

AgAbroad Newsletter

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INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS IN AGRICULTURE

A FIRST FOR EVERYTHING

KYLE MCCARTHY

Study abroad is all about what you make of it. It will make you uncomfortable, stretch you. No matter how many trips you go on or how prepared you think you are, there is always a moment of panic when the plane lands somewhere new. "I just woke up, I'm in a new country without a map. No one is here to meet me. Where do I go now? I have XX days to fill before I have to be at such-and-such airport to fly home. I hope someone speaks English..."

When I left for Ireland, I had never been on a plane. It was my first time flying, first time flying alone, first time out of the country, and no one was there to meet me on the other side. It was exhilarating, terrifying. But it was leap of faith

in myself, and I found a lot about myself that I had no idea was in me.



The semester was furious, busy, and somewhat chaotic, but the opportunities were endless. Literally close your eyes, spin the globe, and go. I definitely did not always know what I was doing, but there were always just enough people who spoke just enough English or who were just friendly enough to make the trip one of the best I have ever been on. I recommend the experience to anyone who wants to get out, see the world, stretch their wings, and open up their eyes to the world beyond our American community.

STUDYING ABROAD LEADS TO PEACE CORPS EXPERIENCE

SARAH BATTA



Sarah is in Kenya with a group of students from the local school in the village of Kimana, where she studied wildlife conservation with the School for Field Studies. She planted trees with these students on one of her days off from class. "Never was there a dull moment in the 30 days spent in my heaven."

It's funny how when we're young, we seem to have such a confidence in our knowledge of what to expect from the future. Well, at least this is how it was for me. I was 11 when I made my decision to become a veterinarian. I held true to my initiative too, all the way to college. Very early in my college career I set out to make my veterinary school application shine. I performed undergraduate

research *and* I studied abroad. My lack of travel experience made it easy for me to choose a trip; I chose the one with the exciting picture of a student with a giraffe in the background. Price and place made no difference to me, if it got me to my end-goal. As luck would have it, destiny called me to Kenya.

The demand for Purdue's study abroad programs played to my advantage, as I was able to procure a scholarship (as many students do) covering a large portion of the expensive costs of such an adventure. At the time I don't think I realized just how necessary those scholarships were. Now looking back, their existence feels invaluable.

The month I spent studying wildlife conservation in Kenya, even after six years, still brings tears to my eyes. Never had I ever learned so much in such a short

time. I came to many realizations that summer. I learned that even on the other side of the planet I could find kindred spirits that I would come to know as family. I learned that language is not the mountain of an obstacle we, in the US, so often make it. I learned to put things into perspective and be thankful for all the little things life has to offer. Most of all I learned that maybe I didn't know exactly what the future held for me.



Sarah spent 3 years in Peace Corps, Mali, West Africa serving as a health education specialist. This picture was taken among her many host mothers towards the end of the Malian rainy season – harvest time. "I will never take a grocery store for granted again; I never knew true hard work until I was audience to the chores of an African woman."

Visiting Kenya opened a passion in my life that I didn't know existed. I was so sure I knew what I wanted to do with the next 7 years of my life that I almost missed the signs that were pointing me in a completely different life direction. This is the true value of study abroad: exploring a new place and finding who you really are in the process.



Sarah's second study abroad was to Zamorano University in Honduras. She studied agriculture through 11 weeks of hands-on modules, including that of dairy cattle shown in the picture above.

Six years, another study abroad, and a Peace Corps service later, I find myself not in Veterinary School, but in Graduate School. This time I'm studying public health, with plans to take my degree abroad indefinitely. I may not know exactly where I'll be in the future, but I do know one thing: I'm on the right track.

IMPACTING STUDENTS THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

JOEL HARTMAN

"Studying abroad was one of the greatest and most beneficial opportunities I have had so far at Purdue. Having a scholarship to study abroad was not only more motivation to go, but helped significantly in the funding process. I would do it all again in a heartbeat!" – Margot Keimig.

"Receiving a scholarship for study abroad made my dreams of seeing the world a little more possible. Many people, who have dreams as big as mine, would not even consider studying abroad without financial aid. It is also great to know that someone out there cares about helping me study in a foreign country, which has easily been my most memorable and important experience of my college career." – Jenny Colvill

"Obtaining financial aid for my study abroad experience was fundamental towards the success of the trip. Our generous alumni network is phenomenal in getting Boilermakers out into the world." – Kyle McCarthy

"The scholarship was really a Godsend." – Aaron Crow

These quotes echo the sentiments of our students who are blessed with receiving one of the scholarships funded by our loyal alumni. Receiving a scholarship, many times,

can be the deciding factor in a student taking the opportunity to expand their horizons through study abroad. Our donors take great joy in hearing about the experiences of the scholarship recipients and many of our students are now blogging while they travel. Thus, giving everyone the ability to hear first-hand about the adventures and life-changing events our students encounter.

Agriculture Study Abroad offers several scholarships each year funded by alumni like you, yet the need is ever growing. Funding is one of the biggest obstacles hindering the majority of our students interested in pursuing a study abroad experience, yet studying abroad can be one of the most meaningful and impactful opportunities a student can have while at Purdue.

As you review your philanthropic support, please consider helping a Purdue Agriculture student's dream of studying abroad become a reality.

If you have questions or desire further information on how to best support these students through philanthropic support; please contact Joel Hartman, Director of Development, College of Agriculture at (765) 494-4785 or jhartma@purdue.edu.

FROM CHINA TO PURDUE TO FRANCE TO SINGAPORE

XUN ZHOU

My name is Xun Zhou, and I am a junior student studying agricultural and biological engineering at Purdue University. I am originally from China. I came to United States three years ago. On August 13th, 2010, I said goodbye to my parents and got on the plane which brought me here. Living in a foreign country without my parents has greatly improved my independent skills. It is not just transferring from high school to college, or going abroad for a vacation. I have learned to rent an apartment alone, deal with all financial issues alone, plan a trip and budget alone and take the responsibility of all my decision and actions. I am learning how to grow up by myself, and how to become an independent individual.

Due to the passion about traveling abroad and wine, I went to France through Purdue Agriculture Study Abroad Program in summer. I studied at PURPAN University in June and worked in a local wine industry in July. It is a really diverse group. We have students from United States, Mexico, China, Japan, and Lebanon. We are so different from each other, but we share so many commons. We all love traveling and meeting new people. We studied together, and hanged out together as well. The second month,



I lived in a French family and worked with them. It is such a cute French family that they treat me as their family. They introduced me to their families, neighbors and friends. We lived, ate and worked together every day. They taught me French, I taught them English and Chinese. They taught me how to make French dessert; I taught them how to make Chinese food. Living with them teaches me how to communicate with people who speak a total different language. Smile and open a conversation with confidence, then the language is never an issue between us.



They went to a cooking school in Toulouse and learned how to cook a traditional French lunch which included a vegetable soup, duck, salad, and tiramisu.

After knowing how diverse our world is, I decided to continue exploring. I am going to study abroad in Singapore in Nanyang Technological University next semester. For years, Singapore has ranked top as the best place to live. Also, Eastern and Western cultures are mixed perfectly here. Singapore society is also known for its diversity. Therefore, I choose Singapore as my next destination. I am excited to see how my life in Singapore will enrich my experience, and what I can learn from it.

EXCERPTS FROM "GONE TO TAIWAN—SUMMER 2012" BLOG

JENNY COLVILL

Sunday, May 27, 2012

So I am officially on the opposite side of the world, and it definitely feels that way! The amount of experiences I've had in the past 48 hours have been more than I could ever imagine. My mood has never gone so ballistic either. I am still unsure how I feel about everything, but for now I am taking it one day at a time... or one 72 hour day at a time..

Tuesday, May 29, 2012

I have to say the past two days have been radically different than the first two days! I have now met my lab group and have already observed/assisted with some of their "experiments" or labs. They are all super friendly and very curious about me! They have not had a foreign intern before, though there is one Indian PhD student in the lab. Yesterday we "sacrificed" a mouse to gather its sperm and Leydig cells, fun stuff! Then I proceeded to dissect the rest of the mouse and got to remind the student the English word for all the different organs, which was fun! My genetics lab skills have been put to the test, though mostly I just do what I'm told! I think I am really going to enjoy my time working here, though it is hard for me to really assist much with anything since I am only here for four weeks, so mostly I will be learning. However, from what I see my lab mates may learn more from me being there than vice versa! I am sure their English skills will improve dramatically, though I am skeptical if my Chinese will ever even get off the ground... Tomorrow I am very excited because I get to help one of the students who is doing research at the Taipei City Zoo! If I enjoy what we will be doing, I may be able to go there more regularly! I know we will be researching turtles, but I will learn the specifics soon enough.

Tuesday, June 12, 2012

Random cultural things I've discovered in Taiwan—

- When showing the number 6 with your fingers, instead of using all the fingers of one hand and the index finger of the other, you use the thumb and pinky. 7 is the thumb and index finger.
- I hardly ever see any colored cars here, other than yellow taxis. It's either black, white, or maybe a silver car here and there.
- People will wear pretty much anything with English on their clothing, and it is sometimes apparent when they have no idea what their clothes are actually saying. When discussing this with my Taiwanese friends, I found that Americans are just as guilty when getting Chinese symbols as tattoos- getting the "prettiest" looking symbol is probably a bad idea.
- There is never a day here when ladies do not go without their umbrella. It could rain that day, or the sun may shine that day, and unlike the American obsession with being tan leather bags, Asians have an obsession with being as transparent as a ghost. Looks like we all just want to be what we aren't...
- People here will eat anything, and I mean ANYTHING.
- There are very few trash cans anywhere outside or even in buildings, which is always inconvenient, yet there is hardly any litter to be seen. I guess Americans are

literally trashy people, no pun intended.

- abc= American born Chinese
- Everyone here knows about Purdue University, and everyone here believes it's an Ivy League school. I'm ok with that.

Sunday, June 24, 2012

It was a sad goodbye to my lab mates and fellow zookeepers, but I hope that the BACT (Biodiversity, Agriculture, and Culture of Taiwan) program is just as fun! I had my first day of it today. We had our orientation this morning, and met all of the students that I will be with for the next four weeks. There are only a handful of US students here out of the 25 students total, three of which (not including myself) are westerners. A very different ratio than what I expected! About a third of the students participating are NTU students, and the international students come from China, University of Illinois, Texas A&M, UC Davis, University of Maryland, and others I think I'm forgetting! And of course Purdue. We learned a little more about what we will be doing during the course (and yes we get a grade for it too, boo!) and the places we will be traveling. Then we went to the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial, which was an amazing place with the colorful, traditional architecture that I associate with Asia. Then we went to the National Taiwan Museum, which was a small museum with a little bit about the ecology and early history of Taiwan.

Saturday, July 7, 2012

We have seen some gorgeous coastline views that are breath-taking along the way to our different stops! The east coast is rocky with tall cliffs that drop right into the ocean, while the west coast, which we won't be visiting, is flat with sandier beaches. That afternoon we stopped at Cingshui Cliff, which had a rocky beach with stones that were so flat and colorful I wish I could have taken them all home with me. However, the next day may be another favorite of mine. We went to Taroko National Park, where we hiked a trail beside the most bright blue river I have ever seen. It gets its color from a certain mineral in the sediment, but I can't remember what it is. We found a spot that yet again satisfied my climbing needs even more so than any of the other places I have been to! And I was so happy when many others joined me this time. I'm not sure

I've ever had so much fun climbing rocks, and that's saying a lot! It was sad when we had to leave for Taipei for the night, but I am certain we will still find some great places. I am now at Meifang farm, where we will be staying for three nights before moving on. We will not get back to Taipei for I think 10 more days.



Read all of Jenny's 15 blog postings about Taiwan at: <http://jcolvill.blogspot.com/>

STUDENT PRESSES FOR CHANGE IN CAMEROON

JESSICA THAYER

HannahJoy Pheasant, a junior agricultural and biological engineering major from West Lafayette, Ind., spent last summer in Cameroon with Purdue's Global Engineering Program. She was there to help improve living conditions in the west central African country.

"I did not just go on a vacation, I actually got to go work on something," Pheasant said.

Her work started well before she ever boarded a plane. At Purdue, she worked with other students and faculty to design a basic utility vehicle, or BUV. These sturdy and versatile vehicles must be able to haul crops, firewood, water and people in remote areas of the country.

While helping to manage a Purdue BUV team, Pheasant started work on another project: a briquette press. The idea was to use a simple handpress to compact biomass waste (like sawdust and banana peels) into a small brick or disk that could be burned instead of firewood.

"Firewood is what is used mainly for cooking over there," Pheasant said.

However, cutting down so many trees can strain the forest and local ecosystems. The handpress was designed to provide people with an alternative. To be successful, the press would have to be easy to use.

"It's something that would be better than cutting down more trees, but not a big change to their lifestyle," she said.

Pheasant researched the idea and learned that some nonprofit organizations had similar ideas, but none had numbers or calculations. Her research aimed to change that.

After she arrived in Cameroon, Pheasant interviewed people to find out how they would use the press. She quickly learned that the people in Cameroon weren't keen about making investments in the future.

"They have a saying that 'tomorrow is far away,'" Pheasant said.

Pheasant said the initial investment in the handpress was high, even though users would save money in the long run.

While she was visiting Cameroon, her goal was to see what they thought of the handpress, not try to educate them about its benefits and economics.

She found that in some areas, people were interested in making the briquettes to sell to neighbors. Based on that research, next year's design team will adapt the handpress to accommodate their needs.

"Obviously it couldn't be too expensive and they had a few other criteria and they said 'have at it,'" she said.

John Lumkes, an associate professor of agricultural and biological engineering and advisor for the BUV and handpress teams, helped Pheasant with the projects, but let her take the lead on the handpress assignment.



HannahJoy Pheasant, a junior agricultural and biological engineering major from West Lafayette, Ind., worked in Cameroon on a pair of projects to improve living conditions there.

SENIOR SEIZES HER CHANCES TO SEE THE WORLD

SARAH HANN

Shalyse Tindell traveled more than 34,000 miles and visited four countries in just three years.

The senior animal science major from Washington, N.J., has studied in Guatemala, Honduras, Italy and, most recently, Australia.

Before participating in Purdue's International Programs in Agriculture, Tindell had never traveled outside the United States, except for a trip to Canada when she was very young. However, she always wanted to travel. In high school, Tindell had the chance to travel to Australia and stay with a host family, but her family did not like the idea of her staying with strangers.

"They told me, 'You can't do that, we don't know those people!'" said Tindell. Even then she thought, "When I get to college, I'll be able to see the world."

When she came to Purdue, she didn't just travel, she learned something, too. She studied for a semester at the University

of Adelaide in South Australia and spent four days in the Outback trapping animals, surveying the land and learning about the culture.

"Going to the Outback was also a huge learning experience, because I got to learn about more history with Aborigines and how they would forage," she said.

When she traveled to Italy, Tindell was able to explore her interest in food production. There, she toured factories and wineries over the course of one week in the spring. Her travels also gave her a chance to experience completely new things.

"I got to hike an active volcano and roast marshmallows on lava," she said about her experience in Guatemala and Honduras.

The rest of the article and other articles can be found at www.ag.purdue.edu/destination.