



Lara

Brazil – Porto Alegre - UFRGS

Department of Biochemical and Chemical Engineering – ISP 2016

02.06.2016 – 31.07.2016



I decided to have an experience studying abroad, first of all, because I think that it is an opportunity of learning not just about what people of my area of study is studying but it is a chance to meet people from other cultures. When you spend some time living abroad you have the opportunity of personal growth by facing the differences between people's way of living.

Motivation

To be honest, I chose TU Dortmund because the ISP – International Summer Program is the unique opportunity for master students in my home university to study abroad.

But Germany has always been in my plans of visiting, especially because my family is of German origin. So the ISP was, without a doubt, a very happy choice for me!

First days

My first days in Germany were... Just AWESOME! Germany is very different from Brazil, in so many aspects.

The first people we met (the others students from Brazil and I) were our doubles at Düsseldorf Airport. They went there to help us with the bags and with the trains to Dortmund.

The most shocking difference from Brazil that I saw when I arrived in Germany was the public transportation. The trains are very good and the stations don't have turnstiles. In Brazil, unfortunately, it would never work.



I lived at WIHOGA dorm during my stay in Dortmund. WIHOGA is located just in front of Rombergpark. I had a room with bathroom just for me and the kitchen was shared among the students of the floor.

I really liked WIHOGA especially because we had bus and train almost in front of the building.



In Brazil, people use to say that Germans are gross and without patience. But what I saw was completely the opposite: everyone that I met (in the summerschool, at the supermarket, in the trains, at the restaurants) was very sweet and helped my friends and me with the communication and with our doubts.

Cultural Differences

Highlighting the three main differences between Brazilians and Germans: punctuality, honesty and animation.

Regarding punctuality and honesty, I'm sad to say that the score is 7:1 to Germany!

In Brazil people usually don't treat punctuality with the same rigour that Germans do. With respect to honesty, we have a problem in Brazil that we „affectionately“ call „brazilian way“ which means the way some people break the rules, to delude other people or even to enter a train without paying the ticket.

But, talking about animation I am proud to say that we, Brazilians, are more festive and we show our affection for the people with more intensity, by giving a hug in our friends, for example 😊

Leisure Time

In my leisure time I was always going to new places! The guys from Brazil, a boy from Mexico and I were always together. We planned tours for every free time we had. So, at least once a week we went to Dortmund center to eat and explore the city. We also went to many cities around the Ruhr Area: Aachen, Köln, Münster, Düsseldorf, Bonn and Bochum. On the weekends we went to the farthest places: München, Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris and London.



My favorite place in Dortmund is the center region, around the bars and restaurants. I also liked very much the Phoenix-See and the SIGNAL IDUNA!



I really liked everything at TU Dortmund. For us, Brazilian students, the first remarkable thing that we noticed was the infrastructure on Campus. In our country we have big problems concerning the equipments of the classes, libraries and laboratories.

And also, the climate among the students was awesome!

TU Dortmund University

In Brazil the system of the classes is quite different. The professor exposes the content of the course in the way that he/she thinks it's better and, most of the time, the exercises and the doubts concerning their resolution are solved out of the class.

At TU, one of the classes of the week was the presentation of the course content and the next class was about solution of exercises. I really liked this system, because it makes possible for us, students, to learn with the practice with the professor's help.

About the relationship between professors and students I noticed differences too. In Brazil we have more contact with our project mentors but I think this difference comes from the fact that Germans, generally, are more reserved than Brazilians. It's cultural.

Advice for students, who will come to Germany in the future...

- First: GO, IT WILL BE A GREAT EXPERIENCE, I GUARANTEE!
- Especially for Brazilian guys: German people are very friendly, don't listen to your friends that will tell you that Germans are just serious and gross.
- The universities have a lot of opportunities of learning, self-development and improvement of professional skills.
- You will make a lot of new friends
- Going to Germany is not just an opportunity of traveling around the country and its beautiful cities but also many countries in Europe like the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Czech Republic...

Life after leaving

My stay in Dortmund has, of course, a big influence on my life.

The first thing I discovered about myself in this experience is that I am fully capable of studying and working in a research project in a different country in a different language. And also, this experience made me think about doing the doctor studies which was completely out of my life plans some months ago.

The other great thing that I realized was how I love to travel. Since I came back from Germany I am saving part of my money just to travel and know new places around the world.



I miss many things from Germany...

I can highlight the security in the country and the food!

I would have brought a bottle of beer and an apfelstrudel in my backpack if I could!



Lara, Brazil

