

Irina Sotnikova, Stockholm 2016
Swedish charity system
Шведская система благотворительности



I would like to thank all the members of the Sverker Åström Foundation for this amazing opportunity to do my research project in such a unique country. Especially, I want to thank the President of the Foundation Disa Håstad who always helped me with any question and let us feel like at home.

I started my internship on September 22 in 2016. I studied Swedish charity system and how charity organizations can influence the sustainable development of the region where they work. Also, I explored what governmental and non - governmental charity organizations do for different social groups of population including immigrants and refugees.

First 3 months I organized meetings and had interviews with different organizations and interesting people. I had a unique opportunity to visit Childhood – the worldwide foundation which was founded by Queen Silvia of Sweden. They support and implement over 100 projects around the world, assisting children who are at risk or are victims of abuse, children who are in alternative care, street children, and families at risk. There I met with Susanne Drakborg, the program manager of the foundation and a really inspiring person. She told me a lot about main goals of the Childhood, their activities and different projects with many countries including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and others. I was happy to know that Russian charity organizations also could be supported by Childhood. It's really important, because in Russia protection of children's rights and their support is a very big issue.

Another interesting experience I had was with Barnacancer fonden, The Swedish Childhood Cancer Foundation. They work to ensure that affected children, teens and their families receive the care and support they need. The main aim is creating a more promising future for children and teens diagnosed with cancer. I met Fredrik Annmo, he gave me a decent understanding of all programs and activities of the foundation. After that, Eleanor Rendahl told me a lot about “Ride of Hope” the cycle tour which ran every year in Sweden and Europe. They also organized “Run of Hope”, “Yoga of Hope” and many other sport events. It is not a typical

way to fundraise money for charity issues. At the same time, it helps people who are involved in it to have a healthy lifestyle and overcome their fears.

I was extremely lucky to get to know Peter Örn, consultant and author, board member of Swedish International Cooperation Agency, Chairman of Blekinge Technology Institute and his daughter Ebba Örn. They always supported me and organized for me some really important meetings. For instance, I met with Helena Wihlborg, director for BABA, the project of Stockholm Stadsmission about advice and support for unaccompanied children that “disappear” in Stockholm. Also, I met Johanna Valentin and Emeli Karlström, they are responsible for volunteer program in Stockholm Stadsmission which included some studying stages before people become really responsible volunteers. I was really surprised that Stadsmission have so much activities and programs. They have the chain of second hand shops and the café in the heart of Stockholm Gamla Stan, all money from the sales go to the charity issues. They support immigrants providing their jobs in these shops and give them a chance to have work experience. Also, they have a lot of options to support homeless people and the elderly. For example, they help older people who have hardly any money left after the bills are paid, providing them with leisure activities and a meal. Further, I met Anna Lindström, the program manager of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Camilla Monsine Ottoson, policy specialist human rights and democracy. We talked a lot about children rights, special projects for these issues and they gave me a lot of advice about my research.

Finally, I met with Raisa Lång Velazco, Global development manager of Fryshuset and I had an internship there for next 3 months, when I came back to Stockholm in spring time. Raisa is an amazing person, who gave me an opportunity to be a part of their great team at Fryshuset. She always helped me a lot, gave advice and support.



Fryshuset is one of the largest youth centers in the world – but it is actually much more than that. ”Above all it is a vision based on the conviction that encouragement, confidence, responsibility and understanding are necessary in order to enable young people to develop their innate abilities and find their way into society”. Fryshuset is the place packed with all kinds of creative and constructive activities. Young people mix with grown-ups in order to participate, contribute and learn. There are a lot of social projects in Fryshuset about equality, rights and help different groups of people and immigrants. Fryshuset is a meeting place where people share and develop passionate interests, social commitments, sports, entertainment, culture and innovative educational programs. With the help of Raisa I participated in Fryshuset’s work. However, my main research there was about prospective collaboration of Fryshuset with Russia and Ukraine. It

was really interesting to explore my own country from different point of view. In the end of my internship I presented my research work called "Russia and Ukraine: what is the best place to work with youth?" in Fryshuset to Raisa and her colleagues. In the future we plan to continue this research and start the new project with these countries.

Obviously it was a great pleasure for me to see the Stockholm cultural life, observe various places, museums, projects and events. Now, I can say that I fell in love with Stockholm and Sweden!



I want to say special thanks to Disa Håstad for incredible Easter program, where we visited famous places in Sweden (Skokloster castle, Hörkeberga church, Gripsholm castle) and especially for visiting dacha. For me it is one of the best places in the world and I was lucky to visit it in summertime too! Thank you for all these tea-parties, meetings with other scholars at your home and interesting themes for discussion. You are really inspiring and making people change their life completely!



This great time in Sweden gave me a lot of knowledge, experience, new professional and personal contacts. I meet new friends from different countries and of course Russia too. I'm proud to be the scholar of the Sverker Åström Foundation and I hope to continue our communication.

Great thanks to everybody!