

Personal Report

Name: Lama Ashraf Abdel Wahab Sayed

E-mail: lama.ashraf@gmail.com

Home University: German University in Cairo

Field of study: Computer science and engineering

Degree intended: Bachelor degree

Number of semesters: 1 semester

Period of time: 6 months

Everything started when I knew that my university offers a study program abroad with the DHBW Stuttgart for the bachelor students. I read the bachelor projects offered by Professor Dr. Reichardt and really liked several ones. After sending my priorities back to my university and got my reply back that I was accepted and that I should start all my travel arrangements I felt really excited. This excitement feeling was always mixed with some fear. Fear from the fact that I am for the first time traveling abroad alone for 6 months, fear from the language difference and that I am not fluent in German so definitely I was afraid of the language barrier between me and the Germans in Stuttgart and finally fear from the cultural difference between Egypt and Germany.

After landing in Frankfurt airport, I started to realize that this was real, and I now have to start to adapt with the new place I will be living in for the next 6 months of my life. A good start was needed to give me hope that things will go smooth. Luckily we could easily find our way to Frankfurt train station and could easily find the terminal of our train that will take me and some friends to Stuttgart. While being in the train, the first thing I realized that people were staring to us a lot. I told to myself that maybe because of the huge amount of bags we had. Then an old lady approached us and started to talk with us and ask us some questions about Egypt and our studies and so on. Of course this conversation was done in English. She was really friendly and welcoming and I hoped that everyone else I would meet would be that friendly and hopefully would be able to speak English. After about one hour in the train we finally reached Stuttgart main station. There Agnieszka, the Foreign Language Assistant in the International Office was waiting for us with a really friendly smile on her face and also some other students were there with her to help us with our bags. Then we had our first experience with booking our first ticket to ride the U-bahn and then we were told which one to ride to reach home. Reaching our new home in Stöckach I was amazed with how beautiful the neighbourhood was, I did not expect it to be like that at all although I looked it up on the internet before coming. After doing some paper work, First thing I did was taking a picture of my new room and sending it to my family back in Egypt. After a long but exciting day I went to sleep, having to wake up early for an appointment at the University of Stuttgart to complete some more paper work. I do not really know what foreigners should do when they come to Egypt but here in Germany we had to fill a lot of applications. After finishing filling papers, me and my friend decided to go back home alone, with no assistance so we took a map with us and started hardly to understand and figure out how to go back home and we succeeded. The amazing thing is that we did not take much time to cope and know how to go from a place to another without using the map. Once you get to know the system then everything turns to be really easy, punctuate and smooth. On the second day we had a visit to the Mercedes Benz museum. On this day it was

the first time to experience the cold weather as in Egypt it never gets that cold as here. I had to wear a heavy pullover, a coat, a scarf and gloves and I was still feeling cold. Anyways we reached the huge museum and had so many photos and read about the history and evolution of cars. On the other day we went to the zoo also wearing almost everything I brought with me and still felt cold but I had a lot of fun there seeing the various animals there.

My meeting with my professor was on the beginning of the week. He was really friendly, I had a brief introduction about the topic I will be working on and was told to read more about it. I was assigned to develop an android application that would help tourists find their way through the Mont Royal Fortress which is located in West Germany. The topic was really interesting and it allowed me to learn about new technologies and gain more experience in my field of study. After the meeting the professor took us in a tour in the DHBW campus and showed us where the labs are and where the classes are taken and so on. The campus was small but cosy. Although the GUC campus is bigger, but I still felt that there was nothing missing in the DHBW campus.

My week was divided between going out exploring Stuttgart and the nearby cities and studying. A lot of offers were done by the DB on the weekend which were perfect for us to book and travel to for example Heidelberg, Oberstdorf and Ulm. In Oberstdorf, it was my first time to see snow, touch it and ski on it. The feeling was indescribable. In Ulm we went to a cultural training program for two days. It was really beneficial as we got to discuss all about how people from different countries can communicate and how to overcome the cultural differences between people. It was an interesting course that I will never forget.

Another thing I usually waited to attend from week to week was the meeting of the faculty of social work in DHBW. Friendly people, interesting topics to discuss and finally ending up with beneficial information. Usually topics handled comparisons between the education system in Egypt and Germany; this had given me a brief about how German System is somehow different from our educational system. Also topics about revolutions and cultural difference and so many. What I really liked in those meetings was that I could easily share my opinion or add anything without being judged or ignored, which was something I thought of as people with different background than mine would not be interested to hear my opinion.

DHBW offered us a German course to attend in order to help us improve our spoken and written German language. This course was extremely amazing, fun to attend and highly beneficial. It helped me to communicate easily in some of the daily conversations needed for example in the shops, supermarket or even with people in the street to ask for directions. I ended up also having a certificate for attending that course which was really motivating.

Concerning studying, I believe that DHBW provided a good atmosphere to help students in their projects. I was given a Samsung Galaxy S2 as my project required an android phone to test it on. This helped me a lot in testing and in the development in my application. Also the support given from Professor Dr. Reichardt was highly appreciated, with having meetings and having him guiding me in a lot of aspects in the project was highly beneficial. I ended up finishing the requirements needed, finished writing my thesis and finally doing a presentation to introduce people to the work I have done.

One interesting situation I will never forget was that one day I had a meeting with my professor but unfortunately the U-bahn workers were on strike so I had to go to the university on foot. I was still new to the place and I had just got used to riding the U-bahn so I did not know the exact way. Everything went fine, while going from the dorms to DHBW for the meeting. After the meeting I went to have a walk in the park next to the opera, and then when I decided to go back home, suddenly I found myself lost, not knowing exactly where to go. I started looking in the map and trying to figure out the way home. But luckily after two or more hours of wandering in Stuttgart streets I was able to reach home safe, after a long long day.

I have never thought of myself as a shopaholic until I travelled to Stuttgart. Being surrounded with almost all the brands that I love was really hard to resist. I spent a huge amount of time doing nothing but shopping. From going to Königstraße to Metzingen, then back to Königstraße...and so on and so forth. I bought gifts and souvenirs, took some, not some but a lot of amazing pictures in different sites in Stuttgart. This is a photo of me in one of my favourite places in Stuttgart. This picture was taken I the TV Tower, I was looking through the telescope. The view from up there is just amazing. In Egypt we have a similar tower, but the view is usually of the river Nile, the pyramids, the tall building and the streets. From the TV Tower the view was a little bit different. The green trees are almost everywhere and between them are the tiny, beautiful houses.



Food was a huge deal for me here, because usually I do not cook that much in Egypt. But here being responsible and independent I started trying and learning new recipes and I kind of mastered and liked cooking some meals.

Also one thing I liked was that my dorms were near to a huge park. It was 2-3 minutes' walk to reach it. Sometimes I liked to go for a walk, enjoy the quietness, the green areas, the scenery of the swans, ducks and all sort of birds and colourful fish in the lake. Other times I used to go there to run, to be more energetic and to lose weight.

Eating a lot of chocolate made me on cloud seven, no nine. Trying different flavours. I almost liked all of them and I think actually that I ate tons of chocolate here. So as a warning for people coming here next year, Don't fall for chocolate and repeat my mistake :D:D

Finally, it was an opportunity to have done my bachelor project here in Stuttgart. For the past six months I had mixed feelings, from happiness and excitement to panicking and home sickness. But all in all this was an experience that would forever be engraved in my memory. I travelled to several cities in Germany, but Stuttgart is and will always be the most beloved city to my heart. I have met several people, made a lot of friends, laughed and cried. I had learned a lot and sure I would like to come back to Stuttgart soon.