

## Visiting my servas friends. Youth hosting proved possible.

By Elena Olivera Begué



More than 10 years ago I joined Servas. All this time I have been travelling with the organisation together with my family and alone (through the Nordic countries Germany, Italy and the British Islands, among others). I am now 27 years old, and this is my first trip that I only stay with just other youth members.

I want to share about this trip because it is a simple and yet clear example of the beauty of connection among youth. And don't get me wrong. I enjoyed my other travels visiting people from older generations to mine, I actually believe intergeneration connection is one of the beauties of Servas.

After this initial disclaimer, let's start...

My trip actually started visiting my old home. A town called Wageningen where I met with the friends from my masters. Very nearby lives Bianca. A German living in the Netherlands. I met Bianca for the first time on a phone call, planning the volunteer tasks for SICOGA (Servas' general assembly). During the presentation round we realised we lived less than 1h away and so we met. We have shared many adventures together since that first warm tea next to the canals in Utrecht. Some riding in the same bike and squeezing in a taxi with all our (and our friend's) luggage. My stay with Bianca this time was short but sweet. We really enjoy catching up on the challenges of young adult life and living in a new country.





From there I took a bus that brought me to Paris. There, I met Manon (, Snackita, a beyond adorable cat) and Léna. Again, this was not the first time I had met these two beautiful souls. I first met them in Italy on the Summer Youth Eco Camp. I appreciated sharing time one-on-one with them and learning about how they approach life in the big city.

I stayed at Manon's where we shared delicious food. Spanish omelette and the chai recipe I learned during my trip to SICOGA. With Léna we walked around Paris and I learned about the current questions the citizens are discussing regarding the remodelling of Notre Dame. One of the days ended with a book presentation by one of their friends on a really relevant feminist topic.



The last bus ride arrived earlier than my mind back to Barcelona. Luckily, the warmth that had grown in my heart remained for a bit longer.