

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: | Weis, Meike |
| Studiengang: | Lehramt an Grundschulen – PO 2011 |
| Studienfächer: (bei Lehramtsstudierenden), ggf. Abschluss: | Mathematik, Englisch KB Deutsch, KB Musik & Kunst Staatsexamen |
| Name der Praktikumseinrichtung: | Ban Phang Heng Primary School Ban Sikeud Primary School |
| Praktikumszeitraum von - bis: | 17.09. – 22.12.2018 |
| Erhaltene Förderung: | <input 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 checked="" 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?

I've known about, and followed, the project for a long time before my internship, so I knew what to expect and the stay therefore matched with my expectations quite well! 😊
It's a good opportunity to foster many skills and competences, which encompass professional, personal and intercultural ones. The more open and flexible you personally are to go along and engage with your tasks and surroundings, the more great experiences, memories and professional progress you'll be able to make and take back home!

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.

Application: Via the International Office, interviews, feedback within a few days
After that everything went quite quickly: flights were booked, and dates were set for preparational workshops at the PH, access to alfresco and Wordpress

Preparations by the PH: Global English seminar, workshops by previous volunteers for Singlish & Camp songs, two additional meetings as a team – with project leaders and previous volunteers

Personal preparation: getting information about the country – vaccinations, safety, travelling, etc.
+ preparing for special task – read How to's and printed off the list of possible blog article topics

As everything is organised by the PH and/ or AfC for you, there was no urgent need to get in touch with the training institution beforehand.

3) The Training Institution

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

Ban Phang Heng Primary School: situated next to the secondary school, they are connected via the canteen. Everybody is open and welcoming – your main contact here is Ms Bounpheng Singhalath, who has been in the programme for long and whose English is really good. She can be your helping hand for whatever you need to organise - be it coordination with the Mopsy teachers or communication with the director, e.g. for Activity Time signatures – she's always happy to help!

Ban Sikeud Primary School: was the first of the AfC schools – nicely situated and great school climate. The team is very experienced, the teachers have known each other for years and all seem to get along very well. The students are familiar with the process of us volunteers coming, they are always happy to ask for your name and other things they are able to say in English.

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 many different tasks: I was responsible for teaching five Mopsy groups at Ban Phang Heng Primary School three times a week. Moreover, I worked with the three primary school English teachers Ms Mittaphone Sichampa, Ms Phovang Inthavong and Ms Bounpheng Singhalath. They all have been part of the programme for long, therefore lessons were reduced and we only did 1-2hrs of English per week. For this, I mostly continued with the *New Headway Intermediate* book, but also tried to include pronunciation work from time to time. For Bounpheng and Mit, I also observed - or after having prepared them together - team-taught lessons (Marleen Linder did this with Noy).

Together with Natalie, who worked with the secondary English teachers, and Malin, I held a workshop on communicative tasks and activities for the English classroom.

Other than that, I taught Ms Chanmany, Mr Thongsing & Ms Khamseng in English. Originally, they were assigned to do lesson preparation for their respective subjects with their tandems, but as communication about these more complex topics was still difficult, it was decided that the lessons should, for now, alternatively be invested into English lessons. For Activity Time, I offered Singlish at Ban Phang Heng Primary School twice a week; and in terms of special tasks, I was responsible for the project's blog.

The cooperation with both the Lao colleagues and the German interns was excellent. The Lao people whom I met and worked with are so kind-hearted, I don't know when and how problems should have arisen in the first place. I'm glad Team VII was a very harmonic one, too, we all helped each other when help was needed (no matter if it was with preparing lessons, blog articles or getting rid of geckos and spiders to name but a few examples 😊), cooked together and for each other, and genuinely enjoyed our free time on both weekends and holidays together!

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.)?

For me, personally, there were two major differences to previous internships in Germany: the level of individual responsibility and the opportunities for intercultural learning.

Starting with the former, I can say that throughout the internship there is a good balance between enough help for you to be able to master your tasks (e.g. the project leaders being there for urgent questions or problems, former weekly reports for orientation, ...) and enough freedom to work independently, as well as implementing your own ideas. I've held many individual lessons during former internships, but this was the first time that I planned units over a longer period of time. By monitoring what is going well, what needs improving, and thinking of better alternatives, your abilities of self-reflection and evaluation are fostered, which are both important in the later life of a teacher but also personally. This has paid off, and it was nice to see the progress of my tandems and pupils become visible 😊 I could also try out many songs, rhymes and games with which I now feel secure and which I could use in German classrooms without (much) further preparation.

For the intercultural aspect I can say that I've worked in intercultural settings before, which I could profit from in Laos when adapting to the Lao way of life and to differences between Germany and Laos. There's a long list of things I've learned by observing and/ or asking questions and having different cultural aspects explained. One thing I had underestimated a bit, was that communication really was challenging in everyday life sometimes, but I got used to communicating through gestures, facial expressions, or the help of Google Translate.

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.

It took me a few days to get fully accustomed and find my way around, but I didn't experience any major difficulties, such as culture shock or homesickness. I think, my experiences came quite close to my expectations, which helped. I could imagine it also helped, that us volunteers live in our "western bubble", the villa, where you automatically speak German with the rest of your team and have the opportunity to cook food that you know from home. In the beginning, it was super strange to be the one everybody's looking at or pointing towards on the street, often accompanied with a murmured "falang" (which means foreigner), but you get used to it.

7) Practical tips for future volunteers

I feel a lot has been said in previous reports by previous volunteers, so I'll try to keep this short:

Personally, I worried way too much about possible diseases, mosquitoes and vaccinations before going. For the latter, I'd say get those and the amount of which you're comfortable with. I didn't get the rabies injections and therefore, tried to stay away as best as I could from all animals which can pass it on to you. That turned out to be a lot easier than here, as animals don't usually come as close to you to cuddle or get food, etc. I also figured that just in case I get bitten, I'd head to the next hospital in probably Thailand, anyway, as even with the vaccinations you need to get another shot. Mosquitoes were no problem for me either – however, that differed from person to person, so that again, is very individual. For mosquito spray, I'd recommend buying it in Laos – it's not only cheaper but also has a nicer scent.

For your while-phase, I can only recommend investing a day or two in the beginning to check the material that there is in the villa and the didactics room. You save yourself a lot of time if you use the available resources rather than preparing new material for every lesson.

Even though the surrounding countries are more popular and known for travelling, our team spent all holidays in Laos (firstly, because it's either expensive or time-consuming to reach the destination of your choice; and secondly, because there were many places within Laos that we wanted to see). We didn't regret that in the slightest; travelling is cheap and (mostly) easy, and we managed to visit all places that we wanted to go to. We spent more time in Luang Prabang, Vang Vieng and the south of Laos (Pakse, Bolaven Plateau and the 4000 island region); and more locally - also suitable for day trips - we explored Nam Ngum, the Buddha Park and went to see the elephants. Loved all of it!

8) Miscellaneous

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(If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me.
Other than that – enjoy your time in Laos!)

You are welcome to hand in selected pictures from your stay via Email. Future volunteers can access them along with your final report.

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

Weingarten, 1.02.2019

Place, Date



Signature