This self-competence enables us to deal adequately with our own personal structures. The workshop offers the opportunity to recognise one's own structures and to practise a constructive way of dealing with them. The exposure to unusual challenges thus expands one's own scope for action.



The firewalk is probably one of the most immediate and effective ways to overcome fears (especially decision-making fears) and mobilise courage, strength and self-confidence. Participation in a firewalk offers us the opportunity to question our inner beliefs, to reflect on them and to trigger them in order to broaden our perspective and to develop new viewpoints.

Stephan (Pedagogical Supervisor)

Personal experiences from the workshop:

„On 4 April 2018, a fire walk took place in Fronteiras for the Progresso youths and counsellors.

First, we all joined in on some team-building exercises, e.g., we had to choose one of many photos and explain why we chose it and what it brought to mind.

After the group exercises, we prepared the fire pit, and we all lit the fire together. After that we had a short break to eat and drink.

When it was finally time and only the embers were left, everyone who was brave enough could walk over them.

All in all, it was a very nice day, for which we have to thank the Progresso counsellors and of course Ms. Dagmar (our firewalking specialist). “

Benjamin
(Nova Sembla)



"Firewalking" became the new buzzword at Progresso for a while. Everybody wondered, would we actually be walking on fire? We were all looking forward to it.

When the day came, we were educated by Dagmar and her colleague about the history of firewalking. She explained the concept of having to be fully present in the moment and able to completely focus on what we were about to do. She guided us through varied tasks designed to build up trust and focus. As we all went through this journey together, it was not clear if the final goal of the fire walk would be reached.

Throughout the day there was laughter, despair and, for some, even tears of emotion. The youths were now about to actually walk on fire. Many hesitated at the start but others went straight across the glowing coals without a moment's indecision.

Some even walked across the fire multiple times for a specific person or said the names of people they walked for or did it for some life goal they wished to achieve. Many went hand in hand and walked across the fire together.

After the walk we all sat and ate together. There was a quiet atmosphere, full of self-reverence. All the participants were extremely thankful to Dagmar for the experience.

Paola
(Counsellor, Counselling Living)



10 Years of Progresso and how we learned to walk

"Progresso" is the Portuguese word for "progress". And taking steps means, among other things, learning to walk. This is many associations' essential idea for youthcare programs. Our concrete Progresso motto for the last 10 years has been: "One step back - to simplicity". This is the essence of everything we do.



Our self-concept for young people: Match your step to your leg.

Progresso arose from the will to offer young people a group experience abroad to help them find their identity. It also allows them to learn social skills in a safe setting far away from a harmful environment.

But the question is: How did Progresso learn to walk in the first place?

Standpoints are born of experience!

To give an overview, you sometimes have to travel back into your past, because that is where many roots for the present and the future lie. Mine, too.

I come from Halle in East Germany, and I grew up in a socialist system. There was light and shadows at the same time. In a nutshell, I can say that I had a beautiful and safe childhood under the dictatorship. During that time, I experienced and learned how to be there for each other and support each other. Together we were strong! And with the fall of communism, the motto was: only you count, only the best will get ahead...

Very confusing for a 13-year-old teenager.

Portugal: Happiness is not a final destination, but a way of travelling.

And almost exactly 30 years later, I am now typing this newsletter here in Portugal. You are right to ask: What does my childhood in the GDR have to do with Portugal today?

A few things. For example. We didn't have much back then. And we at Progresso make a virtue out of necessity - as we always have: we need each other and help each other. Our stance: interpersonal values are more important than consumerism. But why Portugal, of all places?

This country embodies the so-called "calma": calm, relaxation, cosiness, everything seems slower. When I first crossed the Mondego River to Coimbra by bus in June 1999, I decided that I would study here, in the oldest university city in Europe.

A year later, I was cramming in the library for my Pedagogy degree.



Three things I still find charming about Portugal to this day: the almost always blue sky, the friendliness and the serenity of the people.

At this point I will skip two or three chapters of my life and land in 2006. That was an important milestone, marketing professionals would now say. In 2006 we founded Progresso - not knowing whether we would manage to make our dream come true in Portugal.

You learn to walk by stumbling

2007 was the year of promotional tours. Sounds posh. Actually, it was very banal door-to-door pitching. It went like this: Hans (head of our first cooperation partner Rückenwind e.V.), Tanja Wolfrum and I travelled all over Germany from Youthcare office to Youthcare office to present our unique concept.

You can probably guess how this journey turned out. Many Youthcare offices thought our concept was great. But none wanted to invest in us.



The first step is always the hardest

The first moving and exciting moment was September 14th 2007, because on that day Progresso - that was Tanja, Mark and me at the time - started a programme with two Dutch young people under our care at Quinta do Cerro. At first, we were worried about the language barrier.

But things turned out differently. Namely, much better. The counselling in another language had a positive effect on the development of the young people. We realise that now. They could not fall back on their old behaviour patterns, and thus had to learn a new and healthier way of communicating.

The second step leaves its mark: the opening of Fronteiras in 2009

The requests started to grow. And so did the need for space. We and Jan Mulder, head of our Dutch cooperation partner, did not have much, we started with caravans.

The caravans gradually turned into mobile homes, which then turned into bungalows.

Sometimes we felt like settlers and pioneers in the Wild West. That sounds about right, Portugal is in the west of Europe after all - and it was pretty wild, too. And quite honestly - we were never really tame.



Confidence is gained after many steps

Five things changed Progresso over the years:

1. the intensive social-pedagogical individual care settings - ISIC
2. the opening of our office and the school,
3. the Time-Out programme,
4. the opening of Nova Sembla, and
5. the Counselling Living group

Let's start with the individual care settings. Quite a few children and young people in our context need special attention in order to catch up on their childhood. For this purpose, we have been looking for - and found - suitable care settings in Portugal since 2009.

The next important step for Progresso, which takes us to 2010, was the opening of our open space office with our first and indispensable secretary Susana. The schooling of our young people also took place there at the beginning.



Time Out: A right and important step towards taking time out



In 2011, we expanded our offer with the Time-Out Programme. Behind the English expression is the simple idea of taking some time out, which was introduced for young people who are in a crisis, affected by personal, family or social difficulties and for whom, for example, a temporary solution within the framework of residential accommodation was necessary. Overall, the programme gives time and space for thorough educational planning and for finding a suitable form of assistance.

In March 2012, the smallest and third living group "Nova Sembla" came into being. The name came from a mixture of the nearby village "Semblana" and the story of the discovery of the island "Nova Zembla".



And very important at Progresso - you come here so you may leave

From the experience of the previous years of counselling, we have seen time and again that for some young people the step back into independence in their home country was still too big and they needed a different transition. Therefore, we saw the need to install an intermediate step to enable the young people in Portugal to try out what they had learned and to learn to live independently.

Because as the basic concept of Progresso says, we humans learn through experience. This is how our Counselling Living group came into being in 2014.

Coming already implies leaving

A lot has happened since then. Mark, a valued co-worker and founder of Progresso passed away due to cancer. That was a hard setback. Tanja decided to return to Germany in 2016 for family and health reasons. Together we have been through a lot, grown, fallen, had significant crises, made many mistakes and learned a lot from our mistakes. Very important:

We got up again and again and took the next step.



A loss also means a fresh start

Jutta, our therapist of many years for the children and young people, has taken over Tanja's position as deputy manager and pedagogical-psychological director, thus adding a completely different professionalism.

After 10 years, Progresso has already grown to over 40 staff members, and at peak times we have had up to 25 children and young people in our care.

All of this was only possible because we had and still have really great employees who were brave and committed enough to implement their extraordinary ideas together with us.

Tell-Us and Trotzdem e.V., two of our cooperation partners, have played a major role in the development, quality and vision of Progresso. I would like to make special mention of them here, because they have been at our side for over 10 years now and have always supported us since our first steps.

When the journey ends, the arrival begins

In summary, Progresso has grown like a child. We have become bigger and more experienced. We have grown in ourselves and in our tasks. The same goes for our young people. They have started a journey. And we are a port of call. A transit station. Our children



and young people come so they can leave again. Even if it is painful for us, it is good that they leave. Because then we have done everything right. They dare to take their own steps. We know from our own experience: the biggest step is the one through the door.

Dorit Brandauer
(Managing Director)

Progresso in the Eyes of a Former Youth - Luis

Interview with Luis



Luis today

Stages at Progresso:

Intensive pedagogical-therapeutic living groups for youths Fronteiras and Nova Sembla, then later Counselling Living first in a group then in an individual setting

1. Looking back on the time before you came to Portugal, what was going on in your life then and how did you feel?

In the past, I felt that everything that could go wrong in my life did go wrong. Everything I started in my life I had to stop or gave up. My life was pure chaos. I attended many schools. My behaviour before Progresso was very aggressive - towards everyone: friends, family, teachers, police. I didn't respect nor listen to anyone.

2. When was that and what project did you get into?

Then in 2012 I came to Portugal - to Fronteiras. At that time there were only two projects: Fronteiras and the Quinta do Cerro.

3. You had a very special journey at Progresso. Please tell us about it.

Yes, that's true. It took me a long time to understand what Progresso is really about. It's about coming to terms with yourself. Thanks to the help of many special people, I managed to get in touch with my biological family and even fly to Brazil to explore my roots.

All this would have been unthinkable for me without Progresso. The willingness to accompany me there, to interpret and to give me emotional support was a special journey.

After that, I even managed - thanks to enough hard work and the trust of my counsellors - to finish my school in Lagos and live there independently.

I had a car, my own flat and my own life there in a place where others go on holiday. What I want to say is: Progresso opens all the doors you want to open if you fight hard for them.

4. What was the first positive change or surprise you noticed about yourself?

One of the first positive changes I had was that I started to open up and confide in people about my problems - without fear of being judged for it.

That was a very difficult step for me because I always wanted to sort everything out by myself and had bottled up a lot of sadness, anger, rage and hatred. Suddenly I could talk about it - that was new.

5. And what was your biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge was actually getting to know myself and being able to look myself in the face without hating myself. I learned a lot: I got to know new emotions and allowed feelings.

6. You have now been away from Progresso for some time. What did that feel like to you at first?

I felt prepared for life and was looking forward to the time ahead. I knew that I was no longer aggressive, that I could control myself and that I didn't go crazy straight away. I knew that if I didn't like something, I could say it in a respectful way. I felt safe - that was a very nice feeling.

7. And in retrospect, what would you say is the most important thing you learned during your time at Progresso?

Mmhh, the most important thing... I couldn't say. I became an adult at Progresso. They prepared me for life there. Everything I learned is important, whether it's accepting the first phase and doing as told, or how to manage my pocket money. It's a lot of little things that helped me become an adult there.

8. If you now look at your life from the outside: How are you and what have you achieved?

When I look at my life now, I couldn't be doing better. It took me a while afterwards to find my place in Germany. I know I can go back to Progresso at any time, and even after the program I was always happy to take up this offer to find myself. Right now I am happy that for the first time in my life I am chasing and realising my dream. I owe it to Progresso to have found this strength in me and that I am able to fight and not give up straight away.

9. And last but not least: What visions and wishes do you have for yourself and your life in the future?

I am currently catching up on my school exams and want to become a pilot afterwards. That was my childhood dream and now I'm going to pursue it.

**Thank you very much, Luis! Maybe you will fly us as a pilot
on the Germany-Portugal route sometime?**

Who knows 😊

We wish you all the best ♥



Progresso in the Eyes of a Former Youth - Matthijs

Interview with Matthijs



Stages at Progresso:

Intensive pedagogical-therapeutic living group for youths Fronteiras, then later Counselling Living

1. Looking back on the time before you came to Portugal, what was going on in your life then and how did you feel?

Well, almost my whole life was unstructured and I was emotionally sensitive. I had several near-death experiences, which greatly influenced the rest of my life. In my puberty I took drugs that totally consumed me mentally and physically, which didn't really help me. I ended up in a very sad state of mind. By the time I was 22, this mood was a permanent condition. I could no longer close my eyes to it and eventually went into "psychic shock".

2. When was that and what project did you get into?

It was in 2013, and as I recall, I got into the living group Fronteiras on July 14th.

3. What was the first positive change or surprise you noticed about yourself - when you got into the living group Fronteiras?

I remember that the very first moment I saw any progress in myself was my second day in the project. I thought about my past behaviour and realised that it was not going to get me anywhere in life. I knew I had to overcome my mental state. There were some very motivating moments when I noticed that I became a bit more normal and balanced. Of course, I preferred this because it helped me in my further positive process of not allowing my old impulses to guide me.

- after moving to Counselling Living?

As I became a little more independent, I became a little more aware of myself and noticed the positive skills that good self-esteem, self-acceptance and the trust of a group (Fronteiras) can develop. The biggest surprise for me was when I discovered the potential in me to live completely independently.

4. And what was your biggest challenge?

Developing understanding for myself and for others.

5. You have now been away from Progresso for some time. What did that feel like to you at first?

I felt very relieved - but was not yet completely satisfied, as I still wanted to perfect certain things about myself. But this was limited due to my traumatic state.

6. And in retrospect, what would you say is the most important thing you learned during your time at Progresso?

Feeling love for others means redemption.

7. If you now look at your life from the outside: How are you and what have you achieved?

- My mental state has improved, my health and relationships with friends and family have stabilised, as far as I can tell.
- Despite all the challenges in life, I am following my path.
- Full self-acceptance and the ability to get used to my inner impulses and bring them into perspective in relation to the necessities of life.

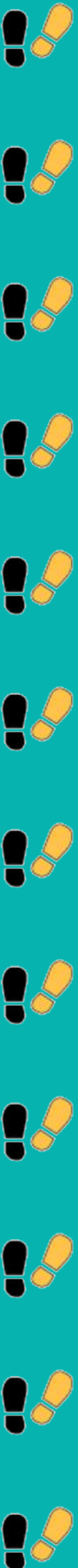
9. And last but not least: What visions and wishes do you have for yourself and your life in the future?

Being able to make my decisions through logic and common sense and in a way that benefits me. Factors such as happiness, prosperity, good will, love and above all compassion are important in this context.

My wish is to one day own a nice home where the right priorities are set.

I also want to develop and enjoy friendships and relationships of all kinds.

Thank you very much, Matthijs! We wish you all the best. ♥



Progresso: The Parents' View

„So, here I am, trying to write down some feedback on Progresso...

It's not so easy for me, because it really upsets me! But I can say this much right at the beginning: the fact that my daughter was accepted by Progresso in Portugal is a huge gift for me, for which I have been grateful every day since she left in August 2018...

Because although my daughter and I basically had a good relationship, without external help my child would have slipped into a quagmire of drugs and illegality! I myself could not offer this young woman - overwhelmed with life and the demands placed on her - the support she would have needed from me as a mum, because I was too busy with my own problems. Although we love each other very much, we led a life of fear, anger, despair, disappointment and helplessness in our family. We had stopped talking to each other and finally forgot to talk at all.

Now we have the opportunity for each of us to take care of ourselves, calmly and without being distracted by the other. I know my child is in very good hands and if she goes through a difficult phase, there is always someone there to catch her. I had the opportunity to get to know Progresso's staff during my local visits and although it is of course not easy as a mum to leave your child behind in a faraway place, I have never flown back to Germany with a bad feeling.... The decision was the best one I could have made for us! M. and her brother R. didn't get along at all in the last few years, they were constantly clashing.

Now they write to each other, talk on the phone and are happy when he can come along for the next visit, which is wonderful for all of us. We are taking small steps towards each other again as a family and no longer growing further apart. We are not left alone, that is important. Because we wouldn't have been able to do it on our own. I would like to thank all the staff at Progresso very, very much. You are the best thing that could have happened to the three of us!!!

Thank you very much, Sandra A.“



“When it peaked in March 2018, we met Progresso. Since April 2018, my daughter has been in Portugal. For me, the first priority is that my daughter is safe. I am thrilled with the close cooperation. I am kept informed about everything. My daughter gets the attention and help she needs. I was able to see the successes and progress for myself on site. I am glad that I got the help of Progresso in this difficult situation.

Thank you for the good care. Zelia T.“

Progresso: The Parents' View

“We as parents are very very fond of the Progresso project. It is a very good institution! From the fact that everyone we have had contact with there is very nice, loving, understanding and helpful, to the organisation, school, therapy, counselling, environment, recreational activities, family contact, etc. The whole project has helped our son a lot and finally moved him forward! We are absolutely thrilled and would like to thank everyone very much on behalf of our whole family!

Warmest regards, Kirsten S.”



“I would like to thank the whole team of Progresso and Trotzdem e.V. Jugendhilfe in Düsseldorf!

Without you, my daughter - and I too, I think - would no longer be alive. You gave us both a great welcome. My daughter learned a lot from you and took away a lot with her. You were always there for her and when there were problems, I could always get in touch with you. Thank you for the great conversations in Portugal, for the understanding and your help. I will never forget you all. You made life worth living again and taught us the knowledge that there is always a solution, no matter how far down you are. THANK YOU TO THE WHOLE TEAM.

Kind regards from Bavaria, Pascal S.”



„Our daughter L. has been in the care of Progresso for 2 ½ years. By the time we got the chance to put L. in Progresso's care, our daughter's condition was very bad, to be precise: we had lost her (drug addiction, etc.).

But our door opened for the better. For that, we as parents and family are very grateful. She has learned to love herself, to take responsibility for herself and her life. To solve conflicts without it turning into aggression. Of course, it was not always uphill, it was a hard, rocky road. And now, 2 ½ years after she moved into Progresso, we have a self-confident and strong daughter who has both feet on the ground and knows where her journey should take her. This says everything about the project: good and consistent counselling.

We wish that many more children could get this chance to participate in your project.

We are grateful for having been given this opportunity.

KEEP IT UP.

Kind regards, Familie C.“

My Family's Visit

On May 31st 2019, the time had finally come. After a long time of waiting and planning, my dream of my parents and my two younger siblings being able to come to Portugal finally came true. They came on a Friday morning already around 8:30. This was totally exciting because the plan was for me to stay in the Algarve with my family. Thank God Progresso also supported us a bit and booked us really nice accommodation. Close to the beach, shops etc.

Day 1: On the day we arrived, we first checked in and then all ate breakfast together. After that, it was time to find accommodation. That actually went quite well. When we found the flat, I couldn't believe my eyes at first. We even had a TV with German channels. Finally, I could watch series again that I used to watch with my mum. And we even had a pool. My brothers and sisters couldn't wait to go in and when the day was almost over, we went down to the beach and visited a bar.

Day 2: My birthday. We just let the time pass together and at around 4 the counsellors and young people from Counselling Living arrived. Then we had coffee together and went to the pool. In the evening, we all went out to eat at the restaurant and then my group went home again.



Day 3: My counsellor picked us up in the morning and took us to Almodôvar so that my family could see where I live. We spent the whole day there and in the evening we were brought back to the Algarve.

Day 4: I ordered a taxi in the morning and we went to Slide and Splash. We had a very nice day there. At 8 we went home and went down to the beach for the last time. Then we soon went back to the holiday flat.

Day 5: The departure of my family, packing our things and slowly making our way to the check-out. We had a long talk with a counsellor afterwards about how it was and what we did. Eventually we made our way back and everyone went home again. That was the most wonderful holiday with my family.

Larissa (Counselling Living)



A Mother's Visit

Once again, I, Edda from Cottbus, was able to spend some great days in Portugal with my son Jonas as part of the HPG. Jonas has made great progress and is now in Counselling Living.

The impressions I gathered there were positive. Jonas and I took advantage of the time together and had a lot of fun.



We drove to the west coast. Jonas went canoeing and I first treated myself to a coffee.

We also went to Albufeira, where there is something for everyone: whether it's a shopping trip to grab a souvenir for loved ones back home, just lying in the sun or cooling off in the water and letting the

waves carry you! We decided to take a boat tour in an inflatable boat. This was excellent and very exciting. The golden grottos we got to see were impressive and I read about them in the guidebook beforehand. Simply magnificent! Jonas rode a Segway right at the Albufeira marina. If you want to eat delicious fish, you can do so in a small restaurant at the harbour.

We were at a motorbike meeting in Almodôvar, where you could marvel at many a hot chopper. Appropriately, the crowd was fired up. Not just due to the rock'n'roll tunes, no, but of course also due to the freshly grilled delicacies for those with a hungry stomach.



Jonas' passion is drumming! Jonas plays in a drum group in Almodôvar and really enjoys it and is really good. As his mum, I was very impressed! How proud I am of him. I got to see the whole troupe live. They were rehearsing outside for a big performance! In the evening we had a great time in our pizzeria opposite the office! Super tasty and the staff was always very friendly. This was the perfect end to the day!

In conclusion, I can only say: these were great days with beautiful weather, lots of sensations, great experiences and a lot of fun!

My son likes it here very much and the whole Progresso team does a good job!

My personal thanks go to Saru, who took great care of us during the time of my stay!

Edda (Jonas' mother)



Music is Connection



Thanks to a cooperation with some hip-hop artists from Marburg, the project "Music is Connection" came about. It was very well received by the young people. From January 5th to January 10th 2018, they had the opportunity to create their own hip hop songs.

First, they had to find the right "beat" for the lyrics they had written themselves. The young people thought a lot about how their own topic described in the lyrics could be stressed by the right choice of music - how "feelings" could be conveyed.

Writing their own texts was another challenge for the young people. This was about relationships, love, past reflection, perspectives of the future - or simply about the "good rhyme" or "wordiness". Adapting the text to the chosen music required a great deal of creativity.

Music is an important part of youth culture, it's about dealing with one's own feelings - about expressing personal moods. Sometimes a sound can replace a whole word, a whole sentence.

Technically, there was the possibility to record the prepared songs in good quality during the project. Using a computer, recording programme, mixing desk and microphone, the young people were very creative and productive. The high motivation and willingness of the young people to deal openly with critical feedback and their ambition created a wonderful group atmosphere.

Making a recording is not always easy. Often the same part was re-rapped umpteen times until it really fit the chosen beat. It took a lot of patience, self-confidence and the courage to try something new.

The Marburg artists supported the young people with expertise ("structure" of a song, breathing techniques, beat and rhythm) and sensitivity ("what to do if you forget the lyrics or get nervous?"). With a lot of fun and a great coping ability (after all, for many it was the first time they had ever produced music themselves, let alone presented it), we proudly showcased the results in front of a small audience at the end!



We had a great time and are looking forward to the next one!

Lea
(Ped. Coordination, Nova Sembla)

Progresso's got Talent



The "Progresso's got Talent Show" is an event organised by Progresso where all the children and counsellors can show off their talents. It is also a great occasion to have all of Progresso together again, to talk, laugh and have fun and enjoy the homemade food together.

The show was opened by Dorit and Darren giving a speech. Then the first performers came on stage and showed us their talents.

Our programme looked like this:

1. Celina and Christina; Capoeira
2. Jacky: Guitar
3. Semblana Act: „Power Puff Girls“
4. Nathalie: sang “A thousand years“
5. Saar: Piano
6. Celina and Shenna: Dancing
7. Fronteiras: Surprise
8. Counsellled Living: „Barbie Girl“ Dance



All the performances on this day were totally successful. And of course, there was also a jury. The jurors were: Jutta, Dorit, Jan and Stephan.

The 3rd place went to Fronteiras. They showed us a video of themselves working hard - yet they didn't give up and finished the work with a lot of energy. The prize was a great game box.

As the jury could not really decide on the 2nd place, there were two second places. The first 2nd place went to: Semblana. The girls really knocked it out of the park and made us laugh. They did a play; it was holiday time, and they went on holiday. They got a creative box as a prize. The second 2nd place went to Counsellled Living. They performed a dance to the song "Barbie Girl". The funniest part was that the boys were dressed as girls and Saar performed as a boy. The prize was a box of sports gear.

And now comes the first place: this went to Nathalie! When she sang, she touched all of us in the heart. The jury had tears in their eyes. She won singing lessons. She can also record a CD.



The day was really fun. I hope to be back for the next "Got Talent".

Larissa (Counsellled Living)

"Holding" - Safety in Crisis Situations



Under the guidance of Nova Sembla's team leader Antonia, the last course of this year took place in November 2019 on the topic of "Holding".

In a comfortable atmosphere at a spiritual place in the middle of nowhere near São Teotónio, some Progresso counsellors met for two days to get to know the different holding techniques, to experience them on their own bodies and to practise them with the others.

But what is this "holding" anyway? When and why do we use it?

All the young people we welcome in Portugal in an individual or in one of our group settings have anything but an easy past behind them and carry a large burden of emotions and traumatic experiences with them. Old wounds and habitual patterns of behaviour and defence come to the surface in the course of everyday life, often resulting in aggressive outbursts. Then a cup or a fist can be sent flying.

If all de-escalation and calming attempts on our part fail and the young people have such a high level of aggression that they pose a danger to themselves and others, the holding comes into play: With a certain holding technique, the counsellors can hold young people and thus ensure their safety as well as the safety of others present.

After a few attempts to escape the holding grip, the sadness hidden behind the aggressive behaviour usually sets in - tears flow and it is possible to talk about what has happened. Very important in this process is also the feeling of security for the young people concerned: While in the past they were usually left alone with their feelings and not seen, they now experience being "held" on their own body. This gives them security, a feeling of protection and a completely new experience. Namely, being held as a person with all their strengths and weaknesses, simply as the person they are.



Violence is never used in the process. Injuries caused by a handhold must be avoided at all costs! Fortunately, all the counsellors present during the two days were able to feel on their own bodies what it means to be held. You cannot escape and you are safe!

Nele (Counsellor, Quinta do Cerro)

School at Progresso - a Teacher's View

Progresso's Study House is located no further than a five-minute walk from the centre of Almodôvar.

Located in a four-room flat on the first floor of a block of flats, this place looks inconspicuous and concealed. And yet, during the week, it is of elementary importance for the "Progresso kids" who attend the Study House when they enter phase 2.

If, while in the living groups, the boys and girls are kept apart from each other and largely shielded from the outside world, both genders and the most diverse interests and lifestyles meet here. Thus, many emotions are pre-programmed and demand a high degree of willingness to learn, tolerance and acceptance from the young people, from the school counsellors and from us learning coaches.

The Study House consists of four classrooms, which were redesigned together with the students during the last summer school and furnished from functional to lovingly homely styles. Four tutors work with the kids on site, another four in the Algarve.



As a proverbial window to the world, the Study House opens up new perspectives for the young people on themselves and on their fellow human beings. In addition to dealing with the learning content of the curricula and individual interests, relationship work and reflection discussions are an essential part of everyday school life, because many have developed a great distrust and fear of school,

school learning and the teachers in the past. Against this background, it is important to us in everyday life that fun, curiosity, individual interests, creativity and one's own learning pace are kept in mind.

With us, the young people have the opportunity to learn without fear in individual or small group lessons and to obtain a recognised school certificate through effective and proven learning aids. Together with our cooperation partners, the "Bischöfliche Marienschule Aachen" and the "Siebengebirgsschule Bonn", we are currently able to offer an individually adapted educational program based on the respective needs and stage of development of the young people. Because "nobody falls through the net".

Looking back, I can say that I really enjoy working with the young people. I also learn something new every day and have various borderline experiences, which gives me the opportunity to look at my own life experiences in a new way and to evaluate them, for which I am very grateful.



Christian (Tutor, Study House)



Traineeship with Animals at Shanti's

I was slowly getting ready to move from Quinta do Cerro to the Counselling Living. My counsellors and I decided that it was time to start preparing myself. This is how it all started...

My counsellors suggested that I look for a traineeship. I wanted to work here in Almodôvar. But Darren, the team leader, said that I needed to get out of my "comfort zone". He then suggested I could do an internship with Shanti and her animals.

Shanti is a sexual therapist and owns a farm with many horses. We asked Shanti and she replied it would be possible to do a traineeship with her. The good thing was that she lived near the Quinta, so I could ride my bike there.



So I had to be there on Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays at 9am. My traineeship days usually looked like this: at the beginning we always chatted a bit.

Then we went up into the forest and cut apart trees that had grown too close together. After that we mucked out the stable of the two horses.

Then I had lunch. Afterwards I picked up dog poo and helped a bit in

the garden until 4pm.

On some other days I still gave the animals something to eat and went for a walk with them.

The nice thing was, it was not only hard work, but also fun!

Nathalie (Quinta do Cerro)



Swimming Pool Traineeship



Before my traineeship at the swimming pool, I worked at the horse stables. Honestly, I have never been a fan of horses, so it was not my favourite job. One day, as I was swimming in the swimming pool, I asked an employee if he needed any assistance. He replied positively and shortly after that I started my traineeship at the swimming pool.

Most of my colleagues do not speak English, so I have to speak in Portuguese. My Portuguese isn't the best, but I can understand some of it. My colleagues patiently try to teach me Portuguese. My main task is cleaning, but I also assist in swimming classes. When I'm assisting in classes, I work with the employee who I asked if I could work there. He speaks English and his name is António. Some people in the swimming class speak English too.



For example, there is one man who attends swimming class who speaks English. He is very motivated. He has a disability. His muscles do not respond to his brain's commands. This makes him unable to walk without assistance. Once I was holding the door open for him and his mom and he thanked me and I replied in Portuguese, surprising even myself. Recently I made conversation with him because it was his 21st birthday and I congratulated him in Portuguese and Dutch. I asked him if he spoke English and he did.


From the 5th until the 26th of May 2018, I was in the Netherlands and brought some of the famous "stroopwafels" back to Portugal with me.

One package for me and another one for my colleagues. They are really friendly. Sometimes there's cake in the staff room and I can have a piece. So this time it was I who brought them something to eat. They loved the waffles.

I really love to work at the swimming pool, even though it is mostly cleaning, I adore it! My colleagues are so kind to me and they make jokes with me - even though I don't understand them. ☺

Jeffrey (Counselled Living)





Imagine that you really knew, exactly and crystal clear, what is good for you. What nourishes you. What fulfils you. What makes you whole.

And imagine moving towards it wisely and in a planned and systematic way. In small, doable steps. But steadily.

Of course, you would encounter difficulties and stumble along the way.

Everyone has a bad day now and then.

And everyone has demons that need to be put in their place from time to time. Or hold them tight so that they stop howling.

But imagine picking yourself up again and again and moving on, towards what is good for you.

Because it's not about being right and getting it right. It's about learning and sticking with it.

So, imagine that you would make your life more and more beautiful and better.

You would incorporate more and more of the things into your life that are good and right for you.

One thing after another.

Imagine becoming more and more yourself in this process.

And feel more and more and more secure and at home in your life.

Through your forwardness you would also grow out of many, old problems, so that at some point you would wonder why you were once so different.

Imagine what your life would be like if it were like that.

Oh, maybe it is. Now. Or soon will be.

I wish you a wonderful journey.

Ralf Senftleben

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