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Home university: German University in Cairo GUC

Host university: Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg Stuttgart
DHBW

Field of study: Computer Science and Engineering

Degree intended: Bachelor Thesis

Number of semester: one semester.

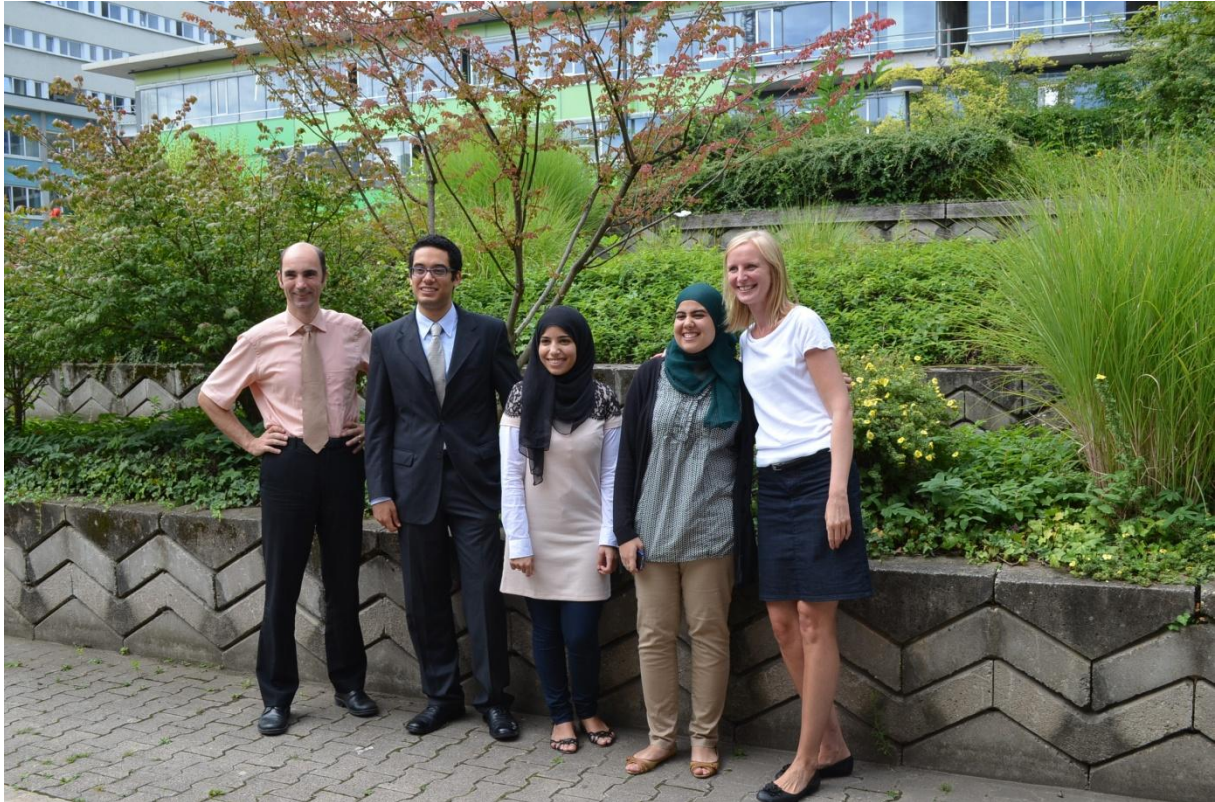
Period of time: six months

I heard a lot about Stuttgart and how beautiful it is, that is why I was very excited to come. When the university confirmed that I am one of the students who will have their bachelor theses there, I had this mixed feelings. I was happy but at the same time afraid of the new place, culture and the idea of living alone for 6 months. I did not worry that much about the language because I know German people can speak English Thanks God. In fact, I have studied German for 5 years before but my German is not good enough because I have never tried to talk or communicate using it. Also the last course I have studied was two years ago that is why I do not remember much. I thought about revising some of the main phrases so I downloaded applications for learning German language on my mobile and started to refresh my memory.

The main concern was not the language, it was the dorms. I was worried about living in a mixed apartment because I do not think I can cope well. My friends and I were counting on our university to find a place for us because we have no experience in such issues. Lucky us, we were offered a new private apartment which is totally perfect for a long stay. The apartment is for two so me and my friend will be staying together. This news about the apartment was enough to make me relaxed. My family were happy that I found a good apartment with my friends and they were finally not worried about me that much.

When the day came, I was neither excited nor sad. I was just looking forward to finally see Europe but at the same time I could not believe I will be staying there that long. We had a good flight and some troubles regarding the ICE from Frankfurt to Stuttgart. After we were finally there, we found Mrs. Agnieszka from the international office of DHBW in the station to pick us. She was so friendly and I actually did not think she will be that much of a cheerful person. She was very welcoming and excited which made me in return very excited and looking forward to see more people from the university.

Our first meeting with Professor Reichardt was great. I noticed that he is very professional and at the same time very friendly and funny on the personal level. The professor gave us some time to get familiar with the project and he offered changing the topic if we are interested in another one. The next week he took us in a tour inside the university so we can see the labs and the areas we can work in. During the six months, he was helpful and he did not mind to pass by his office if we have any problems. I had three month internship at the beginning on a project but I decided to do my bachelor on a different one. The professor tried to find a topic that meets my interest and we had a meeting to discuss what kind of topic I want to be my bachelor and within a week he actually offered me a good topic. For three months, I worked hard on my bachelor and I kept in contact with Professor Reichardt to be able to solve any issues. Usually when I face problems he tries to give me some time to think on my own, be independent and creative without his interfere. However, when I failed he helps me with his vision and opinion. I am very proud that I worked with him and he indirectly taught me many work ethics I could not have learnt anywhere else.



The DHBW is not that much like my university. I found it a bit smaller than I thought and the system there is different. Universities in Egypt usually have teacher assistants and doctors. Students do not speak with doctors a lot and sometimes they do not have a good relation. However, the DHBW prefers professors and doctors to be closer to students, remove boundaries and develop a good relation with them. All professors, doctors and students I have met were very friendly and also they were interested in discussing with us different topics. I also went to the University of Stuttgart many times. It was very big and organized and the places where we can study are very good and quit especially the library. Overall, I was impressed by the universities and the education system in Germany and they are certainly different from the Egyptian education.

In the first month, we had some intercultural meetings offered by the DHBW and people from the HR department were very welcoming. The meetings helped me to get to know how German people think and talk. The doctors and students were trying to reduce that gap and fear we had at the beginning from the place and the new people. I am grateful for the HR department for those meetings because I had a good discussions and I met wonderful people.

In April we travelled to Ulm for a two-day intercultural workshop in the University of Ulm. The workshop was organized and it taught us to think differently and never judge other people before we get to know them. It was such a successful workshop as we all had a great time and we were laughing and playing so it was not boring at all. The workshop was also a good opportunity for us to explore Ulm that small old lovely city. I myself liked Ulm very much and I look forward to visit it again.

Apart from the workshops, me and my friends were having a tough time understanding people in stores or anywhere. We couldn't even ask simple questions without complications. That is why we thought about taking a German course to enhance our language. When we asked the international office they were helpful and offered a course for two months without any fees. Actually I liked that course very much and the teacher was very kind. She motivated us to interact and speak even with terrible grammar mistakes, I personally loved her. The course helped us to speak with people in a little German and understand what they say, since in class we had to communicate in German which by the way was very difficult at the beginning.

In addition, Mrs. Agnieszka advised us to go to a language café to have more German conversations and to get to know more people. The language café was interesting and fun. There are four different tables; one for English language, one for German, another for French and the last is for Spanish. We should sit on a table with the language we want and people on the table start to have conversations or play some kind of a game using this language. At the end all tables have a quiz and the winning table gets free drinks. Unfortunately, our table never won and we always get the worst score ever. The whole language café is just a brilliant idea because you can learn, have fun and meet new people in the same time. I had lots of fun, laughed a lot, played interesting games and met lovely people in those three times I went there. I am grateful for Mrs. Agnieszka; she was supportive, she motivated us and she was always suggesting places where we can spend a nice time. We were lucky to have her.

It is the first time for me to go to Europe and this fact was enough to make me happy and excited about everything. In Stuttgart, I experienced a lot of new things to me. The city itself is modern with a special architecture that combines between the old and the new. It differs from Cairo in so many aspects like transportation, traffic and shopping. I liked the transportation system the most. We do not have a good means of transportation in Egypt. I always use my car or go by a taxi. It takes too much time because a lot of people use cars too so we have traffic problems all the time. I was glad I did not have to drive and I easily take the u-bahn anywhere and in no time. Besides, travelling anywhere is very easy using the ICE which is a comfort fast mean. I also liked that cars and some people respect the traffic lights very much. In general I was impressed by the traffic and the transportation in Stuttgart.

The shopping street is very nice; not only because of the stores but because there are bands and musicians that present almost all kind of music and entertaining shows. It is somehow good that they are not directly asking people for money but they actually use their gifts to do so. I had some difficulty to get used to the fact that stores close at 8 pm because back in my home country stores close at 12 am and restaurants sometimes close at 2 am.

Holidays for us were very important and we usually plan ahead for them. I travelled to many places inside Germany like Heidelberg, Ulm, Berlin and Magdeburg. I went to Oberstdorf so I can see snow and do skiing; I had terrible burses though. I have always wanted to travel to Paris. It is my favorite place in the world and I finally achieved my dream and went there. I travelled also to Rome and Prague. Being in Stuttgart and travelling to those places were a time life experience for me. I learnt so many things, I visited some of the wonderful cities in the world, I met new lovely people and I expanded my knowledge about different cultures and traditions.

I am very grateful for the opportunity BW has given to me and for the people who helped me through the way. Everything was very good and I could not hope for something better starting from the dorms, the university and the lovely city. I am looking forward to visit Stuttgart again.