

Erasmus Broadening Horizons

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The decision to participate in Erasmus was fairly easy; it seemed a rare opportunity and I was determined not to allow nerves or anxieties prevent me from going. On arriving all apprehension soon left me, as I began to have the experience of a lifetime.....

From an academic perspective I found it enriching to study abroad though significantly harder. Benefits of working in Greece were that I found material I was observing more stimulating than when at home. I was able to observe an entirely different culture's norms and values, these were easy to identify when comparing with England. I was so interested in everything around me that I enjoyed working on the project. I had never worked with people so different to myself, alongside professors, teaching assistants, students and general citizens covering all age ranges as well as various nationalities. My communication skills developed rapidly, as did my analytical skills as I had so much information to use and compare. Working abroad was vital for the comparative aspect as I would not have had the same conclusions if my research was limited to England.

Erasmus enabled me to see a whole new lifestyle that I had not experienced before and compare it to one I had; I began to adopt a broader outlook on things. Self-discipline and motivation also improved because I had no one around to help me with task management, I had to plan my own schedules and stick to them; this was harder but ultimately increased my independence and ensured I kept a level head. Living abroad and moving to the place I was studying gave me real hands-on experience, particularly as a novice researcher, and a better insight when looking at future prospects of intercultural communication. By embracing the Greek lifestyle it became easier to observe their culture. My confidence increased as a need for more assertiveness developed in order to get what I wanted.

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Socially, Erasmus offers a lot. I was living in halls for Erasmus students so met with many nationalities besides Greek. The welcoming and easy-going atmosphere instantly set me at ease and allowed me to enjoy the experience, surroundings and people.

My confidence improved as I began to make more friends and get to know more people. In particular this taught me it is worth taking risks in life, as you'll never know how great something *could* be.

Erasmus was at times an emotional roller coaster. But I've realised it was a learning curve and has taught me more about myself and other countries. I think Erasmus will affect many future choices and hopefully open up new opportunities. Besides having given me new friends I have many new ideas about career choices and have acquired hands on academic experience in research.