

DAAD RISE Professional Final Report

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As a senior Ph.D. student, I have been looking for a summer internship program before I finish my degree in order to further boost my academic career before I enter the professional world. As a matter of chance I came across a friend of mine who went to Germany few years back in the DAAD RISE internship program. After he explained to me the application process and his wonderful experiences in Germany and together with the fact that I also have always had a great curiosity to visit Germany for its rich history in innovation and advancement, especially in the area of science and engineering, I decided to apply for the DAAD RISE internship program for the summer 2015.

Working in Germany:

I was placed on an internship position at Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin (HZB), one of the Germany's top-class premier research institutes located in the southern part of Berlin and close to the historic city of Potsdam. My research was on characterization of thin film solar cells. Soon after starting my internship, I was absolutely impressed by the working environment in Germany. The institute was fully equipped with state-of-the-art instrumentation capabilities and wonderful scientists from all around the world. Even without any knowledge of the German language, I never experienced any difficulties while working with my colleagues. I have had a great opportunity to also work under a wonderful, kind, and brilliant supervisor. As soon as I arrived there, he helped me to go through the bureaucratic staff and explained my internship project. And soon after that, when he asked me to join him for lunch, I was quite amazed to see that the people are going for lunch together regularly in small groups. This was quite unique in my experience. This turned out to be a very enjoyable part in the everyday routine, since not only I got to taste a lot of typical German cuisine but also made many new friends during my stay in Germany.

My typical day at HZB use to start between 8:30-9A.M. with a cup of coffee. I used to carry out experiments until lunch time. After lunch, I had short discussions with my supervisor about the experiments that I had been doing since morning. At that time he used to advise me with any difficulties or problems before I returned to the lab to continue my ongoing experiments. Then I used to end my day at 5:30P.M. and head home for the day.

Living and Travelling in Germany:

I have had a great opportunity to stay in Berlin, the city with ever-growing popularity and one of the most happening places in Europe. Since I grew up in a small town, this gave me the perfect opportunity to try out the real life in a metropolitan area. Initially, finding a suitable accommodation in Berlin was a really challenging task for me. But finally, with the help of my supervisor and some German colleagues, I could find a nice WG flat share in the centrally-located

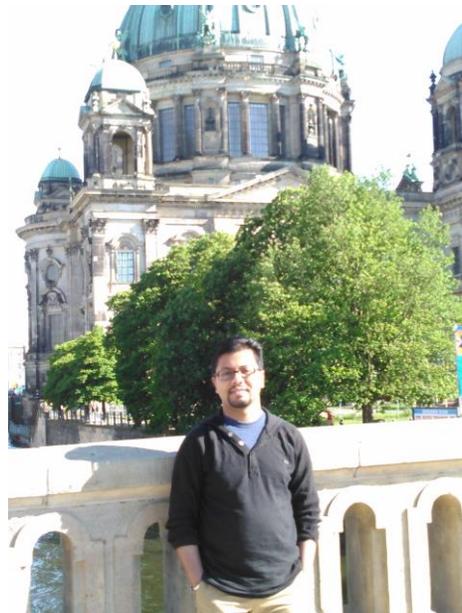
area of Charlottenburg. The area was surrounded with many nice international restaurants, cafes, and bars. From there I could easily reach out to the city center Alexanderplatz, Zoologischer Garten, Friedrichstraße, the Museum district, and many more areas. This gave me the ideal opportunity to spend my weekends and evening exploring all the famous places in Berlin.

The excellent public transportation system in Germany is also worth mentioning. Although I lived quite far away from my work place, I was hardly late to work on even a single day. I had to make three connections daily, including the underground, S-Bahn, and the bus in order to get to the institute from my apartment. Initially I thought this would be a tough commute for a day-to-day basis. But given the frequency of the trains and buses, I found it became merely a matter of habit.

During my stay in Germany, I also had a good opportunity to travel to other adjacent countries in Europe. During the last few weekends I traveled to four different countries in Europe. Considering the speed of the trains it was very convenient to travel between different countries in just a few hours.

Another, wonderful experience was the DAAD scholars' meeting at Heidelberg. There, I met with many other students who are on the DAAD RISE and RISE pro program and spent a memorable time with the famous Castle tour, BASF company site visit, and a delicious dinner.

Overall, the DAAD internship has provided me with an unforgettable experience, both personally and professionally. Germany is a very beautiful country, and I would highly recommend the DAAD RISE internship program to the future prospective students. Furthermore, I think, given a suitable opportunity, I would definitely like to pursue a future career in Germany after finishing my Ph.D.



On a typical evening in front of the Berlin Cathedral

"I agree that my report and accompanying pictures are used by the DAAD in printed materials, presentations and on the website in order to inform funding organizations, sponsors, and students about the RISE professional program."