

Edition 2016-2017

IAESTE

Internship Booklet



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IAESTE IS ALL ABOUT INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS.

IAESTE provides a fun way to discover the world, by working abroad. In this internship booklet you can read stories written by students, just like you, who went abroad last summer with IAESTE. The goal of this booklet is to give you some impressions, to remove all doubts and to give you the chance to get this great experience for yourself!

IAESTE is active in Ghent, Leuven and Brussels. The co-operating institutes are UGent, KUL, VUB and ULB. If you are in your 3rd Bachelor or master in engineering, bio-engineering or sciences at one of these institutes you are able to participate in IAESTE.

Enjoy reading and we hope to see you on the next IAESTE activity; sometime, someplace, somewhere in the world.

Annelies Vandekerckhove,

Jan Poppe and Wynn Geenen

LC Presidents of 2016-2017



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GERMANY

AN PLETINCIX

September 30th 2016 - When writing this report, I'm halfway through my 2-month internship in Germany. The past month has been amazing and I'm sure the next one won't be any different. I've already gained so much experience in the work environment, but more importantly: I've met wonderful people, improved my language skills, visited beautiful places and learnt to stand on my own two feet. I live and work in a town called Zittau, close to the German-Polish-Czech border tri-point. This means that I find myself in Poland or Czech Republic after only a little walk, which is really convenient because everything is much cheaper there. Zittau itself is a charming, picturesque place with a rich history, beautiful architecture and lots of little parks and squares with fountains. I love spending time in the town centre. My internship is at the Zittau/Görlitz University Of Applied Sciences in the IPM department, where I work on the improvement of their simulation tool DynStar.

The day I arrived in Zittau, Simone stood waiting for me at the train station. She is the coordinator for IAESTE and Erasmus students and she is the loveliest, most helpful person I've ever met. Together we went to check out my apartment, which is huge and recently renovated. Before she left, she explained me some basic things, like how the internet works,



Zittau,
Germany

where the super market is and at what time I needed to be ready for work the next day. On my first day of work, I met my mentor Daniel and another IAESTE student Arseniy from Russia. Arseniy and I quickly became friends and every day we would eat lunch together in the cafeteria, talking about our internship, because we were working on different subjects, or about our families and friends at home. In the weekend we would go to the lake or go hiking in the mountains with Simone. Even though there is no IAESTE committee in Zittau (the closest one is in Dresden and it's about one hour with the train), we

were having fun, the three of us. But after two weeks, Arseniy finished the internship because he had already been there many weeks before I arrived. So we said goodbye and made a promise that I would someday visit Moscow and that, if he were ever in Brussels, I would show him around.

Even though I was sad about seeing my friend leave, I had not much time to think about it because the next week I had visitors from Belgium! My boyfriend stayed here the whole week and then my parents came in for the weekend. It was wonderful to see them all again

and we had a great time together. We visited Prague and Dresden, we went to see the famous rock formations in the Zittau Mountains (like the Kelchstein), we relaxed at sunny terraces and we dined at the best restaurants. But unfortunately, they had to go back to Belgium and I had to go back to work. Now that Arseniy was gone, I started socializing more with the people who work at the department, my German colleagues, let's say. They are all older than me, but they are very friendly and welcoming. They always invite me to their 2 o'clock coffee break and a few days ago, we all went to a Czech brewery after work. We had a good laugh and drank a lot of cheap, but delicious beer.

This week, the new academic year has begun and the usually quiet

halls of my apartment building are getting noisier each day as more students are arriving. That's actually a good thing because I'm hoping to make some new friends of my own age. The university has a buddy program, which connects a German student to an exchange student, so the latter can count on someone for help and company. I have just applied today, so I can't tell you yet how that will go, but I expect I will soon be hitting the party scene pretty hard! No I'm just kidding, but it would be nice to hang out with other students.

Anyway, my time here in beautiful East-Germany has been great and I'm glad it's not over yet. There are still many things to see and many places to visit. If you love travelling, an internship with IAESTE is perfect for you. Don't hesitate, just apply! You're in for



GERMANY



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"I can say that on my internship I had more than one mentor, the whole office has put effort into my learning. It was a memorable experience and I would surely recommend it to every student who wants to learn new things about ESD solutions and have a good time."

Rebecca Grancaric, our IAESTE student 2016

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HONG KONG

DHEEPASHRI KANNAN

I did my Internship at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

As soon as I left the Hong Kong international airport, I took a bus back to the University halls of residence (the place where I was supposed to stay) - On the way, all I could see was these skyscrapers, that adorned the entire city. All the buildings were beautifully organized in a fashion. It was something that I had never seen in my life and was such a pretty sight. When I got off the bus, I was welcomed by the IAESTE team in Hong Kong. After striking a conversation with them, I realized I was staying in Kowloon which was pretty far from the Hong Kong Island that had all these pretty skyscrapers. The time I got there was a weekend so I decided to go to the island with a few IAESTE trainees before I started the work. It was a Sunday evening and I took a train to the Hong Kong island, the city was just beyond perfection- the sunset, the sea, the ferries and the skyscrapers- It was a pretty sight indeed!

I was privileged in a way that I got to choose the professor I wanted to work with even before I left to Hong Kong. I chose to work at the photo acoustics lab in the Biomedical Engineering Department. It was then my first day at work and after having a deep conversation with my Professor, I realised that all he wanted me to do was to learn something new and take all the knowledge back to my university, instead of thinking them as just



Kowloon,
Hong Kong

assignments. The task that I was assigned with was to help one of the PhD students in the University. My work was basically divided into two parts. In the first part of my traineeship, I had to do some literature review and come up with the best solution for the project that my guide was working on and the second half was mainly gaining practical experience. I was also introduced to the lab that was well equipped with all modern equipment required to perform the experiments.

I was then given a work place and I shared the office with a few other people from China. At first, I thought I would never make friends in my work place, but that changed soon. I learned later that they were

pretty hesitant to talk to me first and that was the reason why they didn't strike a conversation. As days passed, we became the thickest of friends. We worked together, we had lunch together and we also took breaks and had a few badminton matches. I motivated them to spend some time off from work during the weekend and took them for a hike. We also went to Ocean Park, which is one of the world's famous amusement park. It was absolute fun!

This internship definitely helped me to learn a lot of things- I had to work with a group of people, in which some of them were trying to procure a PhD degree while the others were working as research assistants. They were a bunch of

people who dedicated all they had, to fetch results. They were the most hardworking and highly dedicated bunch of people I have ever met.

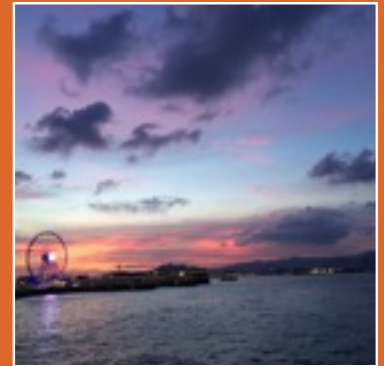
I also got a chance to fly to Singapore for a weekend and go around the country. The food, the weather, the people, it was just flawless. I had one of the greatest times at the Universal studios. This was the only trip that I could actually manage to take during my internship, but it was definitely another amazing experience.

As an International student, I am open to any opportunity that comes my

way. This IAESTE traineeship program definitely helped me gain an amazing international experience and fetched me an opportunity to work with people from the Biomedical Engineering sector. I'm sure that this internship will open up new opportunities in the future and would also help me grow more independently, socially and professionally. I would also strongly recommend Hong Kong PolyU to students who in the future would like to witness and enjoy the Asian culture, and also to gain some real work experience.



HONG KONG



USA

DOMINIQUE GIROLAMI

My name is Dominique, architect to be. During my Erasmus in München I applied again for a 2nd IAESTE internship. My first choice? San Francisco, because ... wow ... and ...why not? Somewhere in the middle of May, I got an exciting message from Annelies: “Well, I just got some good news for you: you are accepted! Congratulations!” I remember that at this time, my heart skipped a few beats. I chose for the maximum period of 29 weeks, starting in December 2015. Just like last year, I came home with the news: “Moom, I found a job”. Haha, a big smile emerges on my face.

Making sure that all the documents were correct was a process that took a forever: VISA and health care were the most important, but everything turned out well. On the 1st of December 2015 I left at 3 am and 27h later I arrived in San Francisco. The cab driver dropped me off at 628 Lyon Street. A friendly young lady opened the door. Is she the owner from the apartment where I would spend the first night? Apparently not, she was one of the neighbors. I did have a contact number of the girl I needed, but my phone died. So I knocked on the second door... Yes, this is the correct place! When Sona – my roommate – showed me the apartment, I was totally surprised: wow, such a beautiful place. I got a private room in this apartment built in Victorian style. This temporary



place became home for the next months...Although it wasn't really official – I've pretended to be a friend just staying a couple of days for 7 months – I really loved living there, and literally fell in love with the beautifully painted bath room... For monthly rent of just 1200 dollar, this was cheap! I lived in the center of San Francisco, the city that I would fall in love with.

On the 1st Friday I passed by the first time at Field Paoli Architects in Downtown San Francisco, where I knew a happy hour was going on. I helped decorating the Christmas tree. It was this day when I asked Maureen, one of the principals, if there was a dress code at FPA. She replied there wasn't but “No shorts

Dominique!”. The weather didn't feel like wintertime at all and I will never forget this anecdote. The Monday after I officially started at 9AM with the weekly Monday morning staff meeting. Maureen noticed I didn't forget my new long pants today! After taking care of the administration I could finally start with the real thing.

So what did I learn in a timeframe of 7 Months working at FPA? I worked on several projects, going from themes as urban design to very detailed projects such as a renovation of a big Mall. When Americans use the words 'Great Mall', they are serious about it. That shopping mall had a walking area of 1 mile inside an old Ford Factory!

I worked on this project for several months and was flabbergasted being introduced to the “real life thing”. Besides that, I worked in REVIT for the first time. It’s because of this project and this internship, that I got introduced to BIM. The advantages of this concept outnumber other programs and I feel I could not give in on such matters anymore. At the moment of writing this report, I actually agreed on a job in Ghent where I can continue working on this.

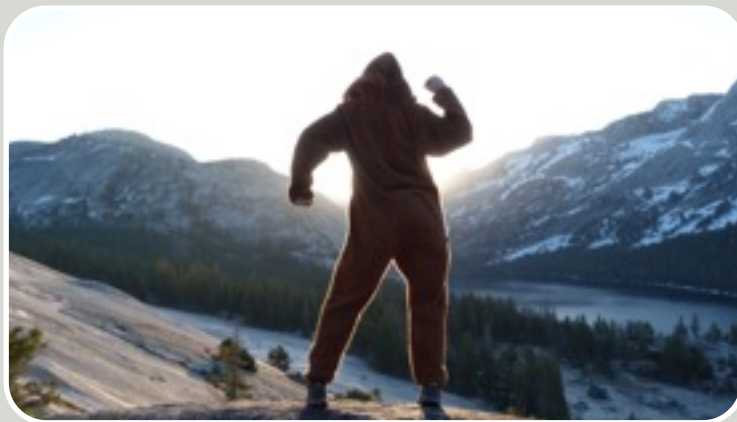
Furthermore, I would like to add something about the ILEAD program I followed in Washington DC too. It is a program developed by the United States Department of State and is not related to IAESTE. To apply, I created a video... challenge accepted. Out of 950 applicants, 60 interns were accepted for this one week program: we focused on leading capacity skills, and social skills. More than ever, I discovered things about myself. ILEAD was only one amazingly intense week, but I learned so much about others, and created a new view about myself.

During my time in San Francisco I met a ton of new people, and I’m convinced that some friends are for life. My stay in here definitely changed me as a social being. I met wonderful characters, spend hours

and hours a week with the same friends...most of the time on 2 sets of 4 wheels. Even when I had an incredibly rough time – one of my best friends over there committed suicide – we took care of each other and I didn’t feel alone. Besides these really close friends, I felt lucky for being part of a huge skate family in San Francisco. We skated every Friday for about 3 hours during the Friday Night skate, filled with good music, some snacks, drinks, but most important of all: great atmosphere with great people.

Last but not least, I got the chance to see so many new things while travelling. During the first 7 months we often left the city to explore nature and camp. After my working period I road tripped for another month. The first part to Los Angeles I was accompanied by a friend, afterwards I bicycled around for a week around LA and stayed in the apartment of a girl we accidentally met on a beach. During my last week we road tripped back from LA to Seattle – about 1200 miles~2000km -, ending back in San Francisco for my last Friday Night Skate. Amazing.

After my second IAESTE experience, I only regret one thing: why didn’t I start applying more early? These internships are literally life changers. Go for it, you should.



USA



INDIA

ELIEN VAN HOUWENHOVE

An IAESTE-internship is an adventure with a lot of dimensions. This internship in Jaipur in India was my first one. A lot of time I spent to the arrangements: figuring out everything for getting a visa, the injections I needed, the medicine I had to take with me. I had a whole bag full of them! So there was a lot of preparation work. I was also busy with it during exams because I would leave for India only four days after my last exam. These exams had to be good because I wouldn't be in Belgium to do the re-exams. It all worked out and everything was ready in time. This accomplishment already gave me some good energy. Now I had to just step on the plane and go with the flow.

When I arrived at Jaipur Airport, which is a tiny airport, I had a warm welcome of Lucas, an Argentinian trainee. The University is in the middle of nowhere at 45 minutes driving from the city (with a Riksjia it is one hour driving). It was a very big campus and had a nice architectural dome building. Everything looked well organized and nice. But when I was there a little longer, I got this double feeling. Because when you put foot outside the campus, there is a poor village where people live in small houses and don't have electricity or water.

Jaipur is a really dirty city but has nice buildings. The old city centre



was once painted all pink for an important visit of a British Prince Albert. That is why Jaipur is called the "Pink City". For me, Amer Fort and Hawa Mahal are the nicest places to see. One of the most amazing visits was to Udaipur. We went there by sleeping bus and in the city we rented a motor bike with three people (all on one bike). Udaipur is called the "Lake-city" and it is so nice to drive in the hills with a view on these lakes. The best trip we did was our North trip. We organized the cab with five people just one day in advanced and, really, we weren't even sure how to go and where to sleep. Apparently our cab driver couldn't even talk English. In short, it was a crazy but it turned out to be my best days in

India. We landed in a village called Rishikesh, which is said to be the capital of yoga. It was the most chill place I saw in India: at the foothills of the Himalaya we had an amazing view and very nice food. In the early morning we went for trekking and seeing the sunrise. After walking some breath-taking paths, we even swam in a waterfall!

The main sort of questions I got from my family and friends were: "Was it safe?" and "Did you get sick?" Ofcourse these two topics, I want to tell more about. Indian food is very different all over the country. In Rajasthan, food is very spicy and everything is made in a fat gravy. You eat it with *chapatti* or *naan* bread. Most of the time

it is vegetarian because of religious reasons. You can find pork and chicken but you can never ever find beef in Rajasthan, a state which has mostly Hindu religion. A cow is sacred in Hindu culture because people believe that it houses the Gods. For the food I have to say you have to be very careful but I really liked even the very spicy dishes. For the women safety, I believe Indian people are changing in mindset. Also for education you notice a lot of effort from the government.

I learned so many things, not only from the project itself. You practice your English but you also learn to understand the various accents that exist, you learn how to handle weird situations, how to arrange a lot of things by yourself, how to see if you can trust the guy who drives the Riksjá,... Most importantly, you meet a lot of new people, you make friends for life, you also learn about their culture and habits. Each person, no matter what culture, was very open minded and interested in learning other cultures. In this way everyone

could do his story and we learned a lot about each other. Habits of living, eating, praying, smoking hookah, surroundings, going to school, world history from different points of view and even world problems we talked about. The IAESTE group consisted of interns from Poland, Romania, Jordan, China, Argentina, Switzerland, Turkey, Cyprus ...

The combination of all of these experiences provide you a completely new plateau for your view on the world, which appears to be very small once you've had one IAESTE-experience. For me, when I was back in Belgium, I noticed that everything is so fast and efficient here, but at the same time, we have no time. Everyone runs. This I think is such a difference and very interesting because, who is happier? I am really grateful for the opportunity to get this internship and I'm already looking forward to make my next trip! I hope India was a first step to even more adventures, opportunities and new friendships all over the world.



INDIA

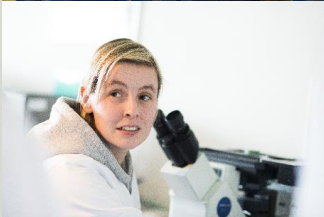




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DENMARK

FILIP VAN PUYMBROUCK

Unlike most of you, I started my traineeship after I finished my studies. This allowed me to have a longer (working) experience and enjoy more of the country!

First day! Arriving to work and meeting with IAESTE the first day can put you on edge since you see all these new faces and pretty much have no clue what is all going to happen. It is exciting however to go through this and discover everything! It only took me a couple of days to get to know most people from my dormitory, know my way to the closest and cheapest supermarket and know the road to work. I started work on Thursday and already went out into the city with the other trainees on Saturday. Meeting the other trainees is one of your first priorities!

GET A BIKE. Denmark is made for bike riding, about 40% of the people living in the city use the bike to go to work. Also, GET A REJSEKORT, this will take you anywhere by bus, train, metro or S-train. Just don't forget to check out! You can take the bus all night long by the way! I only had to ride my bike for 15 minutes to get to work at DTU. It's a huge university with heaps of smart and friendly people who are always willing to help you. This pretty much goes for all Danish people, don't be afraid to ask things, their English is better than most of ours.

During my first week I got familiar with everything around town, went



Copenhagen,
Denmark

to the IAESTE weekly with this time a Finish trainee cooking diner and went to the deer park (Dyrehaven). This park is one of the prettiest places to go to and the deer are only a couple of meters away from you!

Next weekend I went to discover Copenhagen. It took me half an hour by bus but public transport is very accessible, you can even take your bike on the train for free. Copenhagen is a great city! Walk around, discover, be amazed and enjoy! The famous coloured houses, Nyhavn, the pedestrian bridge with a view across the water at the theatre and the opera, the gorgeous city libery Black Diamond, the little mermaid, ... Busy first day there! The mermaid is as impressive as manneke pis, don't make it your priority.

The weekend after this it was kulturnatten (culture night) and everything in the city is open for visitors: government buildings, museums, opera house, library, zoo, Carlsberg old brewery, ... Definitely a nice night to go out into the city! Also visited christiana, an interesting but weird neighbourhood and the meat packing district. Go to Warpigs brew pub there! Really! Also went to a jazz café with live music and to Bastard café, famous for its hundreds of table games to play. Copenhagen is very much alive and fun, even in the fall!

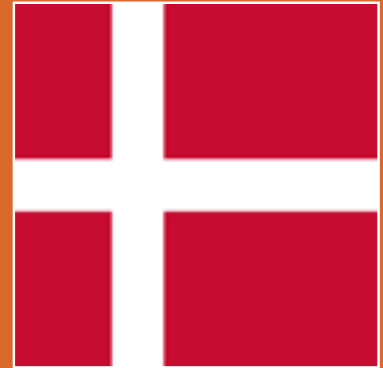
Copenhagen is expensive if you go out and eat and drink and do everything in the city but if you make your own diner during the week or cook in groups even, you'll find that life is not that much more expensive than in Belgium.

I have only been here for just over 2 weeks now but I am still very excited to discover more the next two months and a half! Go outside your comfort zone and meet as many people as you can, wherever you go!

Cheers,

Filip

DENMARK





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CHINA

GOELE DE MEYERE

Three months off to China, it was a scary thought. So a good preparation would help a lot. Reading some travel books, scrolling on the internet and asking people around. What I learned; people don't speak English that well, fashion in China can be improved and there are many, many Chinese people. During the first days in China, this was proven many times over and over again. And their language skills was certainly not an understatement.

With this preparation and my luggage, I went the day after my last exam to the airport and off I went. A volunteer picked me up at the airport of Shanghai and we went to the university of Shanghai where I would stay for a week before I go to Nanjing to start my internship. This first week was an introduction week so we could acclimatize to China. There I met a lot of other interns, two of them also got an internship in Nanjing but at a different company. Whew, I wouldn't be alone in another big city. The first week passed quickly, we learned about the Chinese culture, language (and party life). Then the next adventure, taking the train to Nanjing. First of all, the train station is so big, that they put the ticket office (as big as the entrance hall of Ghent train station) in a different building than the train station itself. Secondly the phenomenal speed of the train, it took us a bit less than



Nanjing,
China

one and a half hour to travel 300 km with stops along the way, so a top speed of more than 300 km/h. Lastly the organization and security to get on the train is so strict, that it is impossible to get on the train without ticket.

Once arrived in Nanjing, the real adventure started. Luckily we were with about 10 other IAESTE interns in Nanjing. Two of them at my company, so I had some fellow friends to share the struggles with. The first week was a thug one. First of all the language; in Shanghai some people could speak English but in Nanjing on the other hand... Even at the office only the boss could speak English well. There was also one other employee who could speak a bit English, but the

conversations never got further than ordering food and stuff online, otherwise things got too complicated. Mainly the communication happened through Wechat (similar to Facebook) but on the level of google translate, thus also a real struggle. Also ordering food was an adventure; as they don't speak English, searching for a restaurant where they have pictures is really recommended. You can also go kamikaze and just point at some random Chinese signs, but the chance is real that you get some kidney, liver, intestines, chicken feet or duck blood. Next up travelling; As Nanjing is a big city they luckily have a subway. Hmm, no subway is not the right word, train is more appropriate as it takes you an hour to get to the city center for only

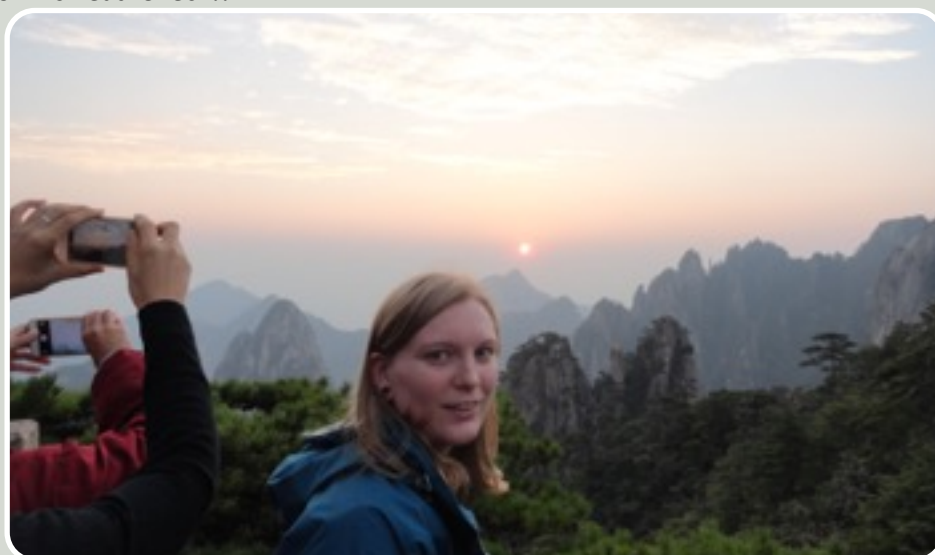
20 km. Taking the bus is also an option, but as there is no map of the busses and only a Chinese app, it is also not easy. Going by bike was also an option but rather a suicidal one, considering the traffic with all the scooters and cars ignoring the traffic lights and signs. Policemen are just nice road decoration. So the 'subway' was after all a good option and in one hour time you have plenty of time to observe Chinese people and their interpretation of fashion.

One of the things that are quickly associated with China is the smog, they said that it was hard to see blue sky. In my first two weeks I barely saw blue sky as it was raining season. So umbrellas everywhere and every time wet feet. But then the never ending heat came the two months following. There were still umbrellas everywhere as Chinese people are scared of getting a tan and I was longing for a bit of rain to cool down. So everyday blue sky accompanied with humid air. There were even days that the feeling temperatures was over 40 degrees. Conclusion; getting a tan in China: Check; walking in the street in your own sweat: Check!!

Three months in China means plenty of time to travel. It was time to discover more of the country after two weeks of being a tourist in Nanjing and enjoying the nightlife (only a couple of good clubs, but a KTV (karaoke) at every corner, so my singing skills improved a lot). Together with the other interns we travelled a lot; Changzhou, Suzhou, Shanghai, Yellow Mountain, Qixia mountain, Beijing, Shengsi island... every time something completely different, but time after time so much fun and amazement. China is after all a country that surprises you every single day.

To finish, a picture that really captures Chinese people. Pictures of everything and everyone. Pictures of the most random and unimportant things. Pictures of them self in thousand fold. But their favorite picture is the one with foreigners, with and without asking, subtle or mostly unsubtle. Chinese people and their phone, inseparable. They look at life through their phone in search of the best picture, instead of just enjoying every moment the fullest and pushing your boundaries as I did.

CHINA

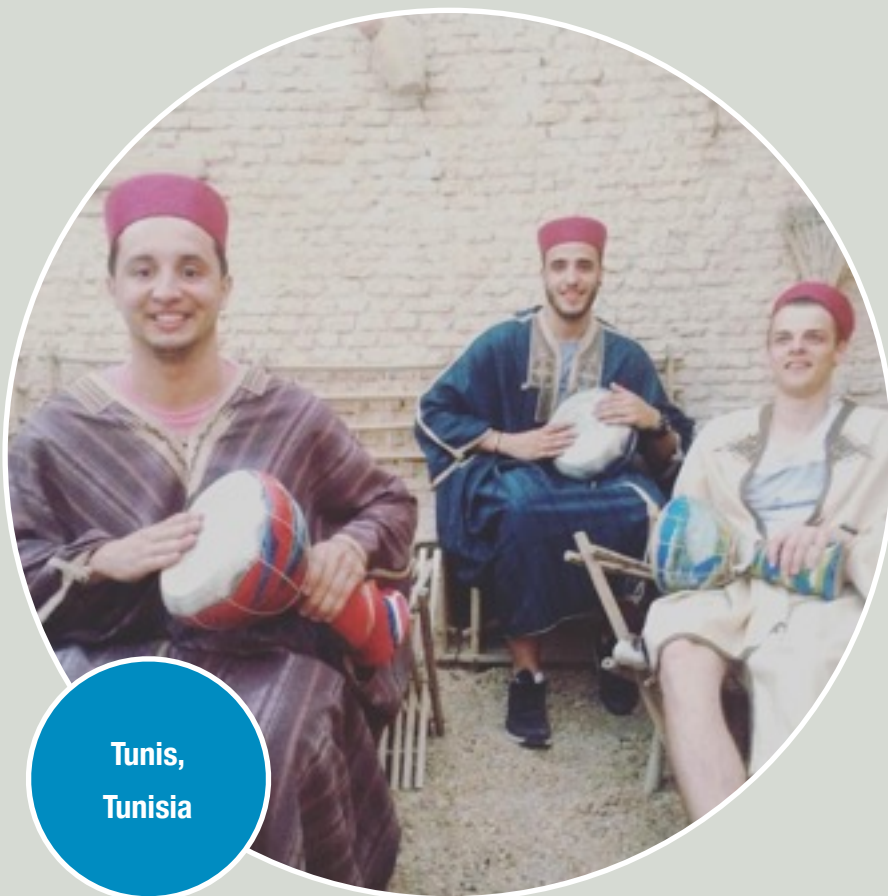


TUNISIA

JAN POPPE

As president of IAESTE Brussels, I spend a lot of time informing and convincing people to apply for an internship abroad. Although I knew what I was talking about because I already met a few people sharing their story with me, I couldn't share mine. Well, now I can! For people busy getting a fleeting glimpse of my report: It was worth every second of my time, every penny of my money and every single effort! So, now that I have everyone's attention for real, let me explain why.

My internship actually started already before even arriving in Tunisia, the capital of Tunisia, where my internship would take place. In Barcelona, I had to change planes and by the time I made it to the airplane, I wasn't alone anymore. IAESTE Tunisia informed me of a Spanish trainee taking the same plane as mine, so I was already making friends in a foreign airport. This illustrates perfectly that, yes it's a jump in the unknown, but every other trainee finds himself in the same situation. This and the fact that the other trainees and I were accommodated in the same building made us a very cohesive group. The members of IAESTE Tunisia were also a big help to make us feel at ease. Not only was there always someone of the committee present, they also organised a trip each weekend. I rode on a camel and a quad in the Sahara, visited some museums, went paintballing... Altogether, I've seen a great deal of



Tunis,
Tunisia

Tunisia and I can say it's a magnificent country. It contains deserts and oases and has some of the prettiest beaches along the coast.

Now it may look as if I was on a holiday all day long, but my internship was from a professional point of view also a great success. The company where I was to spend six weeks was situated in the high class area of Tunis, close to the Canadian and the American embassies. This was a good reference point for cabs, which I had to take every morning to get to my job on time. Now I hear you thinking: "Public transport was not luxurious enough or what?" Well, people who get angry when their train has a 5 minute delay should go to Tunisia for a few weeks. Not a single public transport service, I'm

talking bus, train, tram etc. has a schedule. It can take up to five minutes if you're lucky. It can be forever if you're not. It's a perfect example of the big cultural difference between two very different countries. Another example is the food. They make everything spicy. Except their desserts, those are super sweet. I thought I loved sugar, but it seems Tunisians love it even more.

Due to the hot weather during the summers, the working days were from 7:30 am to 2 pm, but without break. My friendly colleges at EPPM made me feel at ease from day one. Their English was good, particularly for Tunisian standards, and I could always ask them for help. And often I needed some. After all, I was asked to design and optimise a TEG unit in Aspen HYSYS, a software

program I had never used before, but luckily was familiar to me. And in the end, when I delivered my report, I was able to say that I now have full professional knowledge of how to use it. And it proves itself to be useful already in one of my courses nowadays! But maybe even more important is the professional experience I acquired. I finally did something with my academic knowledge in a professional environment. I did something my study is made for and it will help me choose which direction to go when I will be looking for a job.

In the meantime I became close friends with Sergio, the Spanish trainee I met in Barcelona. He was my roommate during the six weeks I spent in Tunis. He also left Tunis

by the time I did, and I even spent a few days with him at his apartment in Barcelona because I didn't have a good connecting flight. But most of all because we became very good friends in those six weeks, and who says "no" to a few extra days off, right?

My internship with IAESTE was an extraordinary experience I will remember for the rest of my life. I was able to gain some professional skills and to be part of a very different culture, something I consider impossible to do as a tourist. And due to the many friends I made there, I now have a home in a lot of countries. After living and spending so much time together with them, my door will also always be open for them.



TUNISIA



INDIA

JARON PASCAL

I did an 8-week internship in Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University aka PDPU. Located in a non-touristic Gujarat, this university is specialized in energy like petroleum, solar energy ... They have their own solar plant (1MW). I worked on the topic of detection of potential induced degradation (PID) in solar cells with impedance spectroscopy.

Arriving in India went smoothly. It's about a 10-hour flight, I had a transit in Doha for 19 hours. Luckily, I got a hotel room for free from the airline. Once arrived, three students of IAESTE were waiting for me. They drove me to the campus. I arrived there around 2 o'clock in the morning.

I got a 3-persons bedroom. With air conditioning and an own bathroom (including a toilet with toilet paper which is not common in India). It was the first year for them to welcome foreign students. They try to make it as comfortable as possible for us. The only problem was the food. In this area, they only eat vegetarian food. (It is also not allowed to smoke and drink in public), but that was not the problem. It was the amount of spices. The first weeks I could not eat a decent amount of food. Fortunately after telling them, they prepared less spicy dishes for us. After four weeks, it was no longer necessary and I could eat whatever they ate.

There was a girl from Iran, but she went back two weeks after my



Gujarat,
India

arrival. In the meantime, there was someone else from Bosnia. We were there the whole time with 2 persons (3 days with 3). That was a bit unfortunate. Especially when I left, the girl from Bosnia then was completely alone.

The first weeks, I have especially learned from books. I got an open desk in the lab and sat together with Ph.D. students who worked there. After I was able to start the theory, I could start the experiments. A Ph.D. student guided me with the experiments.

The professor and Ph.D. students were very friendly. I could always count on their help. Several times, we went out with them. For a kind of farewell, we went to a restaurant with (unlimited) pizza. We were allowed to sit on their back of the motorbikes, something you cannot do easily in Belgium.

I had to work in the solar lab on the weekdays, but they were very flexible. I could start and leave whenever I wanted. The school itself was not that flexible. You had to be at the campus at 21u and be in your room at 22u30. This sometimes gave problems when you went out to eat. Fortunately, they were not that strict for us.

It was a pity that not everyone understood English. So you could not really communicate with local people and with the people who worked at the university like cleaning staff, security... To learn the local language is quite difficult; in every state, they have their own language.

Local restaurants are really great. We ordered something at random and it was always delicious (do not forget to ask to put fewer spices on it).

Another advantage is that the food is very cheap compared to Belgium.

Those two months went very quickly, there were many beautiful days. For example, one of those days was the last day. The reason was not because I was returning that day. (I do not deny that I was happy to return to Belgium again.) That day, there was a small farewell party (I had made some pancakes). They had made a poster to hang there as a reminder of me. It's a good feeling that I leave them as a friend and not only as a colleague. I also received a bracelet from a girl for a safe return. Those are moments you will not forget.

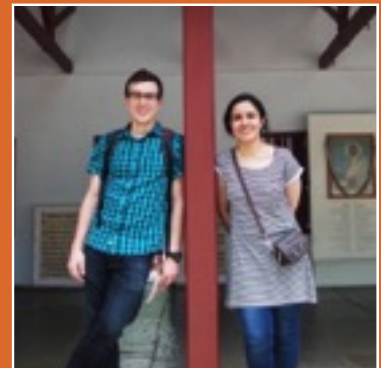
The thing that is special about visiting a country on an AIESTE internship is that you are not really a tourist,

tourists visit some attraction with some fake shops and go to a restaurant where they order something that they know. This was not the case. Maybe you do not visit as many touristic places on an IAESTE internship, but you will experience more real life there. You go to places you otherwise would not go and get information from local people.

As a conclusion, I can say that everything went well. If I had known what it was, I would do it again. I recommend everyone to do an IAESTE internship. It will definitely be an experience that will stay with you throughout your life.

If you want to know more, I blogged about my internship: <https://www.jaronpascal.be/blog>

INDIA



NORWAY

JEROEN VAN HOUTTE

After flying for four hours, I arrived at the world's northernmost city with a population above 50,000 people, situated in the middle of a vast area of only fjords, forests and mountains. It was my home for seven weeks: Tromsø city in Northern Norway at 69° North. I arrived at this remote place as IAESTE internship student after I graduated with a master's in Physics & Astronomy at the university of Ghent.

When I arrived at the airport of Tromsø someone from the IAESTE organization was already waiting for me to pick me up and drive me to the student house, which turned out to be a cosy typical Norwegian house. Already many students were around there at that time since the academic year starts a month earlier in Norway than in Belgium. Since it was new for everyone at that moment, it was the perfect time for me to start an internship. Together with some Erasmus students I explored the neighborhood and experienced the night life in the North. It took me some time however to get used to the crazy prices: a beer of eight euros is really common in a pub there.

For the internship itself, I was pleased to join the Earth's observation research group at the university of Tromsø. They collaborate within CIRFA, which is the acronym for "Centre for Integrated Remote Sensing and Forecasting for Arctic Operations". They develop for example methods to monitor sea ice and detect oil



Tromsø,
Norway

spills, based on radar satellite images. This is of great importance for industry in the arctic regions. Since I did not follow courses related to this specific subject during my education in Ghent, this internship was the excellent way for me to get in touch with this field.

On my first working day at the research group, my supervisor took the time to set up a reachable project in accordance with my educational background. After the seven weeks I was able to finish the project successfully. Maybe it will even result in a scientific publication. On top of that, the subject turned out to be very meaningful for the phd fellowship I was going to start in Belgium one month later.

Besides the experience I got from my own internship project, I also got the chance to learn more about the main scientific activities of the research group itself. By joining their yearly scientific conference I heard about the current phd projects. It was held in Sommeroy (literally translated: 'summer island'), which is a very misleading name I would say.

During a conference you usually do not get much time to explore the place itself. Therefore we decided to go for a real hiking trip afterwards. Together with some phd students of the research group, I went to the Lyngen Alpes, just one hour drive away from the city. It is an impressive mountain chain with many glacier lakes and colorful

forests. During our trip I fell into a river, almost sank into a swamp and dived into a glacier lake. These are only a few examples of how I experienced the wonderful Norwegian nature. Afterwards we slept in a primitive hut in the middle of the forest. Although there was no electricity nor water available, it had a sauna which we were happy to use. Afterwards we refreshed ourselves in the ice-cold lake, like the real Scandinavian people do. And at night we looked up to enjoy the magnificent northern lights.

After seven weeks the time of daylight shortened remarkably. People even

started to hand out vitamin-D pills to keep people healthy during the dark season in the North. At that point it was time for me to go to the south again. Thanks to IAESTE who arranged all the practical things, I was able to focus myself on the project and had plenty of time left to enjoy Norway to the fullest. I made really good friends at the student house and at the research group during my rather short stay. It felt even weird to leave but I promised to come back someday to this amazing place where I had such a good time.

NORWAY



KENIA

JONA DE SUTTER

Doing an IAESTE internship was the best decision I have ever made. The only thing I regret is not making this decision earlier. During eight weeks, I was part of the architecture department at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, or JKUAT, in Juja, a small student city near Nairobi. And those eight weeks were the best ones of my life.

I was very excited to go to Kenya. I had no idea what to expect, I didn't even know if I would survive being away from home for such a long time. I just knew I wanted to explore the world and get to know some different cultures and some new people.

From the first moment I arrived in Juja, I knew I made the right decision. Immediately, I felt very welcome. One of the employers of the international office of the university was there to greet me. Even though I arrived incredibly late in the evening, some of the other interns were waiting in our house to welcome me.

During my internship I worked together with the students of the fifth bachelor in the architectural department. In my project, I had to design a gallery in the capital Nairobi. I also had to give multiple presentations about Belgium, and give feedback to other students who returned the favor. It was very



Juja,
Kenia

interesting to both get feedback from my supervisor and the students. I really felt part of this class and I learned a lot from the students and the lecturers about architecture but also about education in Kenya and about their daily life.

Every Tuesday evening we went to the IAESTE meeting, where we got to know the members of the local committee. We also went to parties with them and enjoyed a cultural food night. We even went on a camping trip to lake Naivasha, where we had an amazing weekend.

An IAESTE internship is not all about working. During the weekend we

did a lot of different activities. The most amazing thing we did, was taking a safari trip to Maasai Mara. In the Maasai Mara reserve one can observe the migration of the wildebeest during the summer, migrating from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania to Maasai Mara in Kenya. It was very impressive to see thousands of wildebeests and zebras crossing the reserve. There were animals as far as the eye could reach. We also saw some lions, some of which were even hunting. On other days we went hiking or visited the National Museum of Nairobi, the Elephant Orphanage, the Giraffe Center (where we could 'kiss' some giraffes), and many more.

I even had the opportunity to visit a project in one of the forgotten slums around Nairobi, which was certainly a life-changing experience.

Every intern in JKUAT had probably a love-hate relationship with Juja. The house we were living in was a bit of a mess. We didn't have a refrigerator, no light in the bathroom, a toilet that was barely working and so much red dust outside that it was impossible to keep our house clean. Not even mentioning the casual power and water breakdowns we had to endure. We were all very happy to go to a shopping mall, even if we just went out to eat and go to the supermarket to buy some different types of fruit and vegetables, cheese and some other 'European' products. Because we were not able to buy these products in our little hometown.

But every evening when we arrived back in Juja and we saw the busyness and dust of the village again, we had a feeling of being back home. Home sweet home. After all, our house in Juja was the place where our friends were living. And casual drinking parties in the evening make the worst water breakdowns way better.

After my stay in Kenya, I have found my recipe for happiness. It is not the place where you live, or the amount of money you have. It is the people you are with, that make your life worth living. In those eight weeks I have met the most amazing people I could ever have. And I know for sure I will go back to Kenya. Thank you, IAESTE, for giving me this amazing experience!

KENIA



BRAZIL

JOZEFIE DE PRAETERE

And finally the moment is there when you have to write an internship report, but you are only allowed to use 4000 signs. That's too short! But I will try my best to give you a good overview of my amazing stay in Brazil the last two months.

6 July. After a flight of 12h, I landed in São Paulo. A Brazilian girl waited for me and instead of immediately taking the bus to Ilha Solteira, she spent the whole day to show me around. I drank a real coconut, the first time in my life! It was wonderful to see so many palm trees in such a colourful city.

After a 10h lasting bus drive, a local student brought me to my Republica. I stayed only one week there, because the situation was really bad. The building was old, broken and dirty. The girls did no effort to speak English and were actually not interested. So I decided to search another Republica.

I met a Jordanian girl and moved in her place, we were 5 girls. It was heaven! They were very friendly, always ready to help and spoke English fluently. This is not usual, most Brazilians only speak Portuguese. I learned some basics with Duolingo, which helped me a lot. The words are quite similar to French, and after a while I could have simple conversations. Even if I could not explain very well, people



Ilha Solteira,
Brazil

did all their effort to understand me! Brazilians are really kind, open and warm persons. Everything is so chill and trustful, I missed this a lot when I went back to Belgium.

My professor was also really nice. I worked on the synthesis of superconducting ceramic BSCCO nanowires, using Solution Blow Spinning. It was my own research, another PhD student helped me. He could not speak English very well so we communicated often through Google Translate. We made so much fun, trying to explain with gestures what we wanted to say. He always made time for me when I had a problem. He even told me I had to ask more vacation to travel!

They were very flexible: I worked 3-4 days in a week, from 10h to 16h. They never made a problem if I texted them that my weekend trip would take one day longer than foreseen.

My research went very good and was finished almost 2 weeks too early. My professor convinced me to write a paper to publish in a scientific journal, I still have contact with him for this. It would be so cool if the paper got accepted!

Besides working, I travelled a lot. I must say that IAESTE was not well represented in Ilha Solteira, because it is situated very far from everything (1000km). If we wanted

to go somewhere, we had to organise on our own. But we were a nice group of 'gringo's' (how Brazilians call foreigners) so this was no problem: we rented a minibus or cars and drove with loud music for 8-12h until we reached our destination. We ziplined above a waterfall in a city called Costa Rica, rafted on Sucuriu river, snorkelled next to an anaconda in Bonito, visited amazing caves with clear blue water, climbed trees during full-moon night, saw the biggest sinkhole of South-America, observed red macaws making nests, visited Paraguay and Argentina, took a boat trip straight into a giant water fall in Iguaçu, saw the sunrise on top of one of the highest mountains in Rio de Janeiro and spotted many wild animals such as tucans, ostriches, armadillo's, big reptiles, ant eaters, eagles, monkeys and birds and

fishes in all sizes and colours you can imagine.

If we didn't go on a weekend-trip or vacation, there was always something to do in the city. Pool parties, beach festivals, barbecues... I never felt bored or lonely!

You can imagine that saying goodbye was the worst thing. This chill culture, happy people, nice weather, beautiful nature, friends... Before I left I thought: omg, two months is so long! But after this period I realised that this is way too short. I can recommend an experience like this to everyone, it is something you will remember for life! Don't be afraid of the unknown, just jump into the adventure. The only thing you will regret in the end is why you booked your flight back so early!



BRAZIL.



INDIA

KAAT VANDECASTEELE

Hi everyone, I did an internship of 1 month in Manipal University, department of Biomedical Engineering, India. I selected this internship because the topic, MRI Brain Tumor Segmentation, fitted in my educational path and looked interesting to me. When I was selected by IAESTE, I was really happy. But the approval by the Manipal University took long. My internship was only approved 1 month before departure, when my exams already started. It was quite stressful to arrange the visa in time. Luckily, everything was ready before departure and I passed all my exams. At that time, I really looked forward to start my travel, but I had no idea what to expect of India...

My arrival was actually quite difficult. After a long travel, I arrived in the morning in Mangalore (Brussels Abu Dhabi Mangalore). There was a problem with the suitcases. Almost half of the luggage was lost, including my suitcase. A lot of chaos was present in the airport and the procedure to complete the document was difficult. But after 3 hours, I managed to get ready and walked outside to look for the cab, who should bring me to Manipal. When I went outside, it was raining cats and dogs and the cab was already gone... I called IAESTE India to tell what happened. Because of the bad connection and the Indian accent, I couldn't understand them on the phone. In the meantime, I met an Indian man and his wife, who were



Manipal,
India

living in Manipal. They helped me with the communication and offered me a free ride to Manipal. I was actually really lucky I met them.

When I arrived in Manipal, the IAESTE organizers were very kind and helpful. They gave me some food (most of the shops were closed as it was a national holiday), clothes, soap and brought me to my flat. In the evening I met my German roommate and had dinner with the whole group of international students, which felt comfortable.

The next day, I met my professor, who introduced me to the project. I worked together in the postgraduate lab of Biomedical Engineering with the other Indian master students. These students

were really communicative and interested in my culture. Usually I had lunch with them. The food was actually really spicy, especially in the beginning, but after a while I start to tolerate. The professor was really flexible. I could meet him whenever I wanted and could choose when I wanted to work. I worked 5 days in a week from 9u00 (or a bit later sometimes) until 17u00, with coffee and lunch breaks. In the end I wrote a paper about my project to publish.

I was happy with our flat. It was cleaned every week (or sometimes twice a week) and we had a van and airconditioning (which was cooling down only a bit). Furthermore we could give our clothes to the laundry lady. Every evening we had to be in

our flat before 11 pm and sign. For me it was not a disadvantage because I was tired enough, but other flatmates found it annoying, because most of the interns, living in other flats, didn't have an hour to come back. The only thing I disliked was the mold growing on my clothes, shoes and other stuff. This was due to the high temperature and humidity, which is typical for the monsoon, rain season in India. Good that it was monsoon during my stay, otherwise it would be very hot!

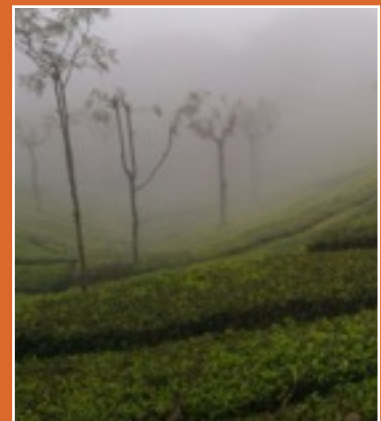
Every weekend I did a trip with other interns. I went to Karkala, Jog Waterfalls, Mysore, Hampi, the coast, Ooty and Masinagudi. Some

trips were organized by IAESTE, some we organized ourselves. These trips were wonderful, but also exhausting and tiring due to the night busses, which were sometimes not so comfortable. Nevertheless I enjoyed these trips. IAESTE also arranged to have dinner together and other events, for example karaoke evening. They really took care of the interns, always ready to help!

To summarize, I had a great experience in India and I have friends over all the world now. I am still in contact with people from Oman, France, German, Turkey and of course India!



INDIA



ECUADOR

LISA MICLOTTE

When I decided to apply for an internship with IAESTE, I had been thinking about an experience abroad for some time. I had explored other options from afar. Some friends with a previous IAESTE-experience, however, told me how easy the application procedure was with this organization and how amazing their foreign stay had been, so I decided to try as well.

My initial choice was to go Japan, but when I got nominated for this internship in Ecuador, I didn't hesitate either. The idea of the jungle and being in the middle of the world, with all its amazing flora and fauna intrigued me enormously. Moreover, my goal for this internship was to go far, as far out of Europe as possible and to experience a completely different culture. On top of that, I would get to learn Spanish, a language that was on my list of "things to learn". I have not regretted my decision.

When I first arrived in Quito on the 30th of June, the IAESTE people were there to bring me to my hostel and make sure I got settled. I immediately made some friends, with whom I spent my first weekend, exploring some of the city. After that, the group of IAESTE-friends only grew, resulting in a colorful bunch of people from Poland, Germany, Greece, China, Spain and Ecuador as well. It is with



Quito,
Ecuador

these people that I've spent my weekends in beautiful places all over Ecuador. Mindo, Banos, Cuenca, Tena, Puyo, Quilotoa and Chimborazo mountain are just a few of the places that have astounded me with their beauty.

The internship itself was a little disappointing, I must say. First of all, I had not known in advance it would take me 2 hours by bus to get to the plant where I worked. Secondly, the task I was assigned with was not very challenging nor time-consuming, so I feel like I've wasted a lot of time there. My colleagues, on the other hand, were very nice and friendly and they were most keen to teach me all Spanish vocabulary I wished to learn.

So overall, my stay in Quito, and Ecuador in general, proved to be a pleasant one. You have to get used to the laid-back, chilled-out culture for a week or 2, but once you can ignore that many Ecuadorians are never on time, you get to enjoy their ever-present friendliness and hospitality. On top of that, in a situation where help is REALLY needed – I got sick with a stomach infection a few days before returning home – they are SUPERhelpful. Thank you for that, Johana and Estefy.

I don't know if I'll ever return to Ecuador, because there's so much more of the world to see, but I can say that it is definitely a country

worth visiting. So, thank you, Ecuador, for welcoming me, and who knows, maybe I'll visit again. Goodbye for now...

ECUADOR



JAPAN

LISE D'HOOP

Konnichiwa, everybody! Going by myself to Tokyo for two months sounded both very challenging and amazing to me. The challenging part I already experienced when I landed in the airport and needed to find my way through the enormous subway stations in Tokyo to the hostel where I would stay before I started my internship. Thankfully Japanese people are really friendly and they gladly offered their help to this lost foreigner. When I finally found my hostel, it was time to start the amazing part of my adventure and to have my first sushi dinner. My CP arranged the whole night and even invited some other IAESTE students, so that I would immediately have some friends in Japan. The next days I got to know Tokyo a little bit more and discovered that it is not a cheap city and that the Japanese climate is not only way hotter than the Belgian one, but also extremely humid. Besides that Japan is also prone to earthquakes and typhoons. For me it was really impressive to experience this, but the Japanese people are used to it, so they aren't surprised anymore when it happens.

Two days later I moved to the accommodation closer to the Tokyo Metropolitan University where I was going to do my internship for 8 weeks. I worked in a mechanical engineering lab where they were examining everything about gait simulations and gait assistive devices. When I arrived my



Tokyo, Japan

professor at the university was so kind to pick me up at the nearest station and to bring me to my room. He also showed me the lab where I was going to work and even went together with me to the supermarket to buy me some food for the next days. And the kind gestures kept coming when the professor also borrowed me some kitchen material from his house and allowed me to lend the electrical bicycle from the lab. I felt home immediately. The next week I met the other professors and students in the lab. Some of them could speak English, but most of them claimed to be bad at it or were just too shy.

My work didn't start immediately, since I still had to wait for some software and other practical stuff. In

the mean time I got the interesting opportunity to listen to the research projects from the other students in the lab and I even got the chance to participate when a company came to test their new gait assistive device in the university. Everybody in the lab was very friendly and extremely interested in my culture and country. They helped me with any question about my project and they kept overloading me with tips on what to visit in Tokyo or in the neighbourhood.

My weekends were always filled with sightseeing trips. The people from IAESTE Japan organised a lot of events, not only in Tokyo but also in other cities, such as Yokohama, Kamakura,... . But when there was nothing organized we mostly met up with the foreign IAESTE students

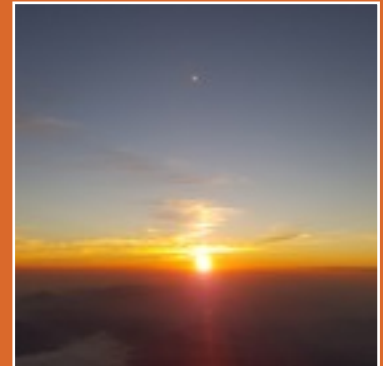
to visit some of Japans beauty. One of the highlights was climbing Mount Fuji, which is with his altitude of 3776 m the highest mountain in Japan. We started climbing in the evening at 8 pm and reached the top at 3 am. This way we could watch the sunrise at 5 am. It was probably the hardest climb I ever did, but after seeing the sunrise and the amazing views it was totally worth it.

During my two months in Tokyo I also got to enjoy the delicious Japanese kitchen: sushi, sashimi, ramen, tsukemen, curry,.. . During the dinners with my lab or with IAESTE, we really got to know each other and had really nice talks about our cultures and our studies or experiences. It was really special to experience this adventure with other people and somehow it felt

like we were one big family. Of course when you're having fun, time flies and so my internship ended way too fast. My lab partners gave me an amazing farewell party and some presents on top. I can say that going on the IAESTE internship was one of the best experiences in my life. I met people from all over the world and learned more about myself but also about other cultures. I now have a whole new list of countries to visit and to catch up with some amazing friends I made. So my advice: don't doubt any longer and just subscribe yourself for an amazing IAESTE experience.

Greets, Lise.

JAPAN



UNITED ARABIC EMIRATES

LLOYD VAN DEN ABBEELE

Salaam ‘alaykum! Welcome to the UAE! Kayf Haalak? These are the first words you will hear when your plane arrives at the Dubai International Airport. Already a good start for an internship in such a high-tech country, knowing that the Dubai Airport is world’s busiest airport. Keep smiling and especially keep walking, it will take you some minutes to get at the exit.

Let me shortly introduce myself before continuing my story: My name is Lloyd Van den Abbeele and I am a third year Bachelor student in Civil Engineering at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Although an industrial internship is not obligated in my Bachelor years, I felt ready to apply the theory learnt during classes into real-life, practical work experience. If you find yourself thinking the same as I did and looking to do an internship, you have two options. You can either apply for an internship at a company in Belgium or you can apply for an internship with IAESTE and enjoy an international experience you will never forget. I feel the second option was the best choice for me at this stage in my life.



Thomas Bell-Wright International Consultants is an engineering firm providing independent Testing, Inspection and Certification services primarily for the building construction sector. I worked in the department of Façade Consulting and Curtain Wall Testing. We often went to construction sites to test the facades on water and air leakages but also on failure of pressure. Another department worked in fire testing of premade facades. In Dubai they offer high value for safety of buildings so every commercial building has to be tested and get a certificate.

TBWIC is the biggest independent firm on this matter in the UAE, with clients who’ve built the Burj Khalifa,

Dubai International Airport and Dubai Metro Station. You get to work with the top management of the firm and you learn a lot about this sector and how tough it can be, but to be honest, it wasn’t that of a challenge and sometimes a countdown to the weekend.

Now a word about Dubai and its culture that dominates all around the Emirates.

All internships start in September, because of the simple reason that it’s too hot here during our summer months. I’ve arrived 31th of August and already the first two minutes in this country I was wondering how to survive in this heat. 40 degrees with humidity of 85% in the morning. Now I understand why

even the bus-waits are provided with AC.

All the trainees live together in the University City of Sharjah. You can take it literally because it's a university of 5km on 5km. Sharjah is one of the seven emirates and the emirate next to Dubai, although it has a completely different law. Sharjah is stricter, as it follows the strict rules of the Islam. So the university consists of two parts with a core in the middle. The women part where all the women's dorms are located, the core with all faculty buildings and the men's part, being an exact copy of the women's. And that's quite it, so no pubs or at least non that serve any form of alcohol. It's prohibited in many emirates and if you find some, know that you'll have to pay three times the average price we are used to pay in Belgium.

The weekends (on Friday and Saturday) were of course the most exiting thing during the week. We had a visit to Dubai new and old part. The new part consisted of huge skyscrapers in every form and color (really a dream to see it as a civil engineer), big malls with ice-skating and skiing parks right in it and even every western brand you can imagine has a store in those malls.

The old part on the other hand had none of these skyscrapers and there you can see how they lived 30 years ago, way before the glory days.

Abu Dhabi taught me that there are also more relaxed parts in the emirates where they care about family gatherings etc. without the fuss of Dubai. Believe it or not, it's the most expensive emirate of all, so living there is only for the richest.

Next to the grant cities, the UAE provides a nature you can't compare to any other you've probably seen. Huge desserts, where every year a lot of people get lost in but also a lot of mountains and oasis if you go to the Eastern part. I recommend you to rent a car (which are quite cheap) and go for a camping in the mountains of Hajar, beautiful views, next to the border of Oman, and unique during night with a BBQ or so.

At last you have to know that Dubai is not all about glitter and glamour. There is for sure poverty and the normal, average man has difficulties keeping up the fast growing Dubai style. Only professors in universities seem to have a chill live, since they get a house and children care (school payments etc.) for free when they begin working at a university.

This journey can only be described as an unforgettable experience, and Dubai truly fulfilled my expectations. I sincerely can recommend it to all people who are not afraid of the unknown and want to make a lot of new friends and want to enjoy a good training program.

UAE



BRAZIL.

LOÏC VERVAEKE

Hello reader! Whether or you are not already convinced to apply for an IAESTE internship this summer, allow me to share my story in the hopes that any remaining doubts will disappear as snow in a Brazilian winter's sun (which is conveniently hotter than a Belgian summer's sun). About three weeks after the disappointing nomination evening during which I did not get any of the internships I applied for, I got an email from the IAESTE team telling me that after all, I had been nominated to go to Botucatu, Brazil for 8 weeks. The person who got selected first cancelled their selection, and boy, did he or she miss out! After a couple months of bureaucratic hell including several trips to the Brazilian embassy in Brussels during the exams, I was on my way to the land of Samba, Carnival, cocktails, Rio beaches... oh and my internship of course.

After arriving in São Paulo and staying there for one night in a ridiculous location (but that's a story for another time) I sat on a 3,5 hour busdrive to the city of Botucatu. This 'small' city of about 130.000 inhabitants hosts 3 university campuses, meaning that the city was actually vibrant with students! As is the case with all local students, I lived there in a 'república', a shared house with 5 to 12 students and more often than not some dogs as well. My república housed 8 Brazilians and another IAESTE intern from Tunisia, who would become my local best friend and travel partner. I'd say about 1/3rd of the students spoke English okay-ish to good. This does



São Paulo,
Brazil

not mean you aren't able to have an amazing time or connect with all the others! I tried to actively learn Portuguese before and during my internship and I recommend everyone going to Brazil to do so, it will get you a long way.

The work itself was at UNESP, the state university of São Paulo. In the beautiful campus of agronomical sciences in Botucatu, I was part of a team that led research on optimizing yeast micro-organisms for the production of ethanol. As a computer scientist, my job was to develop an application to load, analyze and visualize biological networks. I choose to do this in Python due to all the available libraries for both GUI development as well as biological scientific computing. My supervising professor and PhD colleagues were like all the Brazilian people I met,

incredibly warm, relaxed and very keen on making sure I was happy. Work was most of the time from 9h to 12h and from 14h to 16-17h. Often I was able to use Friday to visit other parts of Brazil.

That brings me to the good stuff, the fun and travelling. During the week there is always something to do. Whether it be chilling at your own república having FIFA tournaments, small, medium or huge sized parties hosted by different república's, meeting up with other local or international students, or even trying out your local jiu-jitsu club, you will never ever be bored. Almost every weekend we either planned trips ourselves with people from all over, or we did a trip organized by IAESTE. This way I was able to visit Foz do Iguaçu,

São Paulo, Florianópolis, Caraguatatuba, Rio de Janeiro, etc. All amazing places offering life-changing experiences... Brazil is immensely huge, but it has a very well developed busnetwork with surprisingly comfortable buses for a very affordable price. Parrrtially due to the fact that Brazil is still in a recession, food, drinks and travel were cheap.

The brazilian people are incredibly warm and ever interested to talk and connect with others, if not especially with 'gringos'. Spending time and talking/discussing with people from all over the world is eye-

opening. This internship allowed me to grow professionally, but even more so as person in general, I only regret not staying longer! The people, the culture, the food, the vast nature,... Brazil is a perfect destination. If you still have doubts about having the best summer of your life, let me put it in the gentle words of our beloved Shiah Labeouf; **JUST DO IT.**

BRAZIL.



PALESTINE

LOUISE HUBA

“Stay out of trouble!” with this words I got my passport back and the permission to enter Israel and the West Bank... After two hours I passed one of the checkpoints and finally entered Palestine, the West Bank, Occupied Israel, .. A territory who’s name depends on who you are talking to. As we drove closer to Nablus, we were welcomed by a red sign explaining we would soon enter “area A”, concluding with “danger to your lives”. Every time we would approach Nablus, we would get confronted with these words, but we knew better.

Not much later, I arrived in the flat were the other female IAESTE trainees lived and I felt home immediately. As Palestine is a Muslim country there were two apartments for the IAESTE trainees, one for each gender. Nevertheless we often went together to a pub to smoke shisha, as drinking alcohol is totally haram (forbidden). Difficult as it is to find beer in Nablus, that’s how easy it is to find cheap and tasty food.

Palestinians are extremely friendly and helpful. It’s difficult to walk the streets without being invited for a coffee. Sometimes they offered so much help, it seemed untrustworthy. But soon I learned to just relax, sit back and let the Palestinians take care of you. If someone would have told me I would accept the offer of three young man to be bring me home at 10 pm in the middle of nowhere, I



Nablus,
Palestine

would never believe it. But I did, and ended up home safely and had three new friends.

Often my flatmates and I had difficulties to cope with the man/woman relation in Palestine. Woman are regarded as precious, vulnerable and they should be protected from the evil outside world. Unfortunately none of the female IAESTE trainees felt our behaved this way. Which sometimes led to misunderstanding and frustration.

For my internship I participated in a field study founded by the Belgian Development Agency and organized by An Najah University. Together with two other IAESTE trainees and fourteen Palestinian students I

participated in research about the reintegration of historical centers. The study focused on seven villages in the North of Nablus. Urban planners in Palestine face a bunch of difficulties. The West bank is, like Flanders, densely populated and this will get worse. Secondly they have to cope with the occupation. The West Bank is divided into 3 zones, which lay as a patchwork over the territory. In area C, which covers 60% of the land, Palestinians are not allowed to build. All of this made my internship extremely interesting.

As the study area was outside Nablus, I moved to one of the villages where I lived together with the Palestinian students. I spend

most of my time with “real locals”, an unique experience, which most exchange programs can’t offer. We lost many hours of sleep by talking about the conflict, religion and some pathetic attempts to learn Arabic. When we were girls among each other, hijabs disappeared, some started to dance like crazy and we talked about literally everything. These woman, supposed to be so vulnerable, know exactly what they want.

In the weekend and the weeks after my internship I travelled around with my fellow trainees. Traveling in the West Bank and Israel can be regarded as very comfortable, thanks to the short distances. Nevertheless, as we traveled by public transport, finding our way from one point to

another could be quite a puzzle. Service, as the shared taxis are called, are very limited on Friday in the west bank. On the other side of the border, no driving bus or train can be found on Sabbat, Saturday. Thereby we had to keep in mind that some checkpoints open only for 2 hours a day. But the effort was worth it, the west bank as well as Israel have a lot to offer.

Concluding with some wise advice; as I know you will go on an IAESTE internship this summer (nothing is holding you back) the only thing I can advise you is: Never think “6 weeks will be more than long enough”, take some time after you’re (undoubtable) splendid internship to travel. Every place is worth exploring.

PALESTINE



CZECH REPUBLIC

LUKAS STEYAERT

Dear readers

Because I have graduated and was planning to continue my studies I wanted to do something special during the holidays in between. An internship for technical experience seemed perfect for me, so I applied for an internship of six weeks in Liberec (Czech Republic). Five months later an IAESTE member picked me up at the airport in Prague and put me on a coach to Liberec. Once I arrived, a PhD student of the University drove me in his car (a Skoda of course) through the city to give me a first impression. During my stay I lived in the dorms of the university. I had a French roommate and shared the kitchen and bathroom with two Pakistani PhD students who taught me about their food, country and culture. On my first evening my roommate invited me to join a barbecue with his supervisors. I discovered for the first time the real Czech sausages. We ended in a club where a Belgian beer was cheaper than in a Belgian Pub but where the average age of the women on the dancefloor was 45 years old. This in combination with the epic dance moves of my French roommate where the ingredients for a first funny night.

Because I arrived during the weekend, I had time to meet the other IAESTE interns one by one. During my first week of work I was



Liberec,
Czech Republic

learning a new 3D-modelling program, more specifically Creo 3.0. Initially I applied for an internship concerning the design of parts for vehicles or engines but that theme changed and together with three other interns we needed to design a 3D-printer to print concrete houses. We had a lot of brainstorm sessions together and the fact that we were studying different specializations of mechanical engineering was very interesting. Together with the other interns we became a close group of friends from different countries (England, Scotland, Bosnia, Mexico, Poland, Switzerland, Cyprus and Japan). After a while, the group expanded with other people from the university. Nearly every night we did something together. We

watched a movie, organized barbecues, had a lot of pool nights and tasted the Czech beer in the local student pubs. Because the Czech people consume the highest amount of beer per head in the world, this last 'activity' must be included.

placement countries are joining which results again in a group of students from all over the world. The big advantage of an IAESTE internship is that you get the opportunity to travel in the country of the placement as in the nearby countries for descent prices. Taking a day of was no problem for the supervisors. They encouraged us even to visit a lot of places especially in Czech Republic.

One day, one of our supervisors came in to the office and asked: "Are there any questions about... trips?". This was a quite funny moment because at first we all started seriously thinking about problems in our project.

Besides the local trips I went on an IAESTE weekend in Austria. These weekends are organized by local committees and trainees from different placement countries are joining which results again in a group of students from all over the world. We swam in an ice cold lake, visited an open mine and as a highlight: climbed up a mountain (called Eisenerzer Reichenstein). The natural beauty and the nice atmosphere were unforgettable. Together with one other intern of Liberec we travelled 1100km in 3 days for this weekend but it was definitely worth it.

During the remaining weekends we organized trips by ourselves. Therefore most of the time the group of interns in Liberec split up and went to other destinations. Some other interns and myself went for example to Prague and Berlin. Tough weekends but wonderful experiences. It was always very nice to see everyone back during the week and to exchange our experiences.

I never thought that I would meet such a nice people and that we would become such a close group of friends. The combination of that and the awesome weekends made the six weeks a short amount of time. At the end we also delivered a design of the 3D printer which the supervisors were satisfied with. It was hard to say goodbye to everyone but I went back home with a satisfied feeling and a

CZECH REPUBLIC



INDIA

MAX BEAUCHEZ

Five days after I finished my thesis work in Spain, I was on a flight to Romania. Twelve days after that, I was on my way from Prague to India via Dubai. After 30 hours of flights, layovers, and a last flight that was delayed by several hours, I was relieved to see that two members of the Karunya LC were at the airport to pick me up.

The university campus they took me to was ideal for recovering from the rather intense travel schedule that went before it. The small campus of Karunya University is situated near the end of a narrow valley in the Western Ghat mountains, and is surrounded on three sides by mountains covered in lush forests where wild elephants roam (see the photo). The weather was hot and humid, but the breeze coming down from the mountains made it bearable most of the time. On the road that cut through the university settlement (Karunya Nagar, *nagar* meaning town in Tamil) were restaurants, shops, bakeries and banks.

I and the other trainees stayed in the university guest house in comfortable two-person rooms, equipped with an A/C unit and an en suite bathroom. A kitchen and laundry room were shared. The 15-odd other trainees were a diverse European group, hailing from Spain, Belarus, Poland, Austria, Ireland, Scotland, Czechia and Tunisia.

My placement was in the bio-informatics department, where I



would be working on network analysis of the gut microbiome of rheumatoid arthritis model mice. The work was interesting, the colleagues were very friendly and my supervisor was quite laid back and helpful when I needed him. The work attitude was quite relaxed, which was only fair, because the pay was pitiful – most of the wage we got went to paying for our room in the guesthouse, meaning I only got ₹3500 (€46) for 7 weeks of work.

Though things are cheap in India, this was not enough to live off. Food alone cost about ₹200 a day, though admittedly this could be done somewhat cheaper by cooking. I mostly ate at one of the many excellent restaurants in the university settlement, where they served south Indian and hamburgers and the like. Also, to my surprise, none of the food ever made me ill, so fortunately I never

had to resort to my stash of Imodium I brought.

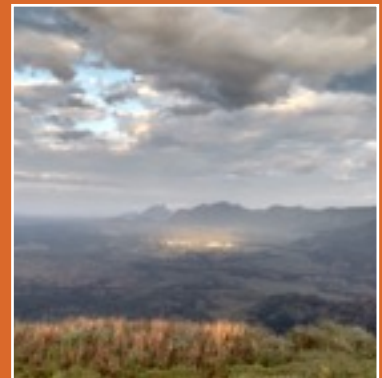
The nearest city was Coimbatore, a chaotic anthill of a city with 1.5 million inhabitants. There was one mall there with a big supermarket, where we would periodically go to get goods not available in the small shops near the university. On our weekends, we would take buses from the bus station here. Some trips were done with (nearly) all trainees, whereas others were done with smaller groups. I managed to go to Hampi (a large area strewn with the ruins of a mediaeval empire's capital city), Bangalore, Mysore, Pondicherry (a former French colony), Ooty (a mountain town) and Madurai. One weekend we also managed to go hiking in the mountains surrounding the university; though after this, we were apprehended after by the Tamil Nadu Forest Service and,

after verifying that we were not Maoist Naxalite rebels, we got away with it after a stern talking to.

The local committee also organised some events, the main one being the International Night. This night was an opportunity for the trainees to make traditional foods from their country (I made kruidnoten with fresh Indian spices) and show them to the Indian students. We also studied in a Bollywood dance and performed it on stage, which was a lot of fun.

All in all, I had a great time in India. It was fascinating to spend some time surrounded by such a dynamic and exuberant culture. At the same time, it was often exhausting and bewildering, and the remuneration was insufficient. But if you can afford it, I would recommend an internship at Karunya University to anyone.

INDIA



CROATIA

MICHAEL COENE

I am Michael, student in informatics engineering. Or as we call it in dutch: "Industrieel ingenieur Informatica". This year I went abroad for internships, one of them in Osijek, Croatia through IAESTE. I will tell my story here and how I have experienced this adventure.

Every adventure abroad is a unique experience, and I hope to give people interested in international experience some guidance. After applying for several computer science internships through IAESTE. I got selected for my first choice : an internship at the university of Osijek with the topic of computer vision. There was a small complication that showed up however, the university of Osijek closes in the middle of the summer. Since I did not want to skip courses or exams there was no way I could complete the full 6 weeks of my internship in one period. The solution was to split it up in 2 periods, allowing me to bridge their summer holidays. In the gap I did another internship at a company in the UK close to Cambridge. Since I did both I will focus on the difference between having an internship through IAESTE, and organizing one yourself.

In my case, confirmation of my internship through IAESTE was quicker than the confirmation of the company. This is probably an exception, but nonetheless it does go fast if you provide Annelies (our national IAESTE secretary) the necessary papers as soon as possible. Give it time, but if you don't hear anything for a couple of weeks, don't be afraid to send an



Osijek,
Croatia

email and ask if there is anything you can do, there usually isn't, but at least some more emails are being sent. Accommodation is also a major difference, through IAESTE placements most of the incoming countries will either assist you with finding accommodation, or find it for you. This was a major advantage, since I don't speak any croatian (by now I can say hello, thank you and goodbye). In most places people don't speak english, and having a local connection who will do everything to make your stay as easy as possible is a big asset.

IAESTE makes the experience way more social as well, in croatia I was placed in a home full of IAESTE and erasmus students. All trainees are in the same situation as you are, a new country and a new adventure. Those people are usually very keen on traveling, so if you want to see the country you are visiting (thrust

me, you do) then they are the ideal companions. Even in the UK, where my internship was not arranged through IAESTE, I joined the local IAESTE facebook groups, so I could participate in trips and events. For anyone going to the UK, wales and scotland are so damn beautiful, I would have spend all my weekends there if it wasn't for the huge train fares. Especially the Isle of Skye weekend is considered one of the most amazing experiences you can have. The only downside of this trip is that you have to be able to take 2 days of. If your internship is in scotland, and it's arranged through IAESTE, that part is usually not a problem.

Both my mentors in the UK and in Croatia where really really friendly, they are people who want an intern to come in, make your stay worthwhile, and care about you learning something.

Besides working and learning stuff, they usually understand that you haven't seen their country before, and that you would like to see it. Do not get me wrong, you are still there to work and learn. But don't be afraid to ask for a day off if events like this take place.

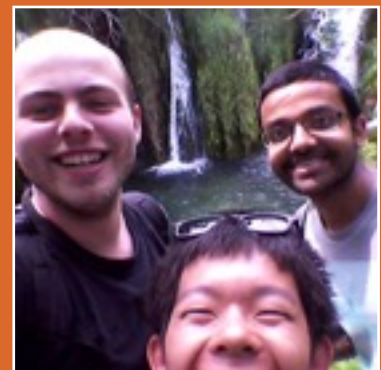
In Croatia I worked at a university, and in the UK I worked at a company. My experience is that I learned a lot in both. The professor I had at the university took the time to explain complicated subjects to me, and would solve problems with me if necessary. The difference with a company is there however. In the UK I would work in a quality tested environment, meaning that everything I produce in code, gets checked, double checked and reviewed. This means that you learn to quality check your code before you hand it over

to the test team. This is of course not the case at a university, in my case I experienced it as a bit more relaxed work. With IAESTE you can get internships at both universities and companies, I but I would recommend to not pay too much attention to that and mainly focus on the subject you are interested in.

I realise I have not talked a lot about my experience in Croatia itself, but all I can say is that the people from IAESTE there are awesome, and have made my adventure in Croatia one of the best experiences in my life.



CROATIA



CZECH REPUBLIC

NICHOLAS EVENEPOEL

Hi there or should I say dobrý den! (Now you already know all Czech words needed to survive an internship in Prague.) I had the pleasure to do a six weeks internship in this beautiful city, six weeks I'll never forget. I wanted to get some handsome experience while still enjoying my summer vacation. An international internship with IAESTE was the ideal option to achieve this.

Going by yourself to a foreign country for six weeks without knowing anyone is an exciting experience. When arriving, I was a little nervous. I got picked up at the airport by a Ghanese exchange student who was a member of IAESTE Prague. There was some confusion about when he had to pick me up and he didn't give me a lot of details about how I should find him at the airport, but at the end it went smoothly after all. He brought me to a huge old looking student dormitory at the edge of the city. I shared a flat with 3 local students. The flat was on the 8th floor and we got everything we needed including a balcony with a nice view. My roommates were very friendly and invited me immediately to have a beer and some typical Czech liquor, Becherovka, with them. During the first week someone from IAESTE Czech helped me with all practical details and I met a lot of other IAESTE students



Prague,
Czech Republic

from all over the world. From this moment on the memorable experiences followed one another. Prague is famous for his night life, which really didn't disappoint. IAESTE Prague also organized an activity every week like mini golf, paddling on the river, lasershooting, etc. ... This was a great opportunity to meet the new incoming students. I never got the chance to be bored and I made a lot of great memories I'll cherish forever. Next to the IAESTE activities, I also attended the IAESTE Prague Challenge. During a weekend IAESTE staff members and interns from all over Europe gathered in the city to have a weekend full of fun, music and drinks.

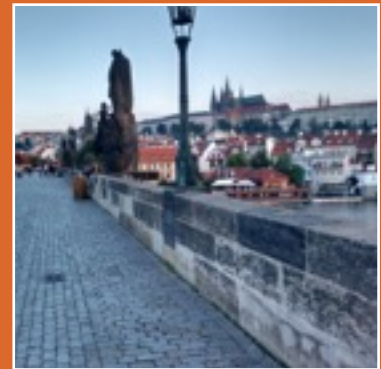
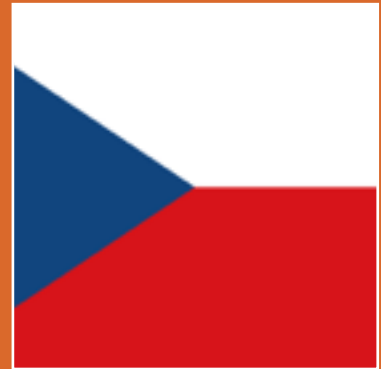
As a chemical engineering student, I did my traineeship at the University of Chemistry and Technology on the department of coal, oil and gas purification. My supervisor was a Belarussian professor, a really sweet man. He showed me around town, lent me some cookware and an internet cable and helped me with whatever I needed. The work was interesting. I could assist some PhD students in their projects and did some optimization at the newest biomass power plant of Czech Republic. the fact that a lot of people barely spoke any English complicated things though. This was a general expression I had all around Prague. The university was also completely at the other end of the cities than the dormitories, so it

took around 45 minutes to get to work. At the end of my internship the work load decreased, so I could get a lot of free days. These I could use to visit beautiful places in Prague, travel to cities like Dresden, Bratislava and Vienna, partying all day long, etc. ... I was also able to travel to some interesting places all over Czech Republic. The six weeks I was there were ideal to do all kind of activities as I barely had any rain at all, which was a big contrast from the weather in Belgium at that time.

Overall it was a great experience in which I met a lot of awesome people who I will definitely visit in the future, got some handsome

experience in my field and became more mature as a person. I had heard a lot of good things about Prague and it really didn't disappoint. Besides the most common touristic attractions like the Charles Bridge and Prague Castle, I discovered loads of other beautiful places like the Vyšehrad area and the overload of other parks with amazing views on the city. A city where you can get big pizza slices in every metro station for a little more than 1 euro, can't be a bad place to stay at! The biggest downside of this experience was probably having to say goodbye to all those wonderful people and going back to boring little Belgium.

CZECH REPUBLIC



BRAZIL

PAULINA MURRATH

Bom dia!! Tudo joia? Be prepared to greet like this when you come to the best region of Brazil called Minas Gerais. It's known for its cheese, coffee, pão de queijo (it's a bread with a cheesy structure inside...soooo delicious!), breathtaking nature and the friendliest people of Brazil (it's true!).

Doing an internship in Brazil felt to me like being in a sort of paradise: during the Belgian summer months, it's winter there and it's about 25-30C every day (except in the South of Brazil) and you see palm trees the whole time. The people here are so friendly that when you met someone new, you had the feeling you are friends forever.

But how was the internship itself? I was working on the extraction of DNA of the chloroplasts of passion fruits and palm trees. As a chemical engineer, my knowledge was 0 about it before coming and it wasn't a problem at all. I got lots of help and everybody was really supportive. Working here is really relaxing it will be you'll have lots of free time. Some weeks I worked for 8 hours a day, but then we had some weeks of only 10 hours a week in total. Also, if you want some days off because of a trip to go somewhere, this won't be any problem.

The IAESTE committee in Brazil is AMAZING too! In almost every big city of Brazil you will find hosts to stay at their place and they will show you around the city. This is how we did it in Rio and Belo

Viçosa,
Brazil

Horizonte. Also, whatever questions you might have, they will be ready to help you with any help. I think the committee part here in Brazil is what made the internship so special. They picked me up from the airport, organized my place to stay, helped me with documents and yeah..it couldn't be better.

I've met tons of people, both gringos (internationals) and locals and the experiences that I had are just impossible to forget. The highlights of the whole internship were the trip to Ouro Preto (now my favorite city in the world, see picture attached), Iguacu (where they have the waterfalls, bigger than Niagara!) and Vitoria (the IAESTE local committee is the best of Brazil there). As for the gringo group, we became a strong group of friends and we are planning to meet up together next year to do a Europe trip with a car. :D

I lived with 2 Brazilian girls and thankfully I learnt Portuguese before coming here. It was not a requirement but learning some Portuguese (Duolingo ;)) is definitely a good idea as not everyone speaks English. Living with locals made me really feel how it's like to be Brazilian, I had the same routine, went to events they went and ate the same meals as them. Basically... when in Brazil, do what Brazilians do ;)

The benefits of going to Viçosa are:
1. cheaper (100EUR/month of rent, lunch for 50 cents at student cafeteria)
2. It is between 4 of the most interesting capitals (Rio, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Vitoria) and the bus connections are really great so you can visit a new city every weekend.
3. You will not be the only person from IAESTE and you'll be able to travel in a nice group of people.
4. It's not a touristy city so

you will be between Brazilians and know how their real life is like. 5. The campus is incredible as you can see on the photo and the international office will help you with any help too.

What did I achieve here in 2 months? Well, I know more about DNA, passion fruits, palm trees, working together with Brazilians, the history and culture of Brazil. I've seen 9 cities in Brazil, made friends for life and broadened my mind. Also, some people believe I'm

Brazilian or Portuguese when I talk to them (mission complete! :D) and I can confidently say I dance forró (a typical dance from here).

If you are reading this and still deciding whether to go for an IAESTE internship, go for it! Wondering whether to go to Brazil? Yes, go for it! going to Viçosa? Yes! ;) Um abraço muito forte (a strong hug) and don't hesitate to contact me if you have more questions regarding anything, I'm always happy to help!

BRAZIL.



COLOMBIA

PELIJN DE WINTER

I am an electronic engineer and during my studies, I went twice on an Erasmus (once in Spain and once in Portugal). These 2 experiences where the reason why I wanted to perform another internship abroad after my studies. And IAESTE was offering just what I was looking for.

I still remember the reactions when I told people that I was going for a six-month internship to Colombia and after that a trip of three months through south America. All they could think off was drugs, danger and violence, or as people say the Pablo Escobar country. And I admit I also performed some research on google to get an idea about the country before I applied for the internship. But boy were they wrong.

After a trip of 24h (Brussels → Madrid → Bogota → Cali) I arrived in the airport of Cali. My school had arranged a driver to pick me up and 30min later I was in my hostel. The next morning I woke up and had my first breakfast in Colombia from that moment on things just didn't stop. In my first week I got to know the University and my supervisors, in the meantime, I was looking for a flat not too far from the school and in a safe neighbourhood. I visited the immigration services to take care of the last paperwork and I got started on my work in the school.

I worked at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Cali where I created a project to teach and motivate, the first year students of the electronic department, what is



Cali,
Colombia

investigating and how they can enhance their research skills. This interaction with the students and my supervisor were a huge boost for my Spanish (which was only basic when I arrived). The University was a private University and offered everything I needed. It had multiple cafeterias, a sports centre, common spaces to relax, a lake a small forest.

In my free time I started exploring Colombia, first my city Cali, which is de capital of salsa in Latin America (you just need to take classes as a foreigner, there is no other option). And after that some trips in Colombia, one of them was with the IAESTE community (which was based in Ibague), they were really great. The national meeting of IAESTE was a trip to the coffee region (Armenia and Ibague) where we got to know the process (and

the huge manual labour required) for making coffee, and the culture of typical families who work at the coffee plantations. We did some 'Rumba' and got to experience how friendly Colombians really are.

As time continued I started to adapt to the Colombian lifestyle: taking only cold showers (at 7am this takes some getting used to), being late all the time and blaming the traffic, not walking on the streets after 9pm (just take a taxi or Uber), everybody is an 'amigo' or 'hija' and life just was 'chévere', not using my phone while walking on the street, the fact that everything you eat has sugar in it (and lots of it), dance on every occasion of the day for any reason and especially during 'Rumba'. Explaining that I was not a 'gringo' (someone from the states) but an 'extranjero' happened on a

daily basis and explaining how to pronounce name always ended up with the conclusion that 'Pepe' was the best way to go.

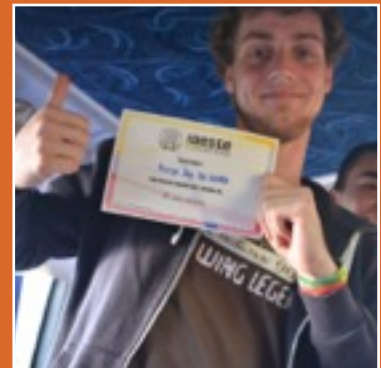
In the end, I learned that Colombia has so much to offer. It is the country of the coffee, an enormous bio-diversities, extremely friendly people, salsa, fresh fruit, the 'Rumba', the aguardiente and so much more. It is a country in change, growing towards peace (FRAC signed the peace agreement while I was making my internship). I can only add to the cliché of all IAESTE students, I

had the best time of my life and I would do it again in a heartbeat.

Making an abroad internship is so much more than just working it's building bridges between cultures, exploring different countries, meeting people from all over the world and getting to know yourself. It is something you will never forget and that will change you in a positive way. The only advice I can give you is, just do it you will never regret it.



COLOMBIA



CANADA

RIK HENDERICKX

When I was about to finish my IAESTE traineeship in Colombia, I already knew that I wanted to do another IAESTE internship some day. So, I checked for early IAESTE offers and I found one at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. I applied, and the rest is history. On April 27th 2016, I boarded my flight in Brussels airport, which was still recovering from the attacks at the time, and headed straight to Montreal. Once at the airport, I had to find my own way to the centre of the city, but that was pretty straightforward since there's only one bus that goes from the airport to downtown. I decided to stay in a hostel during the first week and look for a more permanent place to stay once I arrived. And I got pretty lucky: I found a room in a really nice apartment for a very decent price, which is very rare in Montreal; it's kind of an expensive city to live in. Plus, my place was only a 5 minute walk away from uni.

I shared the apartment with 2 roommates. One was from Morocco, the other one from Pakistan. The Pakistani studies at McGill University, and he's just one example of many international students that study at McGill. I remember that I saw a figure once stating that more than 55% of McGill's students are non-Canadian citizens. This made it even more interesting to meet new people there and just made my working environment pretty unique.

I worked at the AML, the **A**erospace and **M**echatronics **L**ab, which is dedicated to supporting research



Montreal, Canada

themes revolving around aeronautical and space systems, more specifically, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Space Robotic systems. It was my job as an electrical engineer to support ongoing projects of PhD students from an electrical engineering point of view, as most of these PhD students were mechanical engineers or control system engineers and thus lacked some knowledge in the electrical engineering domain. One of my assignments consisted in integrating a wind sensor on a drone and interfacing the sensor electronics with the onboard processor. They allowed me to fly the quadcopter a couple of times, which was a lot of fun.

Life in Montreal is pretty unique.

There's a very diverse mixture of different nationalities and cultures, especially downtown at the 'business' centre and close to McGill. People speak both French and English, although French is more prominent, certainly when you start moving away from the centre of the city. Furthermore, Montreal offers some cool locations, such as Rue Saint-Laurent / Saint-Denis where one can find cozy bars and restaurants and artsy shops and clubs, Mont Royal: a hill with a viewpoint from which you get a beautiful view over the city, Vieux-Montreal: the oldest part of the city which is more or less comparable to the centre of Ghent, and so on and so on. People told me that I picked the perfect period to be in Montreal, and they were right.

During the summer, the city is incredibly dynamic: there are festivals and activities spread all over Montreal, ranging from music shows to art exhibitions to food and beer festivals etc. It was literally impossible to attend all of them as so much was going on at the same time, and that went on during pretty much all of June and July.

But obviously, Canada is so much more than just Montreal. Together with a group of super cool Mexican people, whom I've met in Montreal, I have been traveling around for a bit to get a taste of Canada. I went to Ottawa for Canada Day (it's like the Fourth of July in the USA, people go pretty crazy over there), to Quebec city (where

people are pretending to speak French), and I visited a couple of national parks that showed me the true beauty of Canada's nature. I also went to New York City for a couple of days, visiting a friend that I met when I was doing my internship in Colombia.

As I am writing this report, my internship at McGill is already finished, unfortunately. But I traveled back to Colombia to reunite with my girlfriend, whom I met during my previous IAESTE internship. As you can see, an internship abroad can turn out to be life-changing experience. So there's really no excuse not to pack your things and to go on such an adventure yourself, there is no way you'll regret it. Peace!



CANADA



ECUADOR

SARA BESSEGHIR

When I first heard about IAESTE, I was immediately convinced it would be perfect for me. I did a bit of research and decided to apply. There were not a lot of offers available for bioscience engineers/chemistry (actually only two were in my field) but I got lucky because Ecuador was exactly what I had in mind. I knew there were a lot of candidates for this specific internship, but I was still very disappointed when I did not get selected. You can imagine I was very happy when a couple of weeks later I got the news that the selected person cancelled and I could go!

I went to Ecuador for seven weeks in July-August. I lived in Quito, the capital city. IAESTE Ecuador is not that big (really it's only three people) so Quito is the (only) place to be. We were more or less twelve trainees who worked in or around Quito, and we stayed together in the same hostel (which was more like a house we shared). Even though this meant I had to travel further to work, I liked this arrangement a lot. You could always find some company and there was always something going on. We were mainly Europeans (Polish, Spanish, Greek, German and of course Belgian) and there was one Chinese girl. Ecuador is located on the equator (of course) which means pretty much the same weather all year round, sunrise at around 6 a.m. and sunset at around 6 p.m. Since Quito is at an elevation of 2,850 meters above sea level, we escaped the tropical hot climate. It



Quito,
Ecuador

is a big city with over two million inhabitants, so there is a lot going on. For example Plaza Foch, which is the place to be to enjoy Quito's nightlife, was very near to our hostel. Oh, and during weekdays girls get free drinks in a lot of places there, so that was nice!

I worked at Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ), located in Cumbayá just outside the city of Quito. I had to take two buses, which took me about an hour, to get there. Two other trainees also worked there so I never got bored on the way to work. Unlike most other trainees, I only had to work six hours a day (one hour lunch included), so my days weren't that long and I still had some time to myself and the energy to do fun things at night. My internship had a

pretty vague description, and any attempt to get more information on my job came back unanswered. I arrived there without really knowing what I would be doing. It turned out I got full responsibility of a reactor that anaerobically digests fruit waste into biogas. My job was to keep the bacteria alive and keep track on how they were doing. It was intellectually not extremely challenging but since I wasn't really familiar with this subject I learned a lot.

Of course IAESTE also means traveling. Every weekend we went to explore Ecuador. They say Ecuador has four worlds within one country: Galapagos Islands, Andean Highlands, Amazon Jungle and Pacific Coast. There are all kinds of landscapes and climates within this

one little (for South-American standards at least) country, it is truly amazing! Because it is not that big we got to see so many things, which made me feel really lucky. We canopied in the cloud forest in Mindo, visited the middle of the world (equator), shopped in the market town of Otavalo, swam in the Pacific Ocean, enjoyed the hot springs in Papallacta, swung in this beautiful scenery in Baños, conquered giant cockroaches in the Amazon Jungle, ... We got up to 5,100 meters above sea level (higher than Mont Blanc!) on the Chimborazo volcano. We stayed in a jungle lodge in

the middle of nowhere without electricity or cellphone service. We saw wild monkeys, weird birds, snakes, pink dolphins, whales and so much more! Did I already mention Ecuador is an amazingly beautiful country?

I will finish by saying that if you are only slightly thinking about applying for an IAESTE internship: **JUST DO IT!** It is an amazing experience, you learn a lot about yourself and the only thing I regret is not applying for a longer period of time!

ECUADOR



JORDAN

SIMON ALLOSERIE

Going abroad, it's something we all like to do. But often it's difficult to organise, or not within our student budget. Lucky as we are, engineering students can avoid these two problems by going on an IAESTE internship. Almost your entire experience is organised. The only thing you have to do is buying your plane tickets!

From Brussels via Vienna, I arrived in Jordan's capital city Amman on Sunday evening. Nothing special about this, until you realise the weekend in Jordan is on Friday and Saturday, so I skipped already the first day of the week. First culture lesson of this trip! Not a big problem though. I was welcomed on my first day at work with an introduction to the company and its business. Together with IAESTE interns from Lebanon and Poland, I worked at the Engineering HQ of Umniah Mobile Company.

Our job at the Network Maintenance and Operation Center consisted mainly of the follow-up of the status of the Umniah network throughout Jordan. Whenever something went wrong, we received fault alarms. Then we joined a team to go to the site to clear the problems. Everything from thermodynamics, electrical and mechanical engineering came in useful someday. We went to lots of places throughout the country, which made work a tourist trip on its own!

It also became immediately clear that the work pace in Jordan is a lot more at ease in comparison with



Amman, Jordan

Belgium. There was plenty of time to chat with colleagues or to stop for a break. Unfortunately, that also meant we were not the only IAESTE interns in Jordan just sitting at our desk doing nothing for entire days...

I experienced everything you can expect from the Jordan hospitality. More often than not, co-workers invited us for an Arab coffee or some Bedouin tea. Some even brought us typical Jordanian food to taste, or took us home to have a delicious traditional dinner. I cannot count how many times I've heard 'Welcome to Jordan' and 'Salaam Aleikum', but the most important about it is they really mean it. Surrounded by countries in war and trouble, Jordanians are truly proud of their safe country.

There was never a moment during

my stay I felt unsafe. There is also police and military everywhere and they are very friendly and happy to help you. At least, when they understood English, which was unfortunately for most Jordanians mostly not the case. And let me be fair, my level of Arab only consisted of some very basic vocabulary, although I tried to learn something of this difficult language.

It does not take long to get accustomed to the local way of life. Eating falafel or flatbread with hummus daily, risking your life by crossing the 6-lane roads with your eyes closed (because otherwise you stand waiting forever), relying on public transport without time schedules or designated stops, pausing everything 5 times a day because of prayer time... It's easy to let go old habits once you are in a

a totally new environment.

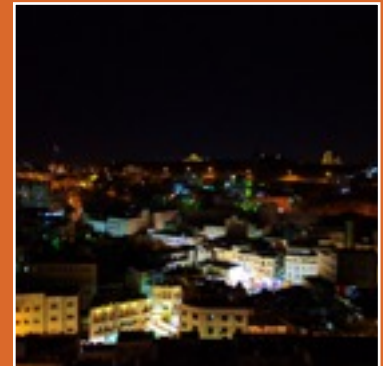
Of course IAESTE is not only about the internship. With 39 interns, we occupied almost the entire hotel where we stayed. During the week, we often went out to charming downtown Amman for a drink and a snack. It is surprising how quickly you get to know each other. Everyone is new and knows nobody, so the conversations start easily.

During the weekends we did trips throughout the entire country. Sometimes IAESTE organised trips, often we organised them ourselves. Jerash, Amman, Dead Sea, Wadi Mujib, Dana Reserve, Wadi Rum and Petra, you name it, we saw it!

Jordan is a splendid country full of beautiful nature and culture. It was sometimes very hard to get around due to very limited available transport, but you forget it once you walk between hanging gardens or rock-carved sculptures more than 7000 years old.

Depending on the content of your internship, it is worth or not to go abroad. But for the discovery of a country, its culture and its people, and for making friends from all over the world, I would definitely recommend you to take the leap and apply for an IAESTE internship. It is truly an experience you must have done during your student period!

JORDAN



COLOMBIA

WANNES DE GROOTE

Buenos dias!

During July and August 2016 I did an internship in Universidad de San Buenaventura Bogotá (USB). Bogotá is the capital of Colombia, located at a plateau 2600 m above sea level. In Europe, Bogotá and Colombia in general are notorious for their rich drug and narco traffic history. When I revealed to my friends and family that I would spend the summer in Bogotá, their reactions were not very encouraging. "You are crazy!", "You will get killed", "Ambitions for becoming a new drugs cartel boss?"... were the everyday jokes I had to withstand. Maybe the most important thing I learned during this internship is that you have to see things with your own eyes before one can judge.

My adventure started by arriving at the international airport of Bogotá at 4 a.m. Elizabeth, the owner of the apartment where I would stay, and another girl were waiting for me. The girl, Kasia, was a Polish student who was doing an IAESTE internship at the same University as me. She tried to use her basic level of Spanish to be a translator for me. I lived in an apartment with four other students. The rent included breakfast, lunch and dinner prepared by a woman who was living with us. Elizabeth owns multiple apartments so every day about 15 people would come to eat at our place. At the moment of my arrival, the holidays were still going one for two more weeks so Kasia and I had to wait a little longer before meeting our housemates.



Bogotá,
Colombia

During these two weeks I got an introduction at the university and started my internship. It took place in an office shared with the researchers and professors of USB where my task was to make a Matlab model of a humanoid robot. My supervisors did their utmost to let me feel at home. They showed me around the university and invited me for lunch to get to know each other better. During the weekends Kasia and I discovered the city. Living in this huge city of 8 million people was very different of what we were used to.

Two weeks after my arrival, the academic year started. From this moment on our apartment was filled every day by a lot of locals to eat their meal. The students were very sociable and immediately accepted me as one of their group.

For me this was the start of trying to immigrate in the Colombian culture. They took me with them to the local bars where we could order beer for only € 0.60 or a bottle of the spirit Aguardiente. This local spirit helped us to gain confidence to enthusiastically sing along with Colombian Classics such as "Amigos con Derechos" played by a Jukebox. The people living in the apartments of Elizabeth can be considered as one close family. Every evening we had a good time and chilled together. The weekends were for going out. The party culture in Colombia is very different than in the Belgian student cities. The Colombians do not need alcohol before starting their fluent dance moves guided by electronic beats. Instead, they go to a club and immediately take of with the different styles from merengue,

salsa, bachata, ... from the moment the music starts.

The warm culture supported by the people I met in Bogotá raised my interest to discover more of this beautiful country. During my internship I had the opportunity to see some of the beautiful parts of Colombia. I went to Medellín to learn more about the rich narco traffic history and enjoying the night life. In Cartagena and Santa Marta I could feel the vibes of the people of Caribbean Sea and support the local sunblock-vendors to protect me from the sun. In Parque Tayrona I saw the white beaches and clear blue water. The coconuts fell straight from the trees

to made this experience even more exotic.

This internship was definitely one of most beautiful experiences of my life. Colombia showed me that it is developing very fast and is a perfect destination for tourism. It is true that there still exist bad neighborhoods, but in my opinion this is common for all big cities in the world. I am glad I had this opportunity and while finishing this essay, I imagine myself being a grandfather and telling my grandkids for the umpteenth time the great stories about the magical summer of 2016.



COLOMBIA



PORTUGAL

WOLF BOGAERT

Wherever you go becomes a part of you somehow, so let's go on an adventure.

I arrived in Lisbon the 29th of July 2016. Here I would spend the next two months working as an intern at EDP Distribuicao.

From the start, my first week kicked it off quite... adventurously. My flight was delayed and I arrived two hours late at the airport. Luckily André (my correspondent from IAESTE Portugal) was waiting for me. I apologized for the delay and we went to look for a cab to take us to my flat.

'Apparently there has been a miscommunication. The flat where you would normally stay is booked by someone else this week, so you will be staying in another temporary room until next week before you will be able to move to your permanent address.'

We laughed. 'It's a very common thing here in the South. I'm sure this one isn't the last you'll encounter.'

The flat was a very cozy place and the people were friendly. However, the atmosphere was rather cold and asocial. Most of my flat mates worked long hours, didn't talk much and disappeared rather quickly into their rooms.

After a week had passed, it was time for me to move to my permanent address. I repacked my stuff and walked to my new home. What. A. World. Of. Difference. The walls were packed with pictures of parties, letters, notes, balloons and all kinds of colorful and funny funky stuff. This place was amazing. It felt so warm and comfortable the



Lisbon, Portugal

instant I walked in. 'This will be my new home', I thought. The people who lived there welcomed me very openly. I immediately felt a connection. They were very kind and friendly and invited me to have dinner with them that night. I thought it was a great idea, so I accepted their request. Sandro, a Portuguese flat mate was responsible for the cooking. His skills are just absolutely amazing. He cooked the first typical Portuguese dish I ever had and I can still remember the taste until this very day when I think about it. From that day on the flat felt like home, and my flat mates like family. We went out partying together, played all kinds of drinking games, had dinners, made lots of fun and shared stories from experiences we had all over the world. These people were lovely.

Of course I had to work as well. More specifically at EDP Distribuicao, one of the largest energy companies in the country. During my first week, I was introduced to Eng. Cravo Branco, one of the heads of the DPL Department where I was placed. 'Your supervisor is on holidays for the moment, he will be back somewhere next week.' August in Portugal is very calm, since most of the people go on holidays during this month. I didn't mind, since it gave me the opportunity to take it easy and get to know the company and it's coworkers during my first week.

When my supervisor José Martins came back from holiday I got the assignment to do a study on improving the

exploitation of the HV (High Voltage) and MV (Medium Voltage) grids in the south of Portugal (Algarve). This task was very interesting, and I learned a lot about the use of software tools to simulate the electrical network. During my internship there was another intern with whom I shared my experiences. We had a lot of fun together and we helped each other out when things got tough or complicated. My colleagues were all absolutely amazing people as well. They were always there to make a joke, to talk, or just to have fun. We even had a 'goodbye lunch' for all the interns!

I felt really good at the DPL Department and liked the work atmosphere a lot. To conclude my internship I did a condensed presentation on my work, which my supervisor was very enthusiastic about. He even invited me to have dinner with him the last weekend before I went back to Belgium! He was such a nice and interesting man. His stories about the history of Portugal were just like movies, but better.

During my stay I visited a lot of beautiful places, including Sintra, Belém, Costa Caparica, Cais Do Sodré and many other sights. Portugal is a very beautiful country and the city of Lisbon has so much to offer. I will definitely go back next summer to see my friends again and go out partying in Bairro Alto, one of the most amazing places I've been to have a couple of beers and lots of fun. This neighborhood is awesome!

The city is full of young people, students and internationals, and the Erasmus community is huge! Every day there is an event to attend and meet new people. I've been to some crazy parties!

This internship has been such an awesome, interesting, educational and inspiring experience. I shared so many beautiful and fun moments, made lots of friends and got to know the amazing city of Lisbon. I want to thank everybody who made this experience possible and I would - without a doubt - recommend it to everybody to apply for an IAESTE internship. It's been a true adventure.



PORTUGAL.



SLOVENIA

WOUTER DEDEURWAERDER

Hi there, reader! The fact you're reading this really excites me, because that means you're already at least a tiny bit interested in going on an IAESTE internship. And you should!

Being a member of IAESTE for a year, I got the vibe and went on an internship to Maribor, the second-largest city in Slovenia. There I worked at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the University of Maribor, in the Laboratory for Technical Measurement. They provide really accurate measurements (in the order of nanometers) and are the best of Slovenia and neighboring countries.

My task was to automate some measurements procedures. For doing this, I got the help of LabView, a well-known software I didn't know before but got the chance to learn and exercise during my internship.

But the working days really didn't feel as hard as those of my summer job at Belgium. For starters, I had really cool coworkers who wanted me to have a great time in their country more than working my ass off. For example, going for a beer in the middle of the day was not uncommon, or as they call that: a cold cappuccino. They also provided me with much info about which places to visit and more important, how to best get there. And if I needed a day off for seeing something, no problem, just go for it!



Maribor,
Slovenia

I could tell you a lot more about my work, but you're not interested in that. An international internship isn't just about the work, it's so much more. When it's weekend so you don't have to work and you're in a beautiful country, what do you do? Right, travel! Slovenia has so much to offer, and I tried to see the most of it: the beautiful lakes (Bled & Bohinj), the seaside (Portorož, Piran & Koper) and the many mountains right next to Maribor itself (of which Pohorje is the prime example).

But don't worry, you won't be bored after work, because you have an IAESTE committee where you go to. Even for the small committee LC Maribor is (which also means there's not that many trainees), they tried their best to arrange

everything for us and make us have a great time. The first day I was there for example, they showed me around the city and where the good places to eat were, also very important! On my first working day, they guided me to the different bank and tax offices, because Slovenia tends to make it really hard for you to get your money. Luckily they know what to do. That's one of the best things of an IAESTE internship, you don't have to arrange these things. I didn't have to search for a place to stay, a place in the student dorms was arranged.

Slovenia also has cool system for subsidized meals. Students get a number of student coupons which give a reduction of 2,70€ on food (which is already cheaper than in Belgium) you order in restaurants

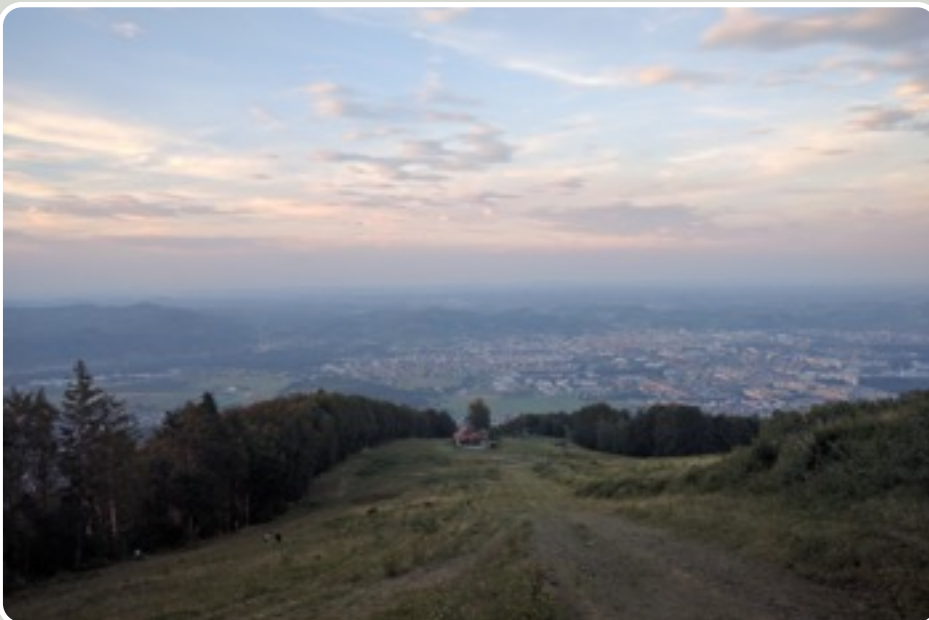
who participate. If there was a meal that cost less than this amount, well, you got it for free. Really amazing getting food prepared for you. I'm now writing this a week after my internship and I'm already really missing it.

It's not only the practical they take care of, but also the fun part. Since we were only two trainees at the time, there weren't many IAESTE activities organized, something that is different in other committees. They solved that by joining us for a drink/party regularly (Maribor is known for the oldest vine so you have to taste it as much as possible, right?).

For other activities we were able to join those of LC Ljubljana, which is a lot bigger than Maribor. One

that sticks out is the international dinner. The concept is simple: every trainee prepares some food/drinks typical for their country and so do the members of Slovenia. The result is a cultural mix of different food from all over the world and a hangover if you try all the alcoholic drinks!

To conclude, I can't describe with words how amazing this whole experience was for me, just apply for one and see for yourself! I encourage every single one of you to look at the internships available. I'm sure there'll be at least one that suits your boat and you'll have an excuse to flee Belgium for a couple weeks.



SLOVENIA



USA

WOUTER VANTORNOUT

After hearing stories about the IAESTE internships I was curious about the destinations they would offer during the summer of 2016. Once I went through the list of available internships somewhere in January, my mind was fixed on the internship in the USA. Without really knowing what I was getting myself into, I started writing a motivation letter. Since I dreamed of visiting the biggest cities in the world, finding motivation to head for New York City was no problem and I was able to convince IAESTE that I was the suitable candidate for this job. I have to admit, I only realised the impact of an IAESTE internship after my application was accepted.



Allentown,
USA

First of all, travelling to the USA - and especially working there - requires a lot of paperwork. After weeks of preparation, filling in questionnaires, sending mails back and forth and calling with the responsible people in the USA, I received my J1 visa two weeks before I had to leave Belgium. Applying for this J1 visa was a very educational experience in itself, and the adventure had not even started yet.

After contacting the president of Lightweight Design and Manufacturing I found out that they were very willing to help in finding lodging and providing me information about the travel to Allentown. After a 20-hour travel from Ghent to Allentown I was pleased to find out that they rented

a room for me at Muhlenberg College. Muhlenberg offered their rooms to interning students in Allentown, which made it easier to meet local people. You have to know that IAESTE USA is only a small organisation with few interning students in the USA what makes the experience different from other countries. Due to the fact that the USA is so outstretched, it is much more difficult to organise events in order to gather IAESTE interns. Personally, I did not see this as a disadvantage since this obliged me to meet the locals. This made the experience of working abroad more realistic. After my 'luxury' stay in Muhlenberg College, I even lived for two weeks in a house between artists, in a crappy neighbourhood of Allentown. In fact I realised that it does not matter where you live or with who you live, it is all about

opening up to new cultures and new people. Once you are able to do that, you will fit in everywhere, and your experience will get a boost. All the people I lived with were very helpful, independent of who they were, what they did or where they lived. They helped me through this awesome adventure and made sure that I enjoyed it as much as possible.

Choosing for an IAESTE internship was enriching on three different levels. First, you get the chance to work in a company with people who are far more experienced than you are. It gives you the opportunity to get out of your comfort zone that is shaped by the auditoria of the University of Ghent. For me, this meant that I could work with a company that had a lot of experience in designing tensile

membrane structures. This is a very small market in which only few firms are active what makes the knowledge about these structures very rare. You never know when this knowledge can be of use in your further career.

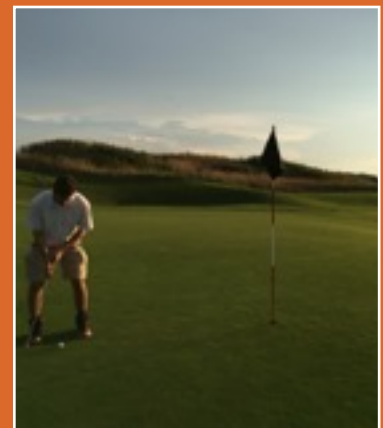
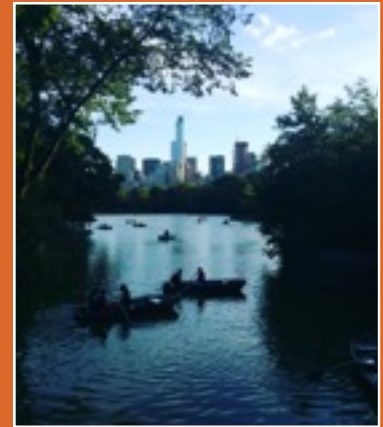
Second, working and living in a foreign country requires that you open up to new cultures and habits. I left Belgium with the idea that living in the USA was not that different from living in Belgium; I returned to Belgium with the idea that nothing in the USA is the same as in Belgium. People live in different ways, have different ideas and eat different things. At first this made me miss home. During the first week I was fixed on my 'Belgian' ideas and I thought I would never fit in. But the longer I was there, the more people I met, and the more I opened up to their culture. This made me realise that traveling is about opening up to other people and other cultures; only then you will be able to see the true nature of a country and its inhabitants. The more I opened up for this beautiful country, the more I started to feel the need of discovering it. All my weekends got filled up without any problem. I had the chance to travel to cities as Philadelphia, Washington DC and

New York City. Next to that, people at the company I worked for were very happy to take me hiking or rafting during the weekends, or invited me for happy hours after work.

Third, and maybe most important, traveling alone gives you the opportunity to think about your life. When you are in Belgium, in your comfort zone, everything seems normal and good as is. But getting out of this known environment gives you the chance to discover yourself. You realise what 'home' means. You have the chance to think about your career.

I could possibly write a book about this amazing experience. I could tell tons of stories about how much I learned as an engineer and as a person. I could tell you about my crazy weekends. I could tell you about the most beautiful sunset I've ever seen or about that one beer that was too much. But I think the main conclusion of my IAESTE experience is that everyone has to experience this adventure himself. I am sure you would love to hear all my stories; but creating these stories yourself, during your own IAESTE experience will be so much better.

USA



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