

September - November 2014

ASA Program – Natalia & Sannah

What is the ASA Program?

The ASA-Program¹ is a learning program founded by the German government which offers students and young professionals a possibility to exchange and learn about our One World through personal experience. It supports young people in expanding their skills and contributing to sustainable global development based on the respect for human rights and cultural differences.

The ASA-Program constitutes a learning cycle which consists of training seminars, a practical and a follow-up phase. Our ASA experience started with two training seminars in Germany, where we were somewhat prepared for the time abroad. Our practical phase took place at the Education and Training Office of the German-Malaysian Institute under the supervision of Mr. Ngan Cheng Hwa. For three months, we worked as a team on the project “Evaluation of Students’ Services and Support at GMI: current state and future opportunities”.

What was our project about?

Our project consisted in developing and conducting an evaluation of the Student Affairs Department at GMI. First, we had to become acquainted with the institution. In order to do that we conducted interviews with the employees of the Student Affairs Department as well as carried out a participatory observation. Afterwards, we prepared an online survey for the students. The main topics covered in the survey included awareness of the student services and support offered by GMI, participation and satisfaction with those services as well as the efficiency of the existing channels of communication between the students and the Institute. Based on the results that we retrieved from over 700 GMI students, we were able to describe in detail the current state of student services and support at GMI and consequently develop recommendations concerning future proceedings and actions.

What was it like working at GMI?

It was a very interesting and rewarding experience to conduct a research project at GMI. We learned a lot about the organization and processes at this vocational training institution. We could always count on the support of our supervisor Mr. Ngan Cheng Hwa and the internship coordinator Ms. Mirjam Häger. Moreover, we were able to participate in many interesting activities and events which were organized by various student clubs and societies at the campus and also outside the campus, such as movie screenings, the Moonlight Festival and sports

¹For more information visit: <http://www.asa-programm.de>

carnival. For future development, we hope to see more German-Malaysian exchange on the campus.

What was it like living in Malaysia?

During our project we found some time to travel at weekends and during the holidays. We were able to explore many parts of the country, including the colonial towns of Malacca and GeorgeTown, the beautiful Perhentian Islands as well as the mossy forest and tea plantations in Cameron Highlands. Because GMI is just a 40 minute train ride from Kuala Lumpur's city center, we had the opportunity to explore the capital and enjoy its cultural offer. When living on the campus it is a welcome opportunity to be able to go to Kuala Lumpur in the evenings and weekends from time to time, as life in Kuala Lumpur differs a lot from Kajang. We also fell in love with some of the local dishes and will definitely miss the variety of Malay, Indian and Chinese cuisine.

