

## 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.

<b>Name, Vorname:</b>	Faix, Pauline
<b>Studiengang:</b>	Bachelor of Education Primarstufe (PO 2015)
<b>Studienfächer: (bei Lehramtsstudierenden), ggf. Abschluss:</b>	Mathematik, Kunst, Grundbildung Deutsch
<b>Name der Praktikumseinrichtung:</b>	Teaching English in Laos Ban Phang Heng Lower Secondary School
<b>Praktikumszeitraum von - bis:</b>	17.09.2018 – 13.03. 2019
<b>Erhaltene Förderung:</b>	<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?

My past six months in Laos have been amazing! I really enjoyed my stay although there have been ups and downs, but I guess that is normal if one volunteers abroad.

The team I worked with was great: The Lao teachers as well as my other team members from Germany. The working and living atmosphere at the villa were a great mix between supporting each other and exchanging material and ideas for lesson preparation and caring about the other team members – I always felt supported, cared and accepted – strangers became family pretty fast 😊

Working with the Lao teachers has been quite challenging at some points, especially in the beginning, but one gets used to the new environment quite fast.

I took a lot from this project back home and I think everyone of us could definitely profit from their work. As I stayed the longest and even worked with the new team for three weeks, it was very sad, when the time came and all the girls from my team went back to Germany. At the same time, I did really enjoy the time spent in Laos and was grateful that my time to leave was not yet to come.

## 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.

I applied very last minute with the background that it is not sure to get a place for this project as I was only just in the second semester at that time and do not study English. That is why I was even happier when I got the acceptance.

To prepare for an internship abroad means to organize a lot. Firstly, I read about the project itself on the Blog and tried to get familiar with my future work and environment. Secondly, I had to organize things like health insurance for your stay abroad, getting the needed injections, doing the last doctor check-ups etc.

We met twice as a whole team before the actual internship, where Prof. Dr. Martin and Johannes Zeck as well as other volunteers from previous teams attended.

### 3) The Training Institution

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

I worked mainly at Ban Phang Heng Secondary School but also partly at the two Primary Schools Ban Sikeud and Ban Phang Heng. The three schools are situated in a little village to the north of the capital Vientiane not far away, only 5 to 10 minutes by bicycle, from the villa where we lived. The schools offer education for around 1600 children with 62 teachers. Most of the teachers only speak very little English except some who teach English or have been in the program for quite some time.

A regular school day means having lessons from 8.00 until 14.45, including a 1,5h lunch break. In the afternoon the pupils get the chance to attend different clubs that are offered by Lao teachers and German volunteers.

Lao people are very lovely and always welcoming. The pupils are really excited if one comes to observe a lesson or gets ready for activity time. While working with the teachers, there is always a lot of fun included and they do really like to catch up with you during their break!

### 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 have mainly been at the Secondary School where I worked with my three tandem teachers (Mathematics and Computer), whom I taught English. Besides this, I offered Maths club and Singlish with another volunteer as well as English Games on my own. During our stay we were supposed to hold one workshop for the teachers, which I did with another volunteer about a mathematical related topic.

As a great job variation, I started working with the Mopsies for some little hours per week together with another intern at Sikeud Primary School. One of our team members left earlier than the rest of us, so I took her Mopsies at Phang Heng Primary school over, too.

Every morning we got to school by bike, which always cost us quite some effort as the bikes were in a very bad shape and the road is laced with thousands of potholes.

It has been a pleasant working atmosphere, especially with the other team members. Besides daily Preparation and follow up work, as well as the additional work such as writing weekly report or Blog posts, there have sometimes also been evenings to spend with the girls where we consciously took some free time and tried to take a little break off from work.

Some of us volunteers from Germany have been more experienced as they graduated from university already, which was a great chance for me to learn some new skills and get supported by them if I did not know how to deal with different situations. As I neither study 'Europalehramt' nor English, I did not have much didactical English background wherefor it was great to know that the other volunteers are always open for questions and support.

I personally really enjoyed the time that I spent with the lao teachers as they are such lovely and so welcoming people and they always put a smile on one's face. They were very happy and grateful when one spent the time during the break at school with them.



## 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.)?

The internship has been different in many ways.

Firstly, I guess one cannot really compare the German and Lao educational system as it is not rudimentary the same. There are different aspects in the local school system which reflect the communist country. Monday mornings, for example, the whole school gathers for hissing the flag followed by taking it down on Friday afternoons. What really shocked me, especially when I have seen it for the first time, was that the teachers can hit their pupils. I guess it is not too hard as they – both teacher and pupil – are mostly laughing in the end but for me it was something I have never seen before.

Secondly, the teachers do not have the didactical understanding as we know it from Germany. One can very rarely see group work or methods which are used during a lesson. Most of the time, the teacher presents the topic as frontal teaching.

Thirdly, the classes are often as big as 52 pupils which is unimaginable for us Germans. This is Lao standard and is very hard to change as there are too many children for not enough teachers and classrooms. I was able to learn a lot from those teachers who had their very big class under control and tried to make the best out of the situation.

Fourthly, it is the case that on top of the fact that the class sizes are mostly too big, there are not enough material that one can use to create an interactive and fun lesson.

I learned to work with this challenging situation and developed some methods myself how to try to 'solve' this. For me it was a great chance to dive into the life of a teacher for a longer period as this only was my second internship during my studies (after the OEP).

## 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.

We lived in a little village outside of Vientiane. The daily life here is pretty lively, lots of people are out on the streets to buy food on the local market and especially in the Morning, during lunch time and in the afternoon when the 2.500 Trio factory employees are coming, having lunch and leaving work, it is really busy and the 5-10 minute bike ride would quickly take longer than 15 minutes. Therefor we always tried to avoid going to the market during these times of the day.

During the week there was not much to do as there is only one Karaoke-Bar and not much else really. Therefor we usually went to Vientiane on a Saturday to enjoy a brownie at our favourite café or just wander around in town. It was always great to take a little break after a busy week where we do not think about work the whole time.

We had two housemaids which was a great help and not Lao standard at all. We were very grateful to have the luxury of them taking lots of work over such like making our laundry, doing the washing up and cleaning the villa daily!

At the villa itself we have had lots of little roommates such as cockroaches, geckos and ants. Although I got used to them very soon and even missed the cockroach when she was not in my bathroom, it is for sure one thing that I do not miss being back in Germany.

We also used our days off to do little trips to places like the Bolaven Plateau, 4.000 Islands, Vang Vieng or Luang Prabang. Do use this amazing opportunity to visit those lovely places!

## 7) Practical tips for future volunteers

Do not take too many clothes with you, as there is always the possibility to wash and the clothing in Laos is very cheap to buy.

Take shoes with you which are old or can get dirty. The road is very dirty, and the dust is everywhere, so do keep in mind that you probably do not want to take them back to Germany.

Take enough medicaments for your personal needs with you, especially stomach ache, head ache and colds. You cannot really rely on Lao medical care but there are simple tablets like paracetamol etc.

Do use the days off to travel to different places and explore the Lao beauty.

## 8) Miscellaneous

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](http://www.thelaosexperience.com)

Karlsruhe, 17-04-2019  
Place, Date

  
Signature