

How I experienced my internship in Irak



Kate is a second year Master student in International Development with concentrations in Middle East Studies and Human Rights. She completed her third semester internship at a 4points Group, a third party monitoring and evaluation firm in Erbil, Iraq.

How did you secure this role ?

Last January, as I was beginning to compile resources on the various types of organizations that interested me and positions I thought that I might want to apply for, I came across [4points on LinkedIn](#). Because no openings were posted on the company's website, I cold-emailed the HR department expressing my interest in professional opportunities with the company and an up-to-date CV. After an initial interview with the Director of Programs and a follow-up with the Director of Business Development, I was offered a six-month contract based out of 4points' Erbil office.

What was your role and main responsibilities ?

I served as the Project Coordinator for 4points' USAID and European donor-funded contracts. In this role, I primarily supported implementation of the [Iraq Governance Performance and Accountability \(IGPA\)](#) project and the Iraq Monitoring and Evaluation Project (IMEP).

In addition to reviewing supporting documentation for IMEP site visits to refugee and internally displaced persons camps, I compiled evaluative reports for USAID-funded activities in the health, child protection, education, emergency assistance, and WASH sectors. For IGPA, I led analysis and report writing activities for the Public Opinion Survey 4points conducted to assess Iraqi citizens' satisfaction with public services in four key sectors: water, solid waste management, sewer, and electricity. I also assisted with the development of proposals and concept notes for new funding opportunities and led the design and implementation of an end-of-project evaluation for a child protection activity in Gawilan Syrian Refugee Camp.

What was the most fascinating and/or surprising aspect at your role ?

I think I was most surprised by how different Iraqi work culture and workplace norms differ from those in the United States (where I'm from). It was fun and challenging to adapt myself to new ways of thinking, getting things done, and interacting with colleagues. It was also fascinating to hear the experiences of 4points' local staff, both Arab and Kurdish, many of whom have been working with the company since its formal inception in 2007 in Baghdad. The resilience they demonstrated, the professional expertise they brought to our work, and the perspective they offered every day was humbling.

How did your PSIA experience help you with the role ?

Assessment and Humanitarian Health Interventions) which enabled me to jump into the work at 4points more quickly. Because these courses helped familiarize me with some of the sectors I ended up working on at 4points, my transition into the Project Coordinator went more smoothly than it might have otherwise. My exposure to quantitative analysis through Introduction to Statistical Reasoning also proved itself to be an asset! During my time in Erbil, I was tasked with developing several technical proposals for projects and handling large datasets, both of which would have been more challenging had I not had the opportunity to further develop my skills in quantitative analysis at Paris School of International Affairs.

What advice would you give to other students?

Be open-minded in your search; don't be afraid to look into unconventional opportunities, in countries you hadn't considered before, or in a sector where you have limited experience. And embrace the cold email method--you never know where your dream internship or job position will come from !

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