

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.

Name, Vorname:	Wecker, Vanessa
Studiengang:	Bachelor of Education (Sekundarstufe), PO 2018
Studienfächer: (bei Lehramtsstudierenden), ggf. Abschluss:	Englisch; Chemie
Name der Praktikumseinrichtung:	Teaching English in Laos Angels for Children – Lower Secondary School Ban Phang Heng BHS Corrugated – Lao – German Technical College
Praktikumszeitraum von - bis:	Lower Secondary School Ban Phang Heng: 19.02.2019 – 12.04.2019 Lao – German Technical College: 15.04.2019 – 5.07.2019
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*
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1) Summary

Angels for Children and BHS Corrugated have made this semester abroad an unforgettable experience! I am so glad that I got the chance to spend my time abroad in Lao PDR at the Lower Secondary School and the LGTC. I am so thankful for the experiences and friends I have made, and all the people I met along my journey to and in Laos!

I have never been to Asia before and when I found out about the project, at an information event at the PH Karlsruhe, throughout previous volunteers, I just had to apply. Sometimes, especially in the beginning, I struggled a bit with adapting due to Laos' unique culture, which of course I knew, was normal. Lao people are utterly friendly and helpful, which made adjusting to these new circumstances a lot easier. Not only that, but also being aware that there is always someone you can talk to, in example previous volunteers, Madame, Bouangeun, the teachers at school, Prof. Dr. Martin, and Johannes. After successfully adapting, I was able to fully enjoy my stay abroad, Laos, and working for the project as well.

2) Preparations for the stay abroad

I heard about the project for the first time at an information event at the PH Karlsruhe from previous volunteers. At that moment, I was still a third semester and was planning on going to go abroad in my fifth semester. I found out that the project offered some "Restplätze" and I just had to apply. I was very happy about getting accepted and the preparations begun. I made sure that I read some more about the project on its blog, www.thelaosexperience.com. I also needed to take care of a health insurance and I have consulted my doctor on which vaccinations to get etc. I felt very supported and prepared for my stay abroad in our previous team meetings. It helped me to get to know my fellow teammates and the head of the project: Mrs. Prof. Dr. Martin and Johannes Zeck. In these meetings, usually on a Thursday afternoon, we received more information on the project, such as our work there. Also, former volunteers had been invited to these meetings to answer questions that might have come up during our preparation process. It was also nice to be able to talk to a person that has already been there, so you might get another perspective on what to expect during your stay abroad. The new volunteers were also provided with a reader, which was very handy and helped not only for preparation but also

during my stay in Laos. The reader includes general information on Laos, such as Lao people or Lao traditions, and of course more specific information on the project, e.g. the teachers at the schools, the different tasks, such as special tasks.

3) The Training Institution

Lower Secondary Ban Phang Heng:

The Lower Secondary School is a two-story building, with 15 classrooms. School ground also includes a gym, a Science Laboratory, a teacher's room, such as a teacher's kitchen to enjoy lunch. Often, lunch is also eaten at the cafeteria, connecting Ban Phang Heng Lower Secondary School and Primary School, right next to the teacher's room.

Around 700 students are currently enrolled at Lower Secondary School. Lessons take place Mondays through Fridays from 8:00am to 2:45pm, including a 1 ½ hour lunch break. The students will stay at school until 4:00pm and have the opportunity to join so called Activity Times (3:15 – 4:00pm), offered by Lao teachers and German volunteers. To get to Lower Secondary School Ban Phang Heng, it will only take one 10 minutes, from the Villa (where the volunteers live), by bike.

Lao – German Technical College:

My next training institution, after Pi Mai Lao (Lao New Year) in April, was the Lao – German Technical College in Vientiane, capital of Laos. The bungalow, where we would live from now on, was right next to the LGTC. The LGTC is divided into six main sections: Automotive, metal machinery, electro-electronics, welding-plumbing, heavy equipment and agro-machinery. Around 100 BHS - students (between the age of 16 and 26) receive different vocational training, usually from 8:00 am – 4:00pm, including practical and theoretical training. The volunteers offer so called BHS evening classes from 6:00 – 7:00pm (Mondays through Thursdays). These evening classes are split into 3 groups: Beginner, Pre – Intermediate, and Intermediate.

4) Course of the internship

Lower Secondary School Ban Phang Heng:

At the Lower Secondary School, my special tasks included: Media Manager, the Science Lab, and writing the Minutes of our team meetings. As Media Manager I had to make sure that all newly created files ended up on the hard drive. Since the internet is not always reliable in Laos, this hard drive comes quite in handy. The Science Lab was my special task with my teammate Rebekka Vogt together. Each Monday and Thursday afternoon from 3:15 – 4:00pm, we offered the Activity Time “Science Lab”. We prepared the experiments an hour before Activity Time started, so that the students could try out science experiments themselves. In the beginning, it could be quite hard to figure out what kind of experiments work because a Science Lab in Laos differs from a Science Lab in Germany. Also, if an experiment did not work right away or at all, I would feel bad sometimes for the students. But the more often we offered the Activity Time, the easier it got and the more confident I felt. Writing the Minutes of our team meetings was sometimes time consuming, because of my lack of experience. After getting the hang of it, this was also a totally manageable task.

I also worked with my tandem partner(s): Mr. Sackbong Boulapan, Ms. Nalee Vongkhamsay, and Mr. Noy Sibounheuang. I observed and prepared lessons with Sackbong Boulapan and taught him English. With Ms. Nalee Vongkhamsay and Mr. Noy Sibounheuang, I solely taught English.

Lao – German Technical College:

At the LGTC my special tasks were: Media Manager and writing Minutes (see above). In the afternoon, I taught a Teachers' class Technical English. Mostly, 4 – 5 teachers participated on a regular basis. Their English is at a fairly high level, which makes it even more fun and exciting to work with them. In the evening, volunteers teach so called BHS – evening classes. These classes are split in 3 different levels: Beginner, Pre – Intermediate, and Intermediate. I was responsible for the Intermediate students. Group I was taught on Mondays and Wednesdays, whilst group II participated on Tuesdays and Thursdays (from 6:00 – 7:00pm). When I first got the College, I had to adjust my teaching. Compared to teaching at Lower Secondary School Ban Phang Heng, the English levels vary, e.g. their English is more advanced, hence you can work with the teachers and students at the LGTC differently. Also, I had never taught Technical English before. After a week or two, I slowly but surely started to get the hang of it and it became clearer and easier as well, to not just prepare lessons, but also to teach them.

5) Assessment of the internship

In general, it is to say that my experience in Laos has been different from those I could have made while doing an internship in Germany. First of all, the school systems are different. I.e. this means that the classes are a lot bigger (about 50 students per class). Therefore, the teachers' teaching style, e.g. methodology, didactics, and provided material, is different compared to a German one. Each Monday morning, the students gather for hissing the flag followed by taking it down on Friday afternoons. Also, cultural aspects influenced experiences made during this incredible internship, in example, in Laos most traditions and beliefs are Buddhistic. Lao people are always friendly and welcoming. I made new friends and met many people along this beautiful journey. Sometimes, the language barrier was tough on me but it in the end it always worked out 😊. I am so thankful that the PH Karlsruhe, Angels for Children, and BHS offered me this great opportunity to make such unforgettable memories and to get more into teaching. This has been my second teaching internship (the OEP was my first one) and I feel like I have learned a lot during this stay abroad because I had a longer period of time to really focus on the class, the people in it and how I can get to my students and make the lessons as joyful and explanatory as possible. The longer I stayed here in Laos, I realized that an internship in Germany probably would not have provided the same outcome as this one did. Simply because I feel like I gained more Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which is in my opinion an indispensable trait as a teacher nowadays who is supposed to teach in a multicultural classroom.

6) Stay in the host country

Sometimes, especially in the beginning, some situations might be quite overwhelming, due to a new culture one is trying to live in, surrounded by a new language. Often, one might find oneself in situations that one is not used to from Germany, e.g. cockroaches or lizards in the house, such as a power cut after a storm but one gets used to it. In the beginning, I sometimes felt like I was not capable of fulfilling my tasks because it took me sometime to get used to living and working here. After a few weeks, these thoughts completely vanished because I felt like I started to understand how things work over here and i.e. how the teachers or my students learn effectively etc. In addition to that, I never felt alone because I always had people around me – my team colleagues, Madame Engel/ Bouangeun (at Lower Secondary School Ban Phang Heng), Mouk, such as Franz (at the LGTC), and basically one's tandem partners. Also, Johannes Zeck and Mrs. Prof. Dr. Martin are always there to help as well 😊. This certainty really helped me to adapt quickly. All in all, this internship helped me to value things more and to take things not for granted. At the Villa (Lower Secondary School) and at the Bungalow (LGTC), we had cleaning ladies, which is not Lao standard as well. On the weekends, I mostly spent my time exploring Vientiane with the other volunteers. For example, we tried out new restaurants, took our bikes out for a tour around/ in Vientiane, took walks at the promenade of the Mekong. Karaoke is always fun with Lao teachers and a nice opportunity to spend time with your tandem partners outside of school. I also

enjoyed reading out in the sun, either in the garden at the Villa or at a local pool in Vientiane.

7) Practical tips for future volunteers

As a practical tip, I would not recommend taking white clothes with you. They will get very dusty from time to time and even if you put them in the washer, they might not get cleaned/ white again. I follow a vegetarian diet and I would recommend bringing some vegetable spreads. Cheese can be found in western mini markets – they are very expensive though (one package of cheese costs about 4 – 6€). At these western markets, you can also find candy, such as gummy bears (mostly non vegetarian, so I would recommend bringing these as well) or chocolate. In most cases, candy is also very expensive. Also, bringing plastic containers where you can store in your food, that does not go in the fridge, might be helpful as well. Otherwise, ants will be all over your food.

8) Miscellaneous

This internship was one of the greatest experiences so far in my life. I highly recommend this to anyone who loves to try something new and completely different. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. 😊

mail: vanessa_wecker@web.de

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

Vientiane, 7.07.19
Place, Date

R. Weh
Signature