

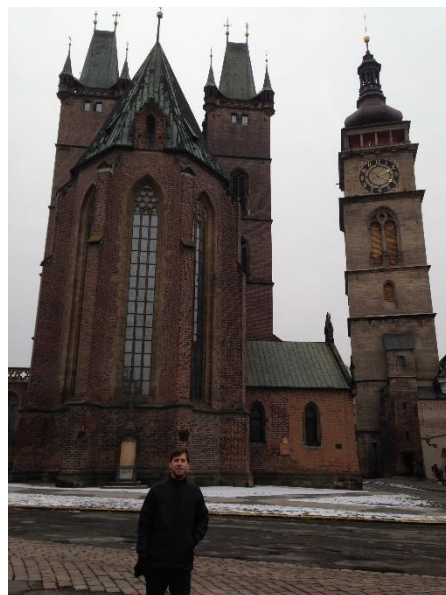
## My Exchange Experience



Now, after my own experience, I believe that exchange students can help change some of the assumptions and preconceived ideas in their societies because people are more likely to accept the change from within their society rather than from the outside. That is why I strongly believe that an exchange experience is one of the most powerful ways to promote human beings and help end those centuries long conflicts that take our focus away from the real problems.

When I came to Hradec Králové, I was a 23 year-old Brazilian student who did not have much experience outside my own culture. I learned a lot going to school in Hradec Králové, but the most important lessons I learned were outside of the classroom. I never thought that I'd travel across the world and have this kind of experience.

My exchange has been an incredible experience for me. I have gained so much knowledge about many countries and about many different cultures from around the world. I now have connections all over the world. I have also become independent, outgoing, and confident.



That experience encouraged me to challenge myself and set some goals in my life when going back to my home country.

Being thousands of miles from home was not always easy. Like everything in life, my experience had its ups but also its downs. The hard times helped me grow up and move away from my comfort zone to gain maturity and independence. The friends that I made in Hradec Králové helped me to get over the hard times, and now I feel that I have a new family, a big family made of people from the whole world, people that I will never forget.



I know I was one of the lucky few to live overseas for one semester, but I also know that very few people know about my story and that I am those of the thousands of other young people who are part of exchange programs every year. However, I knew more than what the news told me and I helped others learn more about my culture.

The lessons I learned will stay with me forever and my belief in cultural exchange will never leave me. This is how we can really learn about others.

