

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
Erfahrungsbericht Auslandspraktikum & Abschluss-/Studienarbeit

Persönliche Angaben	
Name, Vorname:	Yang, Michelle
Studiengang an der FAU:	MA Development Economics and International Studies
E-Mail:	michelle.yang@fau.de
Gasteinrichtung:	-
Gastland:	Ghana
Art des Aufenthaltes (z.B. Praktikum)	Abschlussarbeit
Aufenthaltszeitraum (WS, SS oder Jahr):	April-Mai 2016

1. Vorbereitung (Planung, Organisation und Bewerbung)

The preparation for thesis was made with my thesis supervisor, we decided the outline and the scope of research. I wrote the interviewees emails to ask for availability and schedule a meeting. I met the interviewees in their offices or cafes in Accra, capital of Ghana.

2. Anreise (Flug, Bahn), Visum, Anmeldeformalitäten vor Ort

The visa process can take up to 2 or 3 weeks, so it is recommended to plan your trip and submit the papers as early as possible. In Germany the applications should be submitted to the Ghana Embassy in Berlin. The papers and passport can be sent via post office, once ready it is sent back to you. For more details visit: www.ghanaembelrin.de

You can apply for a single entry visa, upon your entry you will be granted up to 60 days to remain in Ghana. The extension of your visa is done through the GIZ Ghana country office in Accra and the costs are sponsored by GIZ. Please note that the renewal of your visa can take up to 2 months, so avoid planning trips outside of Ghana until you are sure you will receive your passport back in time.

3. Unterkunft (Wohnheim, privat)

The house where I stayed was recommended and arranged by the contact person in our office. There are a number of houses specialized in hosting international students, volunteers and interns in Accra, therefore it is quite easy to find a room. However the costs of these houses tend to be rather high, just as a reference as of end of 2015 a room costs between 250 to 300 euros, depending on whether it has a bathroom and/or air conditioner included.

3 of the most stayed houses, contact person and phone number:

1) Guesthouse (Danquah Circle)

Maxwell, +233 207646487

2) Obruni house (Osu)

Auntie Cee, +233 242101994

3) Compound von Rosalind (Kokomlemle)

Rosa: +233 244418999 Janet, +233 541607802

Due to electricity shortage in Ghana, make sure to ask whether the house has a power generator so when the lights are out, they can still generate lights for you to carry out your life and routine. There are periods when the power is out for 24 to 48 hours continuously, so a generator can be a life savior.

Hot shower are not usually available in normal Ghanaian household, however as the temperatures never go below 20 degrees Celsius, it is okay to shower cold.

4. Praktikum/ Abschlussarbeit (Beschreibung der Tätigkeit)

My routine was usually quite flexible depending on the interviews I had, I had to travel around the city to meet my interviewees, what sometimes can take quite long depending on the traffic condition.

Taking taxis in Accra is not very expensive (no taxi meters, it has to be negotiated before getting on – a 10-minute-ride costs 2 to 4€) but depending on the location can add up quickly. The public transportations *trotros* are very cheap but it often involves many transfers and it is not reliable, so if planning to take trotro make sure to always much earlier.

If I did not have a meeting, I usually went to a café to work on my research. I recommend Vida e Caffee, D Cafe and Pinocchio these are some of the cafes you can find in Accra with free internet connection and good coffee/ sandwiches. The prices are at European level i.e. a capuccino costs around 3 to 4€.

5. Betreuung an der Gasteinrichtung

Not applicable.

6. Ausstattung der Gasteinrichtung (eigener Arbeitsplatz, Kantine)

Not applicable.

7. Alltag & Freizeit (Sehenswertes, Kulinarisches, Geld-Abheben, Handy, Jobs)

Traveling: It is quite easy to travel in Ghana and the costs are relatively low.

Do not miss out the Wlee Falls, Kakoon National Park and Mole National Park (you will almost 100% see elephants!)

Food: Ghanaian foods are generally quite spicy and not very vegetarian friendly, as they make one stew where either fish or meat (beef, lamb, chicken) in cooked together with vegetables. But it is always possible to find an alternative to it, namely banana or yam chips, fresh fruits (mangoes, pineapples) or bread with cheese spread.

Withdrawing money in Accra is quite easy, ATMs are readily available and money changing offices are also quite common.

Celphone: Simcards are easy to be found around the corner and the fees are acceptable.

Major mobile phone companies are MTN, Vodafone, Airtel and Tigo

Going out and parties: there are a few bars and clubs that are well frequented, but mostly by foreigners, local bars also exist but the music blasting next to your ears makes it almost impossible to talk to people. The highlights are Republic Bar in Osu (great music and people) and the clubs Firefly and Plot 7 are the upscale scene in Accra.

Ghana is a very safe country, organized crime or violent crime are rarely heard or seen. There has been an increasing number of burglary and assaults to people who are walking on darker roads around Osu area (commercial and party area), but usually they just steal your phone and money, violent crimes have not been reported and definitely no racist attacks.

8. Finanzielles (Lebenshaltungskosten, Stipendien)

Life in Accra can be very cheap but also expensive, it heavily depends on your lifestyle. Eating local food on the roadside, drinking at local bars and taking local transport (*trotros*) are all things that are quite cheap. You could live with some 50Euros per week by following this lifestyle.

However, if you would like to go to restaurants from time to time, frequent bars and clubs where expats go and take taxis everywhere, then your expenses quickly add up to some 100-150 Euros a week or more.

In short, to live a balanced life combining both elements of saving but also enjoying I would say that 300 to 400 Euros a month will allow you to do most of the things you would want to do.

9. Interkulturelles (Was ist z.B. beim Umgang mit Kollegen im Gastland zu beachten?)

Ghanaians are generally friendly and sometimes quite straightforward, they always add please in their sentence to be polite.

Can I help you please?

No please.

Yes please.

However they often try to avoid confrontation or saying no, so when they say maybe, yes but don't mention a precise date and time to meet. Do not take their invitation too seriously.

10. Fazit (beste und schlechteste Erfahrung)

Ghana was a great place to get a glimpse of Africa. I loved the people, food, music (Ghanaians are born natural dancers!), landscape and just the whole experience of the chaos and growth all taking place at the same time.

The most difficult part was to cope with lack of electricity, limited internet connectivity, very high costs for so many things we take for granted (milk and dairy products, whole wheat bread, high speed internet, electricity, drinking water). The open gutters and lack of side walks makes walking very troublesome. Open-air defecation and lack of hygiene are also part of the challenge.

All these challenges make us appreciate the small things we sometimes take for granted. Things I learned to appreciate:

- Reliable electricity

- Running potable water
- Hot showers
- Side walks
- Safe and reliable public transportation

11. Wichtige Ansprechpartner und Links

Auswaertiges Amt

http://www.auswaertigesamt.de/www/de/laenderinfos/laender/laender_ausgabe_html?ty pe_id=4&land_id=50

German Embassy in Accra

<http://www.ghana.diplo.de/>

Embassy **emergency** contact number, ONLY in case of emergencies:
(00233) (0)24 432 4889

Republic Bar

<https://www.facebook.com/RepublicBarGH>

Travel guide:

<http://www.bradtguides.com/shop/africa/ghana.html>

Cheap flights to Accra:

www.vueling.com

(!) Don't forget to bring:

- Proof of yellow fever vaccine, it is required upon your landing
- Malaria Prophylaxe (Malarone, Lariam, Doxycyclin, etc) and some basic medications you regularly take (i.e. birth control, condoms) or might need (Allergy pills, painkillers). Buying medicines in Ghana can be very expensive and the sources not always reliable.
- Coffee for coffee lovers, filter/espresso coffee can be very expensive in Ghana, instant coffee is readily available for those who don't mind.
- Torch lamp for unexpected light off situations
- Universal adapter
- Basic toiletries supply, in Ghana the options are limited and prices are higher