

Other experiences

I studied **Sociology** for 5 years, it was very interesting, had fascinating teachers, and learned to organize my thoughts, but eventually I was missing something more tangible in my life. I needed more than just intellectual work, I wanted to use my hands to acquire skills and knowledge that could be useful everywhere I would go.

So I chose **woodworking**, learned to organize my work, the steps needed for wood planks and panels to become furniture, from conception to installation.

With my friends we were often discussing about the world we lived in, how to change it and what to do about it. Keeping this state of mind I joined a group of motivated young people in a remote homestead lost in the mountains. After three weeks they asked me if I would like to second the experienced carpenter in building a new 400sqm sheepfold. Together with the help of another WOOFer we erected this wooden structure in 3 months.

One year later they asked me if I wanted to stay as a permanent member of the team. I accepted on one condition: that I had my own activity. So **I created a free range egg workshop** (up to 450 hens), it was efficient, requiring a moderate amount of time commitment allowing me to do a lot of other tasks around the farm. This activity was complementary to the cheese and vegetables we already produced and sold.

It was a very intense experience as we were friends, flatmates and co-workers at the same time. We had a very horizontal decision making process with weekly meetings, in a hostile environment, with no direct road access, at 1100m altitude with big snowfalls during winter.

We worked hard for a small paycheck but I was ok with it as long as we had fun, then the global mood changed, despite my warnings we decided to host less people, we also had less teamwork. This influenced my decision to leave, I tried other places but none suited me.

I met a girl, did a lot of gardening work, helped transform an attic in a beautiful apartment. Built a bespoke staircase, a big and technical piece for which I had to learn new skills, organize every step and keep it achievable for one person, as I was alone to do it.

Afterwards I worked as a cheese maker in a semi-artisanal factory (30 employees), **I was elected staff representative**, I did my best to improve work conditions, modify parts of the production process, tried to find ways for the workers to be more concerned by the company's life and reduce the turnover.

Finally, after a conversation with a colleague planning for a career change to IT and doing my own research I decided to do the same. I informed my boss about it, we signed an agreement and I left a few months later for a school with an intensive program to get an HND equivalency in one year. It was fun studying with people 10 years younger than me, I even earned the unofficial title Mascot of the class.

I got my diploma, got married and we moved to UK as my wife was going back to University. Here I am, now, looking for an opportunity to prove myself in this new domain.