

# **Internship Report**

**for**

**IFA**

**06 August 2007 – 28 September 2007**

**at**

**Senate Office for Urban Development**

***(Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung)***

**Berlin, Germany**



**By:**

**Muhammad Mustafa Paaksimaa**

**Kabul, Afghanistan 05 November 2007**

## **My dreams about Germany:**

Before I go to Germany, I was thinking that I will go to a beautiful country, green and as I had heard about a country without mountains and full of plain and green lands, a country with excessive facilities!

I was going to a country where the German Language has been borne and as I eagerly like this language I was so happy to go to a an environment where I can freely speak German!

I was confident that I was going to a modern, democratic, advanced and independent country!

As it was already planned for me to reside in the historic and beautiful city of Berlin, I always wished to visit all historic places, monuments and beautiful sights of this marvellous city.



German Flag and Berlin State Flag.

## **First impressions:**

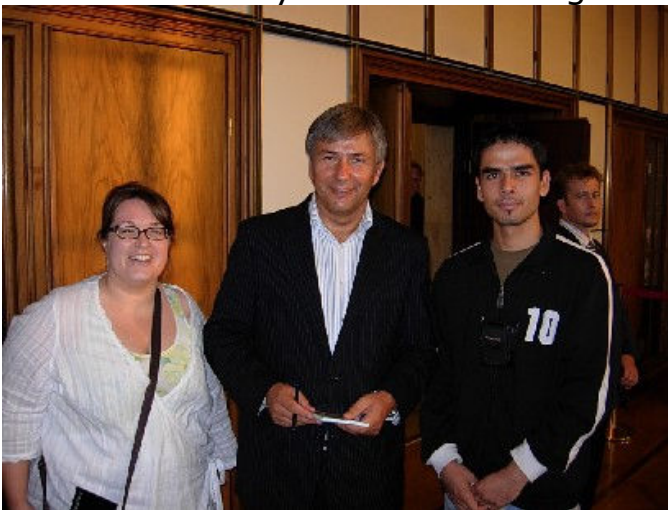
When I arrived in Berlin, I suddenly got that what I thought about Germany were all true and moreover, there were a lot more to add on this picture: The great traffic order on the streets of the city, paved and clean roads, first class and luxurious cars which I saw them all in the very first moment after I arrived in Berlin. To feel oneself being in such a clean, green and well constructed environment which was completely different than the place where I was coming from! It was really unbelievable to think that just some decades ago, some very horrific battles, more terrific than in our country, took place in such an environment, which has no more memories of them!

And now I was in Berlin...

## **My life in Berlin:**

This was my first time ever to live in a separate environment independently and by myself. Loneliness, cooking, washing cloths and so on were all such words that I had no idea of, before! Even I had already started to be concerned about them. But, existence of different advanced facilities in my apartment, which was something usual for all such apartments there, helped me to even forget about all my concerns! All in all it was a great experience for me to understand what does it mean to live by oneself alone.

The good location of my apartment in Berlin provided me with the unique opportunity to easily visit all sights and historic places of the city only with walking a short distance and this was one of my wishes. Visiting *Brandenburger Tor*, *Bundestag* and *Rotes Rathaus* became a normal part of my daily life and really fascinated me a lot. Visiting all such places as well as the modern constructed parts of the city gave me the hope that with trying hard and consistent efforts it is also possible to construct my war torn country as hard working disciplined Germans did!



Stephanie, Mr. Klaus Wowereit (Governor of Berlin) and me.

## **My work environment:**

I started to work in a very friendly environment with very kind people. According to my protocol with IFA, I started to work in *Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung*. From 06<sup>th</sup> August 07 till 28<sup>th</sup> September 07, I worked with Mrs. Wilma Glücklich in the department of "*Soziale Stadt*" and the subject of my internship was Neighbourhood Management.



Opening ceremony of N. M. of *Flughafenstraße* on 07 Sep. 2007.

Although this subject was not exactly matching to my study field, but I found it very interesting. During this time, I started to get familiar with a lot of issues such as urban reconstruction, urban development and construction management.



*Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung.*

In addition to them, working with N. M. Teams provided me with the opportunity to get familiar with issues such as financial and time management and to participate in the meetings of the directors of the local councils and youth councils as well. Participation of youth as well as local residents in neighbourhood advisory councils (*Quartiersbeiräte*) was also very interesting to me. But, for me the most interesting issue during the whole period of my work was the issue of integration, as in that time in all parts of Berlin its posters were visible. As in many N. M. areas, people with immigration background were living, therefore integration had an important role in the working field of department of "*Soziale Stadt*", as one of the objectives of this department was to making the youth and mothers, living in N. M. areas, familiar with the German ways of living (German lifestyle). It aimed at letting them learn how to secure

their future in Germany. The people with the immigration background have gathered from different countries with different religions, while the majority of them were Turkish, Lebanese and Palestinian which are all Muslims. Despite a stable democracy, it was still difficult for them to adapt to the German society soon. But what really important is that finally there was something in this society called understanding, which I hope and try my best to facilitate institutionalizing this value in my society as well.



Mrs. Wilma Glücklich (left), Mr. ???, Me and Mrs. Nordhof.

### **What changed in myself?**

Since Germany is a very modern and advanced country, therefore, Time is really important for Germans and almost all of them are always on time and appreciating punctuality. Every individual knows his/her duty very well and they all look so self confident. These have all impressed me and after I returned to my country, I have become more accurate in my time management and time has become more valuable for me. Making realistic daily plans has really let me do all my assignments during the day in a very perfect way. Since I have lived alone for complete two months in Germany, after I returned, I really got the difference between living alone and with family. I also got what friends mean in one's life. And of course I will impart my experiences of my internship with other YLF members and my colleagues in my society.





My workroom in *Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung*.

### **Inter cultural experience:**

The existence of tens of museums, theatres, orchestras all around me indicate that Germany is really a cultural country. Also I noticed that different people with different religions are all living together peacefully in a free and democratic environment. They exchange ideas and views among themselves and this is a good example which I am very hopeful to use it for our war torn, multi ethnic, multi linguistic and multi religious country.

### **Importance of such experience:**

As I mentioned before, although there are different people with different religions living in Germany, but, what is appreciating is the open and free environment which allows peaceful co-existence among all of them. This conveys strong messages to me and I hope to take this as an example and convince the people of my country to trying hard for bringing such values and open environment across the country to change it to pluralistic and democratic place where every body can equally live together.

### **What I gave to Germans:**

As the issue of terrorism is the burning question across the world today, therefore there was no way out of touching this issue in almost all my meetings and visits with Germans. In all occasions I tried my best to provide them with a realistic picture of Afghanistan today, a picture in big contrast with the one media reflect! I tried to convince Germans that terrorism is not similar to Afghanistan or to Islam! But, on the other hand, it is a further political issue than a matter of civilizations. I showed

them how much peaceful and harmless the religion of Islam is!

## **Berlin:**

“Berlin is always worth a visit! ”

This popular statement from the ITB Company is absolutely right! Berlin is really a beautiful city. It is a busy city with 3-4 million populations, but very ordered and well organized with great traffic system, modern trains and rails, wide streets as well as a clean and green city with very hospitable residents. Historical sites of this city not only attracted me but also thousands of foreign tourists. Berlin is definitely more than what I have described here in only some brief sentences.



*Bundestag.*

During my stay in Berlin I participated in New York Festival at "*Haus der Kulturen der Welt*" in presence of the German Foreign Minister Mr. Frank Walter Steinmeier and I was very happy to visit some German Ministries and German Chancellery on the day of "*Tag der offenen Tür*" on 25. and 26. August.



*Tag der offenen Tür in Berlin.*



Beach chair at German Chancellery on *Tag der offenen Tür*.

I would like to close this report with one of my personal impressions of Berlin here: Since I play football in Kabul, I was very interested and eager to lively attend one of the football matches of *Bundesliga*. Fortunately I managed to attend the match between *Hertha Berlin* and *Borussia Dortmund* in the Olympia stadium in beautiful Berlin. It was my first time to watch live an international football match, and despite watching a lot of matches through the television screen back at home, but I really felt the lively atmosphere of being among such big gathering of fans and watching such a great game! It was amazing and I will never forget this experience! Finally won *Hertha Berlin* 3 – 2!



Me (left) and Thomas Heck in Olympia Stadium during the football match between *Hertha BSC* und *Borussia Dortmund* on 22. Sep. 2007.



**Thanking note:**

At the end I would like to thank the *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*-Afghanistan Office (FES) and Institute for Foreign Affairs (IFA), which both made together this unique opportunity possible for me.

***Muhammad Mustafa Paaksimaa***  
***Kabul, Afghanistan***  
***05 November 2007***