

Summer School in Costa Rica on living conditions and biodiversity

As part of the DAAD project: "Transformative research and capacity building to protect livelihoods and biodiversity in Costa Rica", students from our university traveled to Costa Rica from October 25 to November 04, 2022 to participate in the twelve-day Summer School on "Livelihoods and Biodiversity in Costa Rica". The Summer School was organized by the Institute of Environmental Systems Science, the Institute of Geography and the Institute of Romance and Latin Studies in cooperation with the Costa Rican National Technical University (UTN). The Summer School was organized in situ by Prof. Dr. Susanne Schlünder, Prof. Dr. Claudia Pahl-Wostl, Dr. Almut Schilling-Vacaflor, Dr. Johannes Halbe, Jana Rülke and colleagues from the partner university.



During the Summer School, the group of students from UTN and Osnabrück University had the opportunity to experience the correlation between cultural, economic and political aspects of nature conservation, sustainable land use, community development and livelihood security from different approaches. In classes and through exercises, they were first introduced to basic concepts and then learned inter- and transdisciplinary research methods. These theoretical groundings were complemented by practical experiences. Excursions to the peninsula and the Gulf of Nicoya included visits to a renaturalized wetland in Pozo de Agua and the coastal region around Costa de Pájaros. Here, students were able to interact with local people, gaining an insight into the potential and challenges of collaborative biodiversity conservation and the change towards more sustainable livelihoods. In small groups, students from both universities prepared joint projects on the interaction between livelihood security, tourism, land use and biodiversity. During the excursions, they were able to collect data for these projects, which they then evaluated and reflected on by using the theoretical concepts they had learned. A sustainable effect of the Summer School, which will culminate in a return visit by the Costa Ricans in 2024, is various bachelor's and master's theses that can be based on the project work.



In retrospect, the participants from Osnabrück rated the Summer School as an extremely valuable experience.