

Teens go on youth exchange to Melbourne, Australia

On 9 November, after five months of preparation, rehearsals and shows, a group of seven teenagers - Vinnie Viana, Lucas, Janaina, Vinicius Bina, Maciel, Thaissa and Laura - from ACER Brasil, accompanied by Jonathan Hannay, began their long dreamed-of trip to Melbourne, Australia where they took part in a youth exchange as part of an [Erasmus+](#) project with [iFall](#) from Sweden, [ManorCofEAcademy](#), and hosts [WestsideCircus](#), and organised by [EverythingisPossible](#). Before heading off, the seven teenagers had put on shows at [St. Paul's School](#) and also at ACER's charity event hosted by the [British Consulate-General](#). These shows had helped to raise the R\$20,000 needed for the teenagers to take part in the youth exchange. Thank you very much to [St. Paul's](#) for its partnership and support in this pursuit.



On the afternoon of Thursday 9 November, the group headed to the airport with their passports, visas and suitcases in hand, joined by the teenager's families - it was the start of a journey that would last 37 hours, until 6pm on Saturday local time in Melbourne, Australia. For all but one, it was the first plane they had ever gone on, taking them to far away and unknown lands. First stop was Chile, where the group transferred to a second 13-hour flight to New Zealand. Once the novelty of flying - like the small screens in the seat backs! - wore off, it didn't take long for the group to start to feel

the uncomfortable effects of flying, being squeezed into small seats, and trying to sleep not knowing whether it was night or day! Eventually the group arrived in New Zealand at 5am Saturday morning. While waiting for their third flight, the group left the airport and visited an extinct volcano nearby called Mangere Mountain. Climbing and running around the mountain helped to rejuvenate the group before they returned to the airport and caught their flight to Melbourne, where they were met by their cheery host Simon.



Everything felt different in Melbourne - driving on the "wrong side" of the street, street signs in English, etc. Not long after leaving the airport, the group arrived at its hotel - the same hotel where all the exchange groups would be staying for the week. The Swedish and Australian teenagers had already arrived, and it didn't take long for the ACER group to settle in either. The ACER teenagers were split up and sent to share with boys or girls from the other countries, in two, three or four-person rooms. With barely any time to shower (there were only two showers for 14 boys and two for 20 girls!), everyone then ate dinner



together, prepared by the Australians, which was, surprise, surprise, spaghetti with ground kangaroo!

On Sunday morning after breakfast, the group began what would become its new daily routine - first job make sandwiches for lunch, then the group put on its first public percussion and dance show at a market in Preston, followed by the Australians' circus show. Next, the whole group took the train together, and used the time to get to know each other better - the other passengers on the train looked surprised to see such a big and animated group! Maciel said that the best part of the experience was "everyone being involved...joking around... it really felt like we were one big family" - and it looked like every-

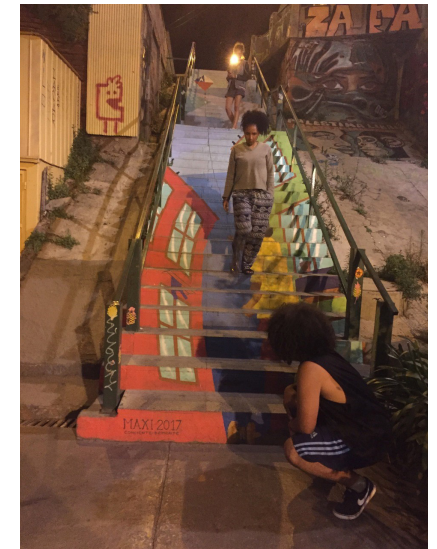


Every day was jam packed with activity - even in the few hours of free time, the teenagers played in the pool and hung out with the teenagers from the other countries. During the daytime, the group attended a reception put on by Australian aborigines; they learned how to do circus tricks from the Australian teenagers - Laura said about the experience, "I never thought I would be able to juggle, the experience was great"; they did drama with the Swedes; and the English taught rounders. They also learned how to play Australian Rules Football (the local version of football/rugby) and went to watch Cirque du Soleil. Everyone also prepared for the show on Friday night that would close the exchange programme.

For the group, the highlights of the exchange were the shows at the market and the school that lent the group its instruments, running a percussion workshop for other teenagers, and cooking a Brazilian meal of rice, beans, farofa, fried chicken and courgette for everyone to try. After the other teenagers left, the group went to see an African music and dance festival, visited a farm where they saw kangaroos, and went to the main museum in Melbourne to learn about the life and history of the aborigines.

The group finally left Australia for home on 19 November - departing at 830pm from Melbourne, travelling for 13 hours and arriving in Santiago, Chile, at 730pm the same night! With nine hours to kill before its next flight, the group took a van and drove to Valparaiso, a town and [UNESCO](#) site near Santiago. After dining and walking about Valparaiso, the group returned to the airport to catch their flight home. Once back in Sao Paulo, the group was greeted by the ACER van, which drove them back to Eldorado by 1130am Monday morning.

After returning, the group shared their thoughts about how the exchange had changed them: "My way of thinking, and knowing that there are many different cultures and customs out there", Bina; "My way of thinking about cultures and certain places", Laura; "I got to stay with family and friends, work more in a team, and I became more willing to try new experiences", Janaina; "Before I went, I would have worked things out alone. I learned how to work in a team", Maciel.





National Dialogue - a Family for every Child.

On the 23 and 24 November, our partner, “Terra dos Homens” Association, together with the National Movement in Support of Family and Community Living, of which ACER Brazil is a member, and [UNICEF](#) hosted a national meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

Our institutional relations representative, Jonathan Hannay, presented together with Mrs Amanda Silva, from the Ministry of Social Development, in a round table discussion titled “Reintegration into the extended family - how to invest in subsidised custody”, discussing our experience since 2009 and also contextualising it within the movement for a new Adoption Law in Brazil, which would strengthen the ability of extended families to raise children well and avoid taking them out of community and family living.

Due to the importance of the event and the themes discussed, Kelly Lima, Family Guardian’s coordinator, participated both days. She said that “the high point was attending the speeches of the judges and prosecutors, putting the child and teenager at the centre of the discussion about protection and highlighting how important it is to think about public policy which serves in the best interests of the child and that always puts their right to live in a family first.” And that “when all options have been explored, that at least an individualised service can be offered, with experienced adults, who have the ability to connect and to develop relationships.”



ACER Brasil
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Siga-nos no Twitter para atualizações regulares

On 31 October it was “Saci Day” - a day created to celebrate Brazil’s culture and folklore. 31 de Oct

On 14 November, Black Conscience day was addressed by Thais Rosa, in a speech titled “Black Conscience to redefine and rebuild.” 14 de Nov

Last Saturday, 11 November, ACER Brazil took 17 girls from the womens’ futsal team to visit the Football Museum, located in the Pacaembu Stadium, São Paulo. 20 de nov



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AGENDA December

11- Ballet performance

16- Capoeira “initiation”

22 to the 2 January - ACER’s end of year break