

REPORT by Ilse S. / Germany

HOW COVID-19 HAS CHANGED OUR LIVES

It was January 2020 when my husband and I heard the first time in TV that a new virus occurred in China, broken out on a big market in Wuhan. We and everybody around thought it's far away and don't touch us and nobody could foresee that this occurrence would change the life of millions of people around the world.

I was a little bit alarmed after hearing that some employees of a company in Stockdorf near Munich were infected with this virus. It turned out that they got it from a Chinese colleague who had held a seminar for them in the rooms of that firm. Although the infected people and their nearest family members were isolated and treated in a Munich hospital under strong precautionary, German virologists and politicians were convinced that the illness would not be harder than a normal influenza. But in February 2020 the pandemic broke out - vacationers brought the virus in the country and Bavaria was one of the most affected federal states in Germany.

A lockdown was completely new for all of us and most people didn't experience such a far reaching reduction of their daily life. For me the negative aspects dominated the positive ones. We couldn't realize most of our planning for 2020, - celebrations, travels, invitations and so on couldn't take place or were cancelled. As so-called „persons with elevated risk“, we reduced consequently our personal contacts to the family and to friends.

Reflecting about positive aspects of the lockdown, I think first of all of the fact that we could spend more time than usually together in our family. And also of discovering some unknown places and interesting sights by long walks in the near surroundings which helped us to feel good and to distract from the unpleasant situation we are living in.

At the first lockdown, beginning in March 2020, I had to get used with that new situation. I worked at home in the household and garden, made things I wanted to do for a long while.

Phone and "whatsapp" became more important than ever. But I was also worried about what was going to happen. The reports about the terrible situations in hospitals, at that time especially in Italy and Spain, were shocking.

During the summer months we could breath, the infection rates got lower and I enjoyed to meet some friends again and to go to a restaurant or to drink a cup of coffee together. My family and I could go for swimming and biking, I was in a good mood and I thought that we were over the worst at that time.

Unfortunately the second wave of the pandemic reached us and this time harder than before. Another lockdown came and is now still actually going on; only one topic exists on TV and in the newspapers: COVID19! After such a long time of social isolation I sometimes feel frustrated and worried, especially after the appearance of COVID19 mutations.

Learners' point of view

It's an interesting experience to take part to online lessons and I like the lessons by Skype very much. It's a good alternative to learn together, to stay in contact with the team and to practice our knowledges. But I think online lessons cannot replace personal meetings, they are more stressful and the feedback isn't always optimal.

My expectations (better: my hope) for the future is that the vaccination against COVID19 will be successful and can help to return to a normal life. We had more than enough challenges during the last year and I fear that we have to master new challenges in the next months.

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