

Erfahrungsbericht über ein Auslandspraktikum

Bitte reichen Sie Ihren unterschriebenen Bericht in ausgedruckter spätestens vier Wochen nach Ende Ihres Aufenthalts (Zeitraum des Volontariats) im Akademischen Auslandsamt bei Frau Rüppell-Wee. Laden Sie außerdem den unterschriebenen Erfahrungsbericht ausschließlich als pdf Scan im alfresco Kursraum hoch.

Dieser Erfahrungsbericht soll zudem insbesondere zukünftigen Studierenden helfen, sich ein Bild von dem Auslandsstudium an Ihrer Gastschule zu machen. Behalten Sie dies beim Verfassen des Berichts im Hinterkopf. Wir würden uns deshalb sehr freuen, wenn Sie uns die Erlaubnis erteilen, diesen Bericht auch anderen Studierenden – wenn gewünscht auch gerne in anonymisierter Form – zugänglich machen zu dürfen.

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| Name, Vorname: | Seeger, Celine Victoria |
| Studiengang: | Bachelor Education Sekundarstufe I |
| Studienfächer: (bei Lehramtsstudierenden), ggf. Abschluss: | Englisch und Geschichte |
| Name der Praktikumseinrichtung: | Vocational Education Development Institute Vientiane |
| Praktikumszeitraum von - bis: | 10.02.2020 – 03.04.2020 |
| Erhaltene Förderung: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PROMOS <input type="checkbox"/> Reisekostenzuschuss AAA <input type="checkbox"/> Reisekostenzuschuss Freunde und Förderer <input type="checkbox"/> Reisekostenzuschuss aus Mitteln des Landes <input type="checkbox"/> Keine Förderung über die Hochschule <input type="checkbox"/> Andere, und zwar: Engel-für-Kinder Stiftung |

Note: You may adapt the spacing for points 1 – 8.

1) **Summary**

Summarize your stay abroad briefly. Did it meet your expectations? How would you assess your internship abroad?

The internship certainly met my expectations. Even though it was a short internship - due to Corona - I learned a lot and had a great time in Laos. Especially in comparison to an earlier internship of mine in Ireland, I felt that this internship was far better in terms of organization (everything is being documented, so one can easily retrieve information and teaching material), social environment (Lao colleagues are very friendly and welcoming, plus one is not alone in this new environment – with the team, one shares the whole experience together and can exchange constantly), teaching practice (I could work autonomously and had my own classes, which is great) and support (Professor Martin is very dedicated to the project, a great help and always available for questions and hints). All in all I really have to say that this project is very professional and very different compared to other traineeships. I can only recommend it!

2) **Preparations for the stay abroad**

Please include the following topics: process of application, contact with the training institution, private preparations, support with the preparations by the PH and the training institution.

After the call for applications had been published, I applied and was invited to an interview with Mr. Zeck and Professor Martin. The questions were tricky, but fortunately all went well and I got an invitation to become a member of team X soon after. I accepted and now went on to apply for financial aid, whereas I also got accepted by PROMOS. Next I booked my flights, got in touch with the directors of the VEDI and participated in three preparatory workshops. Here we also got to know former volunteers who had just returned from Laos. This also was a great opportunity to ask questions etc. Something else that is really great about this project, is the “Reader”, a document which is about 50 pages long and is being handed out to volunteers by Professor Martin. Reading this was the best preparation as absolutely everything important is documented here, ranging from food in Laos, medicine and the tasks itself to the post-project-phase. My last step was to register in the ELEFAND system und communicate with a volunteer of team IX, who was still in Laos and kindly managed our pick-up from the airport in Vientiane.

3) The Training Institution

Please describe the training institution shortly (type of institution, structure, employees, location, student body, if it is a school, etc.).

The Vocational Education Development Institute in Vientiane is a public college for vocational teachers. The eligible subjects at the VEDI range from cooking, accounting, tailoring, tourism and many other subjects to English. There are four English teachers at the VEDI and about 30 / 40 other colleagues, all of which are very nice and welcoming. The number of students participating in English classes at the VEDI encompasses around five English classes of 30 – 50 students. The age of the students vary so that the youngest students are in their twenties, the oldest around forty.

4) Course of the internship

Describe the course of the internship; What tasks did you have? What was the cooperation with the colleagues and other interns like? Did any particularly positive or negative situation arise?

I had three main tasks at the VEDI. The first one was to conduct English classes for VEDI teachers; three sessions a week, lasting 90 minutes. My class was the Pre-Intermediate teacher class, which is a small, yet very nice group; the teachers are eager to learn. My second task was to co-conduct two English lessons a week for a student beginner group, together with my fellow student. This was quite tricky, as most of the students had never had English lessons before, but using lots of visual material, I think we actually managed quite well. Although I was quite nervous about this, I think that it was a really important experience, that one might not encounter in Germany. Additionally, it's fascinating to see how easily you can communicate with people you neither know nor share a common language with after all! My third task was to tandem work with my tandem partner. Together we prepared and co-conducted two lessons a week for a student group (for about 2 hours, classes usually are longer in Laos).

Apart from my work at the VEDI I was also responsible for blog work (being the blog mistress), which meant that I had to proof-read blog posts of my fellow volunteers. Lastly, I also had to participate in information sessions for students interested in an internship.

5) Assessment of the internship

How has the experience been different from those made in Germany? How can this internship be viewed as more valuable compared to one done in Germany? What did you learn (methods, special knowledge, inter- or trans cultural experiences, personal development as a teacher, etc.)?

As I have already mentioned in 1), I often compared the internship to an earlier internship of mine, which took place in Ireland. As I kind of summarized everything there, I will just repeat and maybe complement my statement once more.

- a) The organization of the internship is very good. Professor Martin is always willing to support, hands out readers and is always available for questions. One knows what one has and is expected to do.
- b) In Ireland I was not treated as a student teacher but rather as a temp (I mainly prepared material, taught one to one, but taught classes only when a teacher was ill). In Laos I had my own classes and could be creative.
- c) The colleagues were really nice. In Ireland I found it difficult to somehow integrate, but in Laos this was no difficulty at all. Colleagues were super friendly from the start and it was just a fantastic time hanging out together with them. Work relationships and private relationships are not as separate as in other countries (e.g. Germany), but I really liked it and in my opinion, it made work much more fun.
- d) The culture is very different. However, I found it really interesting. In Ireland most aspects of life are the same as in Germany, but I think a stay in Laos helps much more to work on one's intercultural communicative competence and break with a Eurocentric point of view.
- e) The internship is challenging and the tasks are multisided. One has to fulfill tasks which one would not encounter in other internships. However, I think that this is best to really professionalize oneself. I would say that I developed in many aspects, not merely teaching alone.
- f) Being together in a team is just great. One can help each other, exchange ideas and also spend free time together. Therefore, one can also always converse with the fellow students about what one is experiencing – at home most people would not get it, as they have never been there. Still I felt like we had the perfect balance of encountering original Lao life and somehow remain connected to German culture (-> our team). This is simply because we did everything together with our Lao colleagues and friends.

6) Stay in the host country

Please include the following topics: personal experiences and impressions, life outside the training institution, special challenges or difficulties, unexpected or rather elusive experiences.

Lao is a beautiful country. Even though communication can be difficult sometimes, people are still friendly and helpful. I also have already mentioned the blurred line between work and private life, but again, I liked it the way it was. Of course aspects such as food, infrastructure and many other aspects of daily life are different, but I should think that if one is open and eager to experience the unknown, one should not be disappointed or experience a culture shock (at least I would say that I have not experienced one). On the contrary, our team really enjoyed it. We were also lucky enough to really make lots of experiences such as being guest at a Baci, a wedding, a Master party etc... People will make you feel at home in Laos.

7) Practical tips for future volunteers

The only tip I could give you is not to fly with Emirates or other airlines and invest the money in a flight with Thai airways instead. As our team had to fly home earlier because of COVID-19, I had to book a new flight, because there was neither an Emirates office in Laos, nor a telephone number, nor an e-mail address. Thai Airways on the other hand has lots of offices in Vientiane, so one is was more flexible. I know that phenomena like COVID-19 are very rare, but I think it's good to stay on the safer side. Otherwise, I would simply recommend an internship in the framework of "Teaching English in Laos". It's really worth it!

8) Miscellaneous

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Declaration of consent

☒ I hereby give consent that this report will be made accessible to other students of the PH Karlsruhe and the foundation Angels for Children for informational purposes with my name being

- ☐ anonymous
- ☐ visible only as a hard copy in the Academic Exchange Office of the PH Karlsruhe
- ☒ visible as a hard copy in the Academic Exchange Office of the PH Karlsruhe and as a pdf file on the project website www.thelaosexperience.com

Gaggenau, 8. Mai 2020 *Seeger*

Place, Date Signature