

# My internship at the WFP in Tadjikistan



Sciences Po has a partnership with the World Food Programme. In 2016-2017, five students from Sciences Po had the chance to do an internship in one of the WFP offices. A very selective process, as 22 positions were offered worldwide... Sciences Po did really well placing five students! Interview with Emily ter Steeg, student in M2 International Security, Sciences Po/LSE double degree

## ***How did your internship go overall?***

My internship at [WFP \(World Food Programme\) Tajikistan](#) was most definitely a memorable experience. When at the office I would work on my research project and help other colleagues doing literature review of previous reports on Food For Assets (FFA) projects, statistical reports of other NGOs and the Tajik government. Sometimes I would get to assist the communication officer and attend events like the UN Conference, which was organised when the UNSG Antonio Guterres was visiting Dushanbe (the capital of Tajikistan).

Things were completely different during field trips: we would have to do household surveys in at least 10-20 families in different villages in desolated areas. Travel days to the countryside would be tiring as roads were very bad.

In my opinion, you need to stay and work in a country for a longer period if you truly want to get to know a place, but during my

internship I could already have a taste of life in Tajikistan.

## ***What did you learn, professionally and personally from this internship?***

Professionally, I experienced how hard it is for International Organisations to solve problems of a structural nature. Few people have heard of Tajikistan whilst the situation with regard to food security is worse than in its neighbouring country Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, there is a war and a newsworthy crisis. In Tajikistan, underdevelopment and food insecurity are caused by structural problems such as climate change, bad governance and gender inequality. These issues are extremely complex and very hard to solve, making it hard to get funding from donors.

## ***Any memorable good and/or funny and/or difficult experience?***

My most memorable experience was a project sight visit to the Pamirs, the mountainous area bordering China and Afghanistan. There was only one road to connect the two villages to the rest of the world and it is often blocked by snow or mudflows. The nature was unique, overwhelmingly beautiful and so rough. We stayed with local people in the village for one night because of the long journey. At night, I slept on an outdoor bed with two Tajik girls underneath the stars and you could see the entire Milky Way. The grand finale was our trip home from the Pamir Mountains back to Dushanbe: we got to travel by helicopter!

## ***Would you recommend the program to your fellow SP students and why?***

I would most definitely recommend the OSZ summer internship programme to other students. I really appreciated the way in which I could design my internship assignment together with my supervisor and the amount of responsibility I got during this three-month summer internship. I ended up studying the differences between the vulnerability of project beneficiaries in various districts in Tajikistan. This assignment allowed me to travel through the country and study Tajik society, making the OSZ summer program a great learning opportunity and an adventure.

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