

My Milestone

A 499 word story that describes the sensations and discoveries made by an Ecuadorian volunteer girl in Indonesia, who traveled in search of experiences and found something unexpected lives without knowing it.

It's been a short time since I returned from Indonesia. Today, at 3:34 p.m., 2 days have passed since I breathed again the air of my land. I arrived like I left, but I felt that I did not return complete. I feel that part of me is missing. I'm not 100% Melissa anymore, I'm 90%.

And it is that volunteering is a milestone, an event that marks a before and after in the chronology of life. It teaches you things, it changes you, it renews you. And even if you think that will not happen to you, if you risk it and you embark on a trip to help people, I can assure you that you will not return the same.

My trip to Indonesia was random. I wanted to go anywhere in the world, with the only condition of mixing two experiences: helping and knowing a new culture. I contacted one of those organizations that help to do international volunteering and on February 26 I stepped into that paradisiacal and surprising country that caught me.

I participated in the IDN-24 project, that was in charge of the primary education of children in rural areas, in a town called Jepara, giving support to a classroom teacher in a small school.

In those classrooms I discovered those living looks, those pure souls and those smiles that flood you with happiness when you see them. All the hours I spent in the classroom I did activities that I was in charge of, but most of the time, along with my tasks, I discovered the beauty of life, how happiness is hidden in simple things and as in his innocence, a child can see the wonder of it.

The time was too fleeting; I did not realize at what moment my four weeks of volunteering ended, 30 days that, when I remember, make me vibrate. I know perfectly well that my time there was 4 weeks, 30 days, 720 hours, or any other equivalent time unit, but I can not describe it that way. The time that I shared there, inexplicably for me, is only measurable in the amount of sensations, learnings and new and incredible surprises that I discovered.

With a whirlwind of sadness, that was over. I returned with my backpack loaded with new things, unusual people's names and amazing experiences that I never want to forget. Now I am here, in my homeland, completely transformed by the experience, with immense desire to repeat it. Because, although I learned a lot in that tiny town on this huge island in the Pacific, I know I missed a lot to see, to contribute.

And if you wonder what happened with that 10% missing in me that I mentioned at the beginning of the story, then, that percentage of my essence is 19,000 kilometers from Ecuador: I left it in Jepara, in the embrace of each child, in each smile drawn in their faces. That part of me stayed in Indonesia