

“Sisterhood in our Student’s Dorm”
A group to overcome isolation and promote women’s solidarity

by:
Ivis S.V. Mendoza

Abstract

The student’s dorm of the present project is located in the outskirts of Berlin, Germany, and it is the place where I have been living myself since I arrived in this city. The lack of museums, cultural events or public places in this area is evident. Thus, it results difficult to find a common place where to enjoy some free time close to the dorm. It also results a challenge to receive visits there, where not many friends want to travel this further to visit a very small studio apartment of 18ms².

Undoubtedly, this may be deemed as a disadvantage for many of the residents, especially when plenty of them share a common characteristic: to be far from home and family. Although sometimes could seem convenient to live alone in a studio, it is also possible that this experience lead to a very deep loneliness. Some of the students already have created their own ways to overcome this, as one woman did. She was brave enough to introduce herself to her whole corridor and put a sign in her door that read “Knock the door if you want to talk”. She saw herself the immense need that her neighbours had to communicate and interact with others. However, not everyone has this courage, and the true is that most of us do not know our neighbours and we just accept it that way. In addition, multiple responsibilities may make it more complicated to actually spend time on creating new relationships at the dorm. This needs time and willingness and for many that is not possible while dealing with university duties, work and others.

Furthermore, there is a group of very enthusiastic young people in charge of the administration of the dorm. It is a lot of work and they do it as volunteers. They are students in their very early twenties who usually invite the residents to the bar of the dorm, where mostly parties take part and where the ages of the attendants are also very young. I feel myself out of space when being there and I am sure many others have had the same experience, not only for the age factor but also by the the flirting atmosphere or the exaggerated alcohol consumption.

Taking into account the previous lines, the proposal of this project consisted of the creation of a space where us as women can get to know each other and can exchange support, solidarity and knowledge. Listening to the complains of lack of interaction in our dorm and aiming to count with the strength of a group of women, I decided that I wanted to promote the creation of a sisterhood group in this residence where women interested in overcoming isolation will participate to get to know other women neighbours, to stop being alone in a place full of people and where support had to be the core of the project.