

IAESTE SWITZERLAND – A DIFFERENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM



IAESTE Switzerland
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There are many people who have involved with IAESTE Switzerland, which is an organization for the exchange of students at higher education institutions wishing to obtain professional experience abroad. IAESTE has over 65 years of experience in placing

interns in the fields of science and technology and covers all areas of engineering. We have asked two employers, two interns and a volunteer, what they think about the NPO.

Guido Schenk, Head of Quality Management Department, Nestlé PTC Orbe and Heinrich Hofmann, EPFL STI IMX LTP, Powder Technology Laboratory:

What motivated you to let foreign IAESTE- trainees work with you?

Schenk: There are several reasons. Firstly, young persons must have the opportunity to get in contact with professional life. Secondly, it is also a pleasure to work together with young and motivated persons which have a different cultural background. Thirdly, it is beneficial if more experienced persons share their way of working. Only by explaining the way of working people start to reflect if it is really the best way to do things.

Hofmann: As a Swiss university, it's part of our culture to have the best possible exchange of students. Students from other countries are always a scientific and cultural enrichment for their own research group. New ideas can be tried out and so, interesting projects can be prepared. In addition, with each invited student we provide a student from a Swiss university to participate in the program, so we have a double benefit: Exchange students who come back to Switzerland are usually highly motivated to finish their studies successfully and have learned quite a bit of life experience.

What are your experiences with the students?

Schenk: Students are motivated and open. All of the students tried hard to learn and to contribute the very best way to their task. It was always a positive or even very positive experience.

Hofmann: We have made only good experiences up to now with the students. The selection process is effective and allows us to select the best candidates. The students are very motivated and interested to conduct a small research project. We also never had any difficulties with communication as in the lab English, French and German are spoken. In general, the students are very rapidly integrated into the laboratory and student life at EPFL.

What do you appreciate most about the IAESTE-service?

Schenk: Serious, fast, reliable.

Hofmann: The most important thing is the good selection and pre-selection of students. The assistance in finding an accommodation is also very positive, which turns out to be very difficult, especially in Lausanne. Promoting the integration of students into the university and lots of

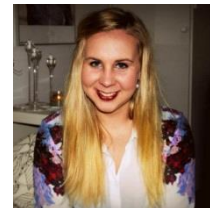
activities offered by IAESTE give the students an additional insight into the local way of life, which is also very valuable.

Linn, current IAESTE intern from Sweden at Actis-Datta SA (Design, Lausanne) and Filipa, IAESTE Alumna from Portugal and now permanent employee at Burckhard + Partner (Architecture, Lausanne):

To what extent did the IAESTE internship change your life?

Linn: For me it was an opportunity to get some experience of how it is to work as an engineer, which I find important since I have been a student my whole life. Then the fact that I got to get this experience in a country other than Sweden was only a big plus. This journey has both increased my eager to see the world and the love to my own country. If I end up being offered international jobs in the future I will now have some experience of it.

Filipa: When I came to Lausanne, it was supposed to be only for 6 months and I had not great expectations. Right after my first month in my office, I felt that this country was THE country to work abroad. I love the working environment, the projects, having colleagues from all over the world and



especially the trust and responsibility they give you, even as a trainee. Almost 3 years later, I'm still in the same office and still loving my work. I don't plan to stay in Switzerland my whole life, but surely the day I will leave, a truck will be

necessary to transport all my Swiss life: all the knowledge (professional and personal), my Swiss and international friends, the Swiss culture which I learned to like and specially my newly love for the mountain and nature.

Mitko, IAESTE volunteer:

What motivates you as a volunteer to work for IAESTE Switzerland?

I think we have been blessed to have IAESTE because it serves as a bridge on so many levels. Across cultures, nations, geography, religion, etc. In my eyes, IAESTE contributes to a better world because it leverages on the universality of science and engineering and uses that strong link to create a bridge where potentially other bridges are not possible or just less likely. This is the reason why I support IAESTE. But being a member of a local committee gives the opportunity to organise an event such as the weekends that we organise, to meet a lot of people and to have fun, lots of fun. One can also get involved in many levels of work if one wants to and can get an insight of how things work in a NGO such as IAESTE.

(A.Hoppmann)

