

## **Trainee-report for the IAESTE internship at the UiB**

I am Selina, 23 years old, from Germany and currently a “Biological Sciences” Master student at the University of Constance. My main interest in biology is definitely nature and wildlife-related, but I am still trying to figure out what my specific scientific interest is. That is the reason for my decision to do this internship, so I can have an insight into ecological and climate change research. However, my goal is, to participate in making science more accessible and understandable to everybody, especially people without a scientific background.

I did my 2 months internship at the Ecological and Environmental Change Research Group (EECRG) at the University of Bergen in Norway from September to October 2020. They are generally interested in how and why a natural ecosystem changes over time and space. Therefore, they have multiple ongoing projects, to not only study the present state but also to reconstruct the past and model the future. Moreover, they try to look into the impacts human activity has on the ecosystems.

Sadly, I wasn't assigned to a specific project or person I could work with. In general, I helped out where I could and where I was needed. That was primarily working in the lab, where I had to weigh the samples collected during field season which lasts until late August. I was mostly involved in the THREE-D, but also the INCLINE- and FUNCAB-projects. THREE-D looks at the three main global change drivers and their interactions and effects on biodiversity: Grazing, warming, and nitrogen deposition. The aim is to not only understand their interactions but to find approaches to mitigate their combined effects. I was luckily still able to join in the field to close down the field sites with the two technicians Silje and Linn. We had to take down the fences, so the weight of the snow won't break them during winter, and cut all the experiment-plots to mimic grazing. Through that, I was able to see almost all of the field sites and get an idea of the maintenance and background work there is to do, to be able to conduct an actual experiment. Later, I could join in the field again, which was a more than welcome change besides the lab work. This time, I worked alongside Joseph and helped him to set up a pilot study system, with which he aims to measure carbon fluxes under the snow, to see what happens during winter under the snow cover.

My main goal for this internship, was to learn about this field of biology, as I haven't had a lot of contact with climate change research in general, and also more specifically with vegetational changes driven by climate change, before. Secondly, I wanted to experience working in the field and mainly outside, since I was unable to do so during my Bachelor's degree. During the weeks I joined in the field, I got a good insight, how such a field site is structured and established and into the work in the background, so the experiments can be realized. However, as a Master's student, I aimed to learn more about specific methods used in that research area and generally for a little more challenging or more research/experiment related tasks.

Besides the working part of my stay abroad, I of course intended to visit Norway and its beautiful nature, make new friends, work on my English, and live in another country, even though it was just for a short period of time. And I can confidently say that despite the Corona pandemic and all the difficulties coming along with that, I still had a good time. I had the pleasure to have an awesome flatmate, Elia, and we not only worked together at UiB, but we also went on multiple adventurous trips, as far as this was possible. Thanks to IAESTE Norway, which organized multiple weekend trips, we were able to visit Stavanger and also flew to Svalbard for one weekend, which is still unbelievable for me and a beyond magical place to be.

Since Bergen is famous for its beautiful surrounding nature, including the seven mountains, my personal goal during the stay was to hike up to all of them (Not in one day, even though this is

apparently a thing for most of the Bergen-people.) and I am proud to say that I took a look onto Bergen from all its Seven Mountains: Løvstakken, Sandviksfjellet, Ulriken, Fløyen, Damsgårdsfjellet, Rundemanen, and Lyderhorn. Of course, I also did not want to miss out on a little bit of Bergen city life, even though this was more complicated than usual, due to Corona-restrictions. However, I discovered together with friends some highly recommendable Cocktail bars, from which my favorite was the Last Monkey and the BarBarista, where they also have their own BarBar beer; and nice Restaurants and Cafés, including the Kafé Spesial and the little coffee shop at the shopping mall Galleriet on the ground floor, where you can get a very tasty pistachio Bolle (a Norwegian pastry) and of course coffee. After work, I usually passed by there and got myself such a pistachio Bolle. Summing up, I have a bag full of memories and a ton of new impressions and experiences, which I am very great- and thankful for.

So, thank you, and cheers! 😊

