

Hello, my name is Cristhiam Flores. I am a biology student at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua UNAN León. I completed a professional internship program within the framework of the internship program offered by the international association for the exchange of students for technical experience IAESTE for its acronym in English. IAESTE is a non-governmental, independent and non-political organization that promotes an international mobility program for the realization of professional internships for students within the framework of University-Business cooperation. My practice was taking place in Zurich, Switzerland during the period from September to December 2018. The firm that employed me was Agroscope. Agroscope is the center of excellence of the Swiss Confederation for agricultural research, and is affiliated with the Federal Office of Agriculture.



My practice was related to agricultural sciences. Agroscope is a firm with different locations throughout Switzerland and with a set of 11 research departments and more than 80 research groups. I did my training within the group "Plants and plant products" in the research group "Varieties and cultivation techniques" where I had the opportunity to share experience and knowledge with excellent researchers.

I travelled to Europe from Nicaragua to Frankfurt, Germany where I took a bus to Zurich. In Zurich I was welcome by an Agroscope worker with whom I took a train to the Zurich Affoltern station located 15 minutes' walk from the firm. A car was waiting for us at the station so that I would not have to carry my bags. During the course of the trip, she explained some general details of how the means of transport work in Zurich. For example, how the station is distributed, where to buy tickets, prices and schedules, etc. In Agroscope I received accommodation in a guest house where other temporary researchers are staying. Among them: master's students, doctoral students and interns. The house has almost all the basic services, drinking water, drainage and electric light (the system of Swiss plugs is different to American and European so I suggest buying an adapter before traveling or as soon as possible). The biggest drawback for me was the lack of internet connection in the house. The closest place to internet access is in the company, so I suggest buying a Swiss sim card and paying for an unlimited internet package.

I worked in Agroscope in a descriptive research whose objective was the evaluation of the behaviour of different varieties of corn. My work was integral. Work in the field taking growth data with the use of specialized hardware and software for agriculture. The sampling stations were distributed in the north of Switzerland, so I could travel and see other cities. Also, I worked on sampling using heavy agricultural machinery. Likewise, take soil samples to analyse in the laboratory. I worked in the laboratory performing physical and chemical analyses of the samples taken. As well, supported other research related to potatoes, lentils, wheat, oats and peas.



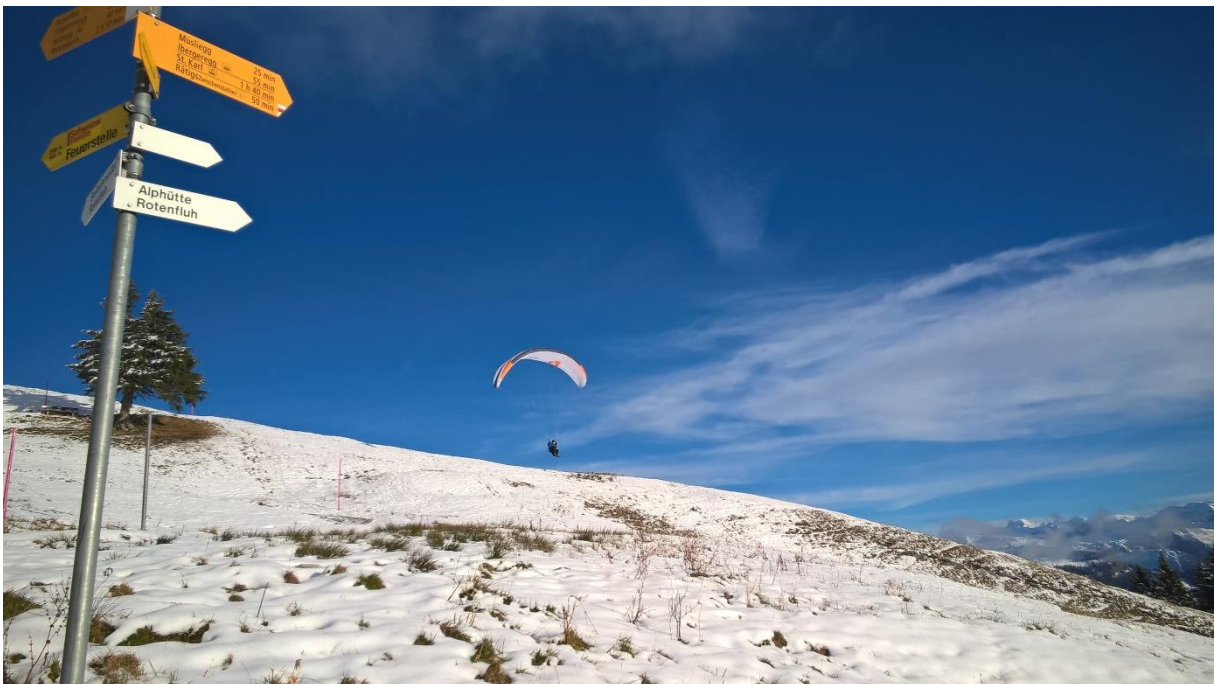
Zurich is a city full of interesting places and things to know. I could enjoy beautiful views. At night it is a colorful city with a large shopping center and an entertainment area for any taste.



About food, I suggest try the Röstli, a potatoes dish very popular in the kitchen of Switzerland. In addition to having a night of Raclette, a cheese of Swiss origin from the canton of Valais. Never forget to eat Swiss chocolate (while I am writing I am enjoying one).



In my spare time, I used to travel by bicycle to expand my vision of the place or visit a local market and buy something new to try. The parks in Zurich are very beautiful. You can also join the number of activities organized by IAESTE. You will not regret. In particular, I enjoyed a trip to St. Gallen where I had the opportunity to see Swiss traditions such as the music of alphorn or the Schwingen and I enjoyed a lot of food. A trip to the Alps is an excellent idea in the winter period and try some winter sport or fly a little.



My experience in IAESTE was extraordinary. It gave me a wider professional experience and gave me a better understanding of university life around the world.