

Research internship in Costa Rica

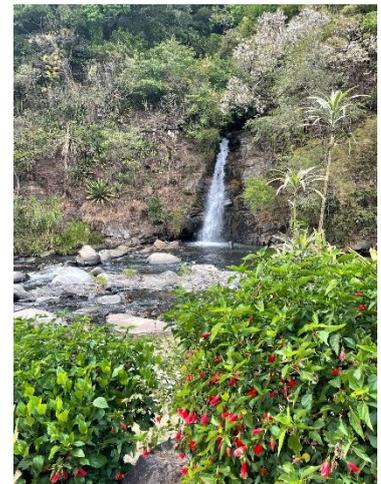
I had the opportunity as part of a research internship to be involved in the project "Building Communities for Sustainable Change: A program to connect students of Costa Rican and German universities with local entrepreneurs in rural areas in Costa Rica". Four months before departure, we started with the preparations remotely from mid-October to the end of January and from February to mid-March we were responsible for the project on site in Costa Rica.

San José or Heredia, where the Universidad Nacional (UNA) is, was the first stop of our stay. There we had the first team meeting in person with all participants from the University of Osnabrück and from UNA. During the meeting we finalized goals and objectives that we wanted to accomplish at the different stops of our stay.

Our second stop was in Santa Maria de Dota, a coffee region in the interior of Costa Rica. There, we had a direct meeting with the local city government, who briefed us on the status of the "One village one product" (OVOP) project and where we could be of assistance. Together with the staff, we came up with a structure for a website that would make tourist activities and features in the region accessible. We clustered the offers of local entrepreneurs into different categories in order to make them clear for visitors on the website in the future. In preparation for the project, we reviewed existing information, contacted entrepreneurs, conducted interviews to collect missing information and took high quality photos for the company's web presence. For this purpose we were able to organize an amateur photographer in Santa Maria during the last days.

Turrialba was our third stop, where we worked on the students' seminar material, among other things. The students had created material in a seminar during the winter semester on the onboarding process, exit interview, protocol structure, and for a wiki on the organizational part of the internship (a kind of how-to to organize and plan the internship), etc. We elaborated the material and adapted it to the needs of the project, so we adapted a template for protocols to our meetings and directly introduced and tried them out for the next meetings. Furthermore we created an interview guide for our market research and a keyword search and SEO for the turri.cr website, where producers from Turrialba, their history and products are presented and sold.

For the Market Research we spent some days in San José and interviewed different cafés, stores and consumers about local products, their sale and product shelves. For this we created interview protocols so that the following interns can continue to work on the project with the collected information.



I am very happy that I accepted the challenge and let the more or less unknown in Costa Rica come to me. Above all, overcoming the language challenge and using Spanish in a completely new context was an important experience for my personal development. The experiences, the people, the culture, simply the whole package of Costa Rica that I was able to experience there was a unique experience that enriched me greatly.

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