



VIVA RIO - SUMMER '15
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

ISABELLA PERAERTZ '16

THE INTERNSHIP

- **TITLE:** Drug Policy Sector Intern
- **OBJECTIVE:** Create a comprehensive set of indicators to help the sector evaluate its Harm Reduction programs
- **HOW?:** Conduct site visits and interviews at the programs, and also visit the organization's partners in the Harm Reduction efforts.
- **THREE STAGES:**
 1. Empirical research using mainly previously conducted research and literature reviews.
 2. Site visits and interviews
 3. Analysis of qualitative data gathered and creation of maps for geo-references for the final presentation
- **Language used:** Portuguese (but not a requirement)



WITH MY TEAM

- Saying goodbye...



BEFORE & AFTER

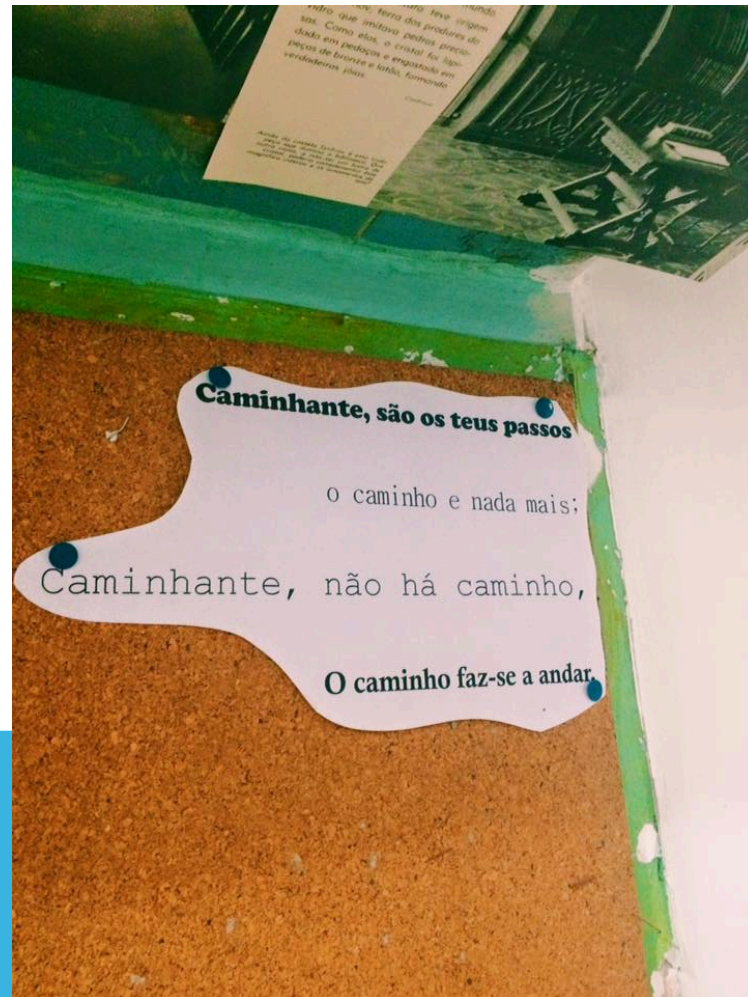
- **BEFORE:** I knew nothing about anthropological style research, Harm Reduction methodologies, and barely understood the intricacies of drugs in Brazil
- **AFTER:** I spent an entire summer conducting ethnographical research in Portuguese, and can now fully explain the subtleties of harm reduction and how it could revolutionize the political approach Brazil could have in terms of drugs.
- **Most enriching:** the trust my supervisors gave me to conduct my own research project. Their support and confidence in my abilities helped me grow exponentially. The professional confidence gained in that office is **priceless**.



FROM THE FIELD

- An inspirational quote from my first week at one of the harm reduction centers.

“Walker, it’s your steps
The path and nothing else;
Walker, there is no path,
The path is made by walking”



IMPACT TO THE ORGANIZATION

- Helped the organization think of ways to improve its own drug addiction help centers, Casas Vivas and CAPS AD.
- Gave suggestions for activities they could implement in their programs to give more visibility to the drug users.
- Brought up policies in other countries, or other methodologies that enriched the organization's thoughts about their programs.



OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- Attended many seminars with the organization, among them we were able to learn from Dr. Julio Calzada, the man who advised President Mujica of Uruguay in his decriminalization laws for marijuana use, cultivation and distribution.



PERSONAL IMPACT

- Re-affirmed my desire to work for the social sector, but it also showed me that I enjoy advising and solving problems within an organization
- I became a lot more sensible about not using language that could come across as patronizing when thinking about drug addiction.
- I learned to appreciate my own life and opportunities, and not to take these for granted.



SUMMITTING CHALLENGES



**CHEERS TO YOUR OWN AMAZING EXPERIENCE
WITH VIVA RIO!**

