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SIR SUCCESS STORIES

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A chat with Chidi Eguiu

by Federica Ferracini

Thursday, 3 pm, Eine Welt Haus. Chidi works at Aldi and every day, after work, he comes here to attend the German classes.

The SIR team took the chance to have a chat with him about his new job and his life in Germany.

Dear Chidi, when did you arrive in Germany?

I am in Germany since August 2015. Approximately 7 months have passed and I still perfectly remember my arrival. My life has changed since then!

What did you know about Germany before coming here and how did you imagine it?

I did not know much about the country before, so I was positively surprised by the

friendliness of the local people. I expected Germany to be a place with good job opportunities and my first impressions were confirmed. Germany is a cool place to be, there are good schools, good places to work and especially nice people. For the first time after a very long time I felt treated like a human being, I felt alive with a future in front of me. I believe you can have a good life here... although the language is very tough...

Are you currently studying German? What are the first words you learned?

Yes, I attend German classes every day and I am now aiming at passing the A2 level test. At my arrival I didn't speak a word of

German, but I very quickly learned the basics: "Hallo,

Guten Tag, Ich heiÙe Chidi...". Luckily I am now progressing faster since at work I speak German with my new colleagues.

Where do you live at the moment?

I live in the refugee camp in Altomünster. There, I share the room with a companion from Nigeria. Originally I also come from Nigeria, but we didn't know each other before since we come from different tribes.

Can you tell us how a day in the camp looks like?

It's not always easy there. Many different people with different cultures all live together sharing the same space. It's difficult to have your privacy there. However, now that I work it is going much better. My day usually starts at 3h30 in the morning when I

wake up and rush to catch my train to work (and finally sleep a little longer in the train!). I work at Aldi in Ebersberg and it takes me approx. 2 hours to get there. After work I attend the daily German classes from 16h00 to 18h00. I arrive back at the camp in the evening, where I basically only have time for cooking my dinner, having a shower and going to bed.

Sounds like you have very long and busy days... don't you?

Yes, but I like it this way. I enjoy being busy. In Africa, I had my own business and I was working long hours. Sometimes it is challenging to keep focused during the German classes when I wake up at 3h30 in the morning...but I need to learn the language, so I keep going and I like it!

Tell us something more about you, your interests, your family...

I come from Nigeria, my parents still live there. My father is very old and sick. I have brothers and sisters there as well. Unfortunately I haven't seen them for a very long time...

I like doing sport and singing. Every Saturday I play soccer with a local team in Altomünster. On Sunday I usually go to the Church where I sing in the choir (although I am not a good singer!). I like my new life in Germany, but I miss my family a lot.

Was it difficult to find a job in Munich?

Well...I was very lucky and SIR helped me a lot. I have got my

work permit in October and then I have registered at the Job Centre in Munich. In December I attended a CV Advising Session with the SIR volunteers. On January 15th SIR informed me that they found a job for me. I will never forget that day. I was so tremendously happy! In my case it didn't take long to find a job, thank to SIR!

How did you hear about SIR?

I saw a flyer at Eine Welt Haus in the room where I regularly attend the German classes. I am very grateful to SIR for all what they did and are still doing for me. The volunteers helped me preparing the first interview with Aldi and there is always a point of contact at SIR with whom I can talk about my doubts and concerns. For example, last week I missed my train to work and I arrived very late. I was very upset and didn't know what to do. So I called SIR and they advised me on how to address the issue to my boss. For sure I won't let it happen again!

Tell us something about your first day of work in Germany? Were you nervous?

Yes... I was very nervous! I currently work in the warehouse of Aldi where my main tasks consist in moving around goods and packages and updating the inventory. In order to do this, I need to conduct a small machine to transport and lift the material. I was afraid of moving and parking the machine, but luckily a colleague taught me how to do so. The second day I started conducting the

machine... I was moving very slowly...like a turtle... but everything worked well. Now I am looking forward to be upgraded to drive bigger machines!

Tell us something about your new job and the new colleagues

The team is mixed, there are both men and women working in the warehouse. I like my colleagues a lot, they are all nice to me and I feel well integrated. Only very few of them can speak English, so I have the chance to practice German! Usually everyone brings his/her own food and sometimes we eat together in a common break area. I feel very comfortable with the working atmosphere at Aldi and I hope my current internship contract will turn into a permanent job soon.

What do you wish for the future? How and where do you imagine your future?

First of all, I wish to receive a permanent working contract with Aldi. Then I'd like to find a flat close to work. I wish I will have the chance to stay longer in Germany, settle down and have a family. This is all I wish for!