

After I finished my Bachelor in International Development, I decided to continue with the SIA Master - Agricultural Economics and Rural Development. In September 2018, after two semesters in Göttingen, I started a 6-months internship with GIZ, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, at the Market Oriented Agricultural Programme North West (MOAP NW) in Ghana. I was working closely with AFC, Agriculture and Finance Consultants, as they implement part of the project components for GIZ.

During this internship, I learned a great deal about the work in the world of development projects and the work dynamics on the ground. I worked with the vegetable market women in Wa, the regional capital of the Upper West Region of Ghana. Our task was to assist the market women to improve their businesses. My colleagues and I did this by supporting the market women to form an association, as well as linking them to vegetable producers within the regions. In addition, I assisted the assessment and development of possible small-scale storage facilities, as well as organizing a meeting between market women and several stakeholders at the border regarding their hindrances of importing vegetables from Burkina Faso.

Another area I worked on was the production and marketing of organically produced vegetables. In collaboration with a local NGO, Center of Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD), we facilitated an organic vegetable training and supported three women groups, who dedicated themselves to organic dry season gardening. They were facing challenges of limited water availability and the tedious labor of manual irrigation.

Something I learned in this internship is that to be critical and to have doubts is a very healthy and necessary mindset for change. Though, as a German in Ghana, there is a fine line between behaving culturally appropriate and appearing like a know-it-all. Doubts and criticism can result in discussions and advise that moves the addressed issue forward, as opposed to agreeing that the constraints in this society are so limiting that there is no hope for change.

As I prepare to go back to my studies, I am currently applying for a semester in France with the Erasmus+ Programme. The statistics might show that most SIA students do not complete the programme within the given 2 years. Though, I believe that the experiences students make alongside their studies are enriching experiences for their life and future career opportunities.

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