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Building Social Bridges

by entrepreneurial thinking



Role models

Cyprus





Ester Beatty

“It is very important to show our culture and share our traditions to the host country.”



Introduction

My name is Ester Beatty and I originally come from Philippines. My family and I came to Cyprus in 1994 were my husband found a job an offshore company. We have 3 children and all of them are adults now and 2 are in the UK. I really started working in 2004 when Cyprus has joined the European Union.

I have been involved with the Philippino Community since 1996 and since then I have never stopped helping my fellow countrymen. I am the chairperson of the Federation of Philippino Organisation here in Cyprus since 2006. A lot of the things we do is helping our fellow compatriots, organising events, sports, and may things to help the community.

Arriving in Cyprus

When we arrived in Cyprus it was not very populated by third countries nationals and back then you could feel some kind of discrimination. I have experienced this very much when I became the president of the Philippino community association in Cyprus and I used to accompany my fellow countrymen in the immigration department. The discrimination they showed us there was unbelievable. They just look at your colour and they basically generalised everyone who look like an Asian to be a domestic worker. It was very hurtful. I was trying to help my fellow countrymen and the officials could put you at the back of the queue whenever you tried to go somewhere else.



My family have experienced discrimination too. We have a disable son and when Cyprus joined the EU we have tried to get some help from the government but they keep giving us all sort of excuses that we are not entitled to independent kind of help or benefit for our disable son. Eventually we had to complain to solve it and at the end the Cypriot government gave us the support we needed.

We are very helpful for that and Cyprus has become now our home and our son is now established and received a lot of help now.

Skills and Competencies

I have a Bachelor Degree in Commerce with a major in Accounting. I believe that I am also a very capable of what other professionals can do and I speak excellent English. I think this why I was able to find a job in one of the offshore companies and until now this is my work.

Being a leader of my community for so many years, it has really given me a lot of opportunities to develop my interpersonal skills and my communication skills. I also have a lot of patience and understanding. Being here for so many years I am like the advisor for the Philippino community. I am very familiar with the local culture, the local communities and with the law.

Social Contacts

When we arrived in Cyprus we didn't know anyone so the church was my refuge. I am catholic and the church has played a very important role in the first few years in Cyprus. Later on when I became the president of the Philippino community, organisations and NGO's have come to know me and I received a lot of support from them.

Advices to immigrants

I like to encourage all the newcomers (immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers) to learn first the language and the local culture of Cyprus. I think that is very important to speak the language in order for you to integrate to the local community. You have to learn how to respect the local culture of your host country. I know is difficult at the beginning but if you really decide to be a part of this society you have to understand the society. In addition, you should also try to show your country's traditions because the local community appreciates this a lot. These days things have change a lot, the Cypriot community are more tolerant and open to foreigners and a lot of them embracing third country nationals in the society and we need to respect that too. I would like to encourage also to be more close to your national community. I am talking on behalf of the Philippino community which is the largest community in Cyprus and for us to be more successful we needed to be a tight community. It is very important to show our culture, share our tradition and food in the host country.

PARTNERS

COORDINATOR



**VEREIN NIEDERSÄCHSISCHER BILDUNGSINITIATIVEN E.V.
(VNB)**

GERMANY

www.vnb.de



VIFIN, VIDENSCENTER FOR INTEGRATION

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