

2020/02

**Auswertungsbericht über einen berufsvorbereitenden  
Praktikums-Aufenthalt  
in Kenia**

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von

**Frau Caren Iddah Anyango Oreno  
aus Kenia**

**Internationale Betriebswirtschaft (IBWL) an der Hochschule Fulda**

## 1. Introduction

The reason why I decided to do an internship in my home country was to see how my German degree could be accommodated into the Kenyan job market. I began my search and sending out applications, and the company that I wanted to work with were not hiring at the moment. They instead forwarded my request to other companies on the German business association group. After an interview, I was able to secure an internship position at the Auslandshandelskammer (AHK) für Ostafrika.

BPSA made sense for me at the time, one because of the financial support and secondly because I could also share my experience with other international students that are looking into integrating their degrees with their systems in their home countries. I also took part in many workshops on the STUBE program and with the various testimonies, I was looking forward to doing the same in my home country.

## 2. Description of the internship position/the employer/the institution visited

I was an intern at the Auslandshandelskammer für Ostafrika for about four months. The Delegation of German Industry and Commerce for Eastern Africa (AHK Eastern Africa) with its service company, AHK Services Eastern Africa Ltd., promotes positive bilateral business relations between German and Eastern Africa companies. The countries represented are Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The departments are; Green Economy, Vocational Training and Services. In the Service department, the Delegation of Industry and commerce for Eastern Africa offers excellent services in connecting East African and German companies with the right business opportunities. The department conducts Market Analysis, Business partner search, Fact-finding and Market Entry Facilitation for the companies in East Africa. The Vocational training department designs, advices and acts as a pivotal point for the certification body for dual vocational training based on the German model in the region. They consult for partners and support various TVET initiatives in Kenya aside from consulting; they have the skills expert program, Training for trainers, and the PWG PVET Trust.

The Green Economy department with its in-depth market knowledge acts as a compass for companies and institutions seeking an insight into the promising East African markets for sustainable technologies - bio-energy, solar energy, energy efficiency, fresh water supply, wastewater treatment and waste management. East African companies can also access knowledge and technology in the respective sectors by connecting to similar German industries.

My internship was under the service team, but I got to work in all these three departments during my stay. This was for me also highlight as I got a holistic view of how functions the AHK.

### **3. Description of tasks and responsibilities as well as the working conditions during the internship**

The work during my internship was mostly project-based. We could have different projects running at the same time, on tops of various workshops and delegation. My daily tasks were general administrative duties, translation of documents, front desk and reception activities on occasions, research (assisting and participating in marketing research), delegations (assisting in preparation and organization of German delegation visits in Kenya. I assisted in the VDMA Workshop: Food packaging and Hygiene that was organized by the vocational training department. I helped in the registration, the front desk and reporting of the workshop. From the workshop, I learnt a lot about the Agricultural export business in Kenya, how they operate, the trends, clients and problems. One of the most significant projects was being part of organizing the Energy Delegation: Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Industries that took part in March. This Delegation fell under the Green Economy Department's responsibilities. The organization included business partner search, fact-finding for the best potential business partner for the companies participating in the Delegation. The Delegation itself started with a forum with almost 100+ people in attendance and followed by a four day of B2B meetings.

Unfortunately, with the spread of the COVID 19 virus, our activities were slowed down as we went on the online mode of conducting businesses. The first business order to be affected was the Energy Delegation in March. We had to cancel the launch forum/conference because they were a government directive not to have meetings exceeding 50 persons. It was a big blow, but we made the best out of their day by setting more B2B meetings on that day. The rest of the delegation went on as planned. We had four days of successful B2B meetings for the delegation in Nairobi and its environs. Luckily enough, the week after, the Kenyan government decided to shut all entry points into the country and advised that employers should allow their employees to work from home. These directives were, of course, to help minimize the spread of the coronavirus.

With Corona, we began working from home and going to the office on request and under a strict schedule. Delegations planned for May and June were cancelled, and we began to search for an alternative to connect with our clients despite the border closure. We had lots of webinars and webinar training and also zoom meetings and calls. During the work from home period I had these activities: business research, market analysis, writing proposals, I organized calls and attended webinars. It was essential to offer our clients practical support

and analysis to ensure that we could still offer them our services and assurance despite the situation.

**4. Assessment of your bPSA with regard to the acquisition of knowledge and competences useful for your continued studies in Germany and your future career**

My internship deepened my interest in positive bilateral trade in general, and the green economy mostly in integrating solar energy in production and the agricultural sectors. I also learnt a lot about project management and market research. I also learnt more about the green economy and how to convert business models to make them more sustainable systems.

**5. Assessment of your bPSA in preparation for your career and outlook for employment opportunities in the country of origin**

Doing my internship has opened my perspective on having a future career in positive bilateral trade in my county after my degree in Germany. It showed me that there is a possibility of combining my degree into the Kenyan job market, and skills such as the knowledge of the German language can be an added advantage.

**6. Overall assessment of your bPSA in preparation for your career and outlook for further opportunities in the country of origin**

My overall stay and internship were enjoyable; I had a chance to travel a bit during the delegation. Getting to know how some sectors operate, e.g. both the agricultural and the solar energy sector, was terrific. The only negative part was in the first two weeks, where I had this big reverse culture shock. After being away for a long time, so much had changed, and I had to adapt and learn swiftly, especially on the digital aspect. On this part, I should have informed myself and educated myself earlier before the trip.

Another situation that impacted me negatively were the government directives to shut down the country to curb the spread of the disease. This meant no movement outside the country's capital Nairobi, where I lived and worked, and also the airports were shut down, only cargo flights were operational. This was a big blow because my internship was to end at the end of April and I was to come back immediately after. I was compelled to stay two more months in Kenya, and thankfully my employer renewed my contract for these two months. This way, I was able to keep financially afloat and also learn more from my internship.

The other challenge was that my study residence permit in Germany was expiring in July and with it the pressure that I should get back at least a month before it expired. I reached out to

the German embassy concerning the situation and actively kept in touch. Mid May I got a tip-off from the embassy and my boss, that several embassies had lobbied for some flights to help individuals fly back to Europe and fortunately I got a chance to get a seat on one of these flights. The trip was abrupt, and I had a few days to prepare, and the tickets were also costly. STUBE Hessen had booked me a ticket before the COVID situation, and they were moving the dates of travel because we were not sure when the president would open up the airport and borders. At the time things were grey because the number of people infected from the virus was rising every day and the government directives kept getting stricter. The situation was a very stressful period for me, and I could hardly sleep. I was also afraid that this might start affecting my work. With the support of STUBE and family members, I was luckily able to fly back to Germany and renew my residence permit for studying.

#### **7. Personal impressions/concluding words and tips for other international students interested in a bPSA**

What stood out for me the most during my internship was meeting the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on his State visit to Kenya and also how helpful my colleagues were to teach and show me how different sectors operate and other activities relate to our work. I feel that Kenya has so much to offer, especially with the digital trend. You could use various apps for day to day tasks like shopping, transport, salon, and even buying medicine at just the click of a button. This trend was for me very impressive.

My recommendation for other students would be to not only get familiar and do research with the specific field of interest but also take into account how much society has changed. It would help their reintegration feel much more manageable.

## Bilder

Bild 1: First Day at the AHK in Nairobi



Bild 2: Energy Delegation Visit on a Tea Farm in Limuru

