

Three months ago, I was advised that at the end of my period at UiB I would have to write a one-page letter about my internship/exchange experience. In that same moment, I already started to create certain expectation of the things I could write in this letter in the future - I already imagined myself writing about how I improved my research skills, how I expanded my networking, how I improved my English and software mastery such as MATLAB, and other points. Indeed, this all happened, but the change that this experience had in my life was so big that those aspects became almost trivial.

When I started in the research group at the university, this contact I had with a totally different reality from what I was used to made me open my mind to the fact that this is a possible lifestyle for a researcher. Researchers in Brazil unfortunately work in much simpler structures and with much less access to technology, for example. In some moments in the last few months, I felt like a traveler not only in space, but in time as well – I felt like I was coming straight from the past (not only in terms of technologies, but in some political and cultural differences as well). There I understood that there is a reality in which the researcher has the resources to work, for example, with two screens; or maybe not going to the office sometimes because the day is beautiful and suitable for midweek skiing. I was enchanted by small details that I didn't know existed in other parts of the world.

Looking back I can say with certainty: those three months were the best of my life. I got to know beautiful places, enjoyed the snow for the first time, made amazing friends, worked with what I like without overloading myself and always with a great sense of freedom. I confess that at times I felt a little angry too, especially when looking at the situation in Brazil and realizing that we still have a long way to go for researchers to have a quality of life close to the Norwegian reality, or at least to the UiB reality. But I also know that anger, like all emotions, has a function, and in this case it served to feed my desire for changing this Brazilian reality.

I came back to Brazil with a new mind, because now I know how my life can be. I had already accepted that my fate would be like the other researchers around me, but now I know that we should be entitled to much more, and that much more funds should go to research and science. I already had an idea of this, but it was with this contact with this other reality that I began to have more real proportions of how much we still have to progress.

I came back here very inspired. Desperately wanting to change the reality around me, and hopefully wanting to come back someday – my plans for post-graduate in Europe have already begun.

About the research I did, it was really nice to get a taste of what it's like to dive into a research project and dedicate myself exclusively to it. I hope to make this project my bachelor's thesis, but maybe for the master's degree I'd prefer to explore other areas of research besides plankton. Certainly the learning I acquired from research and programming will be useful for any other area I want to get into.

In short, this experience changed my way of seeing the world and especially the way of seeing my own future. I will be forever grateful for this opportunity.

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