

Driving For Charity Delivering Meals Right To Your Doorstep

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Learning Report

Abstract—This activity has taught me more than simply driving a van. During these last few months of December and January, I became a part of a project that brought all kinds of different people together. It has helped me realize that if people come together under a single goal, great things can be accomplished.

A big responsibility was thrown onto me, one that I am not usually accustomed to, which has made me realize how important it is to be relied on. It gives you accountability and gives a bigger picture of what kind of person you are and what your role in people's lives is.

At the end of all this, I gained valuable social awareness, experience working in a team and fond memories.

Index Terms—Charity, Elderly, Meal, Van, Campo Grande, Attendant, Driver.

Most part of this document just describe the Activity, even repeating completely the text in Activity Report.

1 INTRODUCTION

WITH this report, I intend to elaborate on what I learned for the **Portfólio Pessoal III**, and share the experiences I had while working for the **Centro Paroquial do Campo Grande** institution. This activity involved driving and memorizing several routes and street names all over **Campo Grande** with the purpose of providing care to the elderly in their homes.

Today, after concluding all of this, I hope to have become more capable and at ease in any kind of environment, be they related to working (in Information Systems) or not.

While doing the activity, there were several aspects of myself that I had to improve, such as, working alongside other people as a member of the team and making sure that I did my job well so that others would not be encumbered by my participation.

I also can't forget to mention the social problems (the poverty and loneliness of the elderly) which made me much more sensitive

amid contractions!

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and aware by facing these problems head on.

2 HOW IT CAME ABOUT

From the beginning, I knew I wanted to work with the **Entreatajuda** organization in order to do work related in someway to charity. I also knew that that kind of experience was something that always lacked in my life.



Figure 1 The Centro Paroquial do Campo Grande church. *Figura sobre a qual referida no texto!*

Another motivation for this was that in charity work, you get in touch with many different people with many different experiences in life,

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Reflection from Activities Report!

and I thought that it would be a good social experience.

Initially, I was accepted to perform the **Connect the elderly** activity, which involved presenting a workshop about the various technologies available that allows them to connect with their family, however, by the time I met with the person responsible for the activity, their schedule was already fully booked due to the Christmas festivities. This led to another offer, this one simpler, but much needed. I was to drive other helpers and assistants all over **Campo Grande** so that they could reach these people in their homes.

3 CHALLENGES

I decided, right from the outset, that I would better myself by striving to engage and talk with other people in order to alleviate problems of my social anxiety. One way I did this was by forcing myself to remember everyone's names, from the security guard, to every member of the attendant staff to drivers of other routes. I would also greet them every time I saw them and ask them questions while we were not busy.

Another critical challenge in this venture involved learning to deal with stressful situations, since I would be driving in very busy sections of town and having to perform maneuvers in tight roads made even tighter by parked cars on each side.

4 DRIVING

During the course of this activity I got many hours behind a wheel, helping me get much welcomed practise, especially driving vans which was something I had not attempted before.

A closer look at the biggest van can be found in the next figure.

I have to admit that in the beginning I was quite intimidated, since I had never driven such a large vehicle before, much less in the busiest streets that Portugal has to offer (or so it seemed to me).

Not only was the van enormous and the streets busy, they were also very tight in the residential



Figure 2. The Ford Transit assigned to Route 1.

districts (which was where all our deliveries were) due to the amount of parked cars on either side.

In the next picture you can see one of the streets that gave me the most trouble.



Figure 3. The dreaded two-way street of hell.

There were several times I was forced to back up the whole street which stressed me quite a bit since I was not used to doing so without a rear-view mirror (the van only has side mirrors).

I also got to experience driving a brand new *Citroen Berlingo*, which had the benefit of being smaller and having sensors for determining the distance to other objects, which was very welcome on those tight streets *U-turns*. You can see the van more closely in the next figure.

While using this van, I saw a much bigger part of the city including the **Alvalade Stadium** and the **Alameda Campus**, which I had never seen up to this point.



Figure 4. The Citroen Berlingo used in Route 2.

5 THE ATTENDANTS

I spent a lot of time with many attendants during this activity, and in that time I got to know some of them very well.



Figure 5. The attendants getting ready for the trip.

I tried my best in between the waiting periods trying to know them better and some really opened up to me. I got to share in their life stories, problems and even aspirations.

It was also through them that I also came in contact with the difficulties that their patients were having. I may have made it seem that their duties are reduced to meals only, but that is not true in practice since they always helped them with problems that they may have such as hygiene, mobility and counseling.

6 CONCLUSION

Repetition!

I knew right from the outset that I wanted to do an activity related in some way to charity, and even though this was not the activity I had in mind, I still come away with an experience that will likely stay with me for the rest of my life.

It also allowed me to become more aware of the difficulties faced by people with very low income and spend most of their days alone at the twilight of their lives. That allowed me to realize that maybe the most important part of this work is not just the meals but the human contact they get from us. It allowed me to be a part of something selfless and bigger than myself.

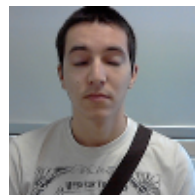
I come away from this experience, hopefully, a more capable, reliable and sensible man than when I started, and I hope that this is only the first step in a long journey of learning and fulfillment.

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Finally, the author would like to thank the Coaching Team 2 for the way they handled and addressed all my issues and for facilitating a smooth experience for both me and the organization.



Eu Me Moi Here I am. I am pursuing my Engineering studies at IST! (IST!).