

Japan Exchange & Teaching Programme - JET
Nicole Halseth, International Studies Major – 2014



September 22, 2014

Hello, my name is Nicole Halseth. I graduated from UNBC in May 2014 with a Major in International Studies and Minors in Sociocultural Anthropology and Global Environmental Change. Just a few short months later I moved to Japan to teach English as part of the JET Programme (Japan Exchange & Teaching Programme). JET is run by the Japanese government and is one of the largest exchange programs in the world.

I arrived in Tokyo on August 1st for a brief but intensive job training with over a thousand recent graduates from around the world. It was an absolute whirlwind of activity. After two days immersed in Tokyo's lively Shinjuku district, I was put on a plane with other new JET participants and shipped off to Okayama Prefecture in the south of Japan.

Okayama, a land of peaches and sunshine (despite the semi-persistent typhoons), has been more than I could have imagined. I live and work in the lovely town of Niimi in Okayama Prefecture. Niimi is true countryside, with a bustling population of 30,000 spread out over a vast river valley. I walk out my front door and into fields upon fields of rice paddies, heavily forested mountains straight out of Jurassic Park (with wild boars and monkeys in place of the T-rex

and Velociraptors), and a never ending parade of the (seemingly inexplicably-placed) vending machines. Bikes and trains are the transportation of choice here.

My modest Japanese language abilities have been getting quite a workout. I negotiated phone contracts, internet service, and everyday tasks. In my spare time, I keep busy with community festivals and volleyball, preparing for an English conversation salon at the local college, and travelling as much as possible. So far, I have had the chance to visit magnificent limestone caves and towering castles, eat delicious food, and take my first ride on the bullet train (which, yeah, was pretty cool). On my weekends and vacation days, I have explored Hiroshima, and the neighbouring prefectures of Tottori and Shimane. I hope to visit the historic city of Kyoto during the changing of the leaves in autumn, as well as the sprawling mountains of Nara prefecture during the springtime Hanami: the blooming of the cherry blossoms.

I work full time at three incredibly lively country elementary schools. I wake up early, put on my business suit, and roll, run, shout, sing, and dance for seven to nine hours before going to bed. Then I wake up and do it all over again. The kids are the best part of the job, without a doubt.

The transition to living and working in a new culture has not been without its hiccups. However, life is pretty sweet here, in this land of peaches. I look forward to every second of it.

World University Services of Canada (WUSC) International Forum 2013



December 5, 2013

Five UNBC students attended the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) International Forum in Ottawa in November 2013 as delegates of UNBC WUSC's local committee. A contribution of \$500 from the Department of International Studies helped to make this possible. The International Forum held workshops and debates on contemporary international development issues and offered a chance to make connections with students from local committees across Canada as well as professionals in the field. The highlight of our trip was the "Great Debate" on the final day of the forum. The question asked was: "What is the greatest development priority of our time?" Our UNBC team position suggested that a holistic, multi-perspective approach is necessary for successful development; context matters. We won the debate!

The UNBC WUSC committee helps sponsor a student to UNBC from a refugee camp through the Student Refugee Program. As well, the local committee plans information and fundraising events for development projects around the world. We are continuously trying to increase community awareness through television interviews, social media, and information tables. Joining UNBC WUSC is an excellent opportunity for students at UNBC to gain valuable skills, participate in intercultural exchange, and learn about what it takes to change the world at a local and a global level.

For further information on UNBC WUSC:

Email: unbcwusc@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unbcwusc>.

2013 CIDA Internship in Mexico

Meghan Kennedy, International Studies Major – 2011



November 29, 2013

For 6 months in 2013, Meghan Kennedy participated in a CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency; now folded into a new organization called Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, DFATD) internship (specifically, the International Youth Internship Program), sponsored by the Canadian government, in an impoverished, indigenous village called Tlamacazapa in central Mexico. Her title was “Program Officer: Education of Children and Women.” She supported the continued development of the education program of an international non-profit organization called Atzin. In this position, she worked with young “village educators” to teach children who cannot afford to attend school or who are failing grade level in school, and to adult women in order to increase their

basic literacy. On a weekly basis Meghan helped the educators plan and conduct their classes, and provided advice, guidance, ideas, and materials. She was also responsible for evaluating students' progress. Meghan says her experience "has been an unforgettable one, providing me with invaluable, on-the-ground community development experience. It has allowed me to learn about and witness the daily struggles faced by people living in poverty along with the challenges faced by the organizations striving to overcome this plight. Most importantly I have witnessed education's power to build independence and agency."

Here is advice from Meghan on how to find such internships:

I found this internship through CIDA's website because I knew that they posted new ones every year. The link is: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/psij-iyip.nsf/vStsEn?OpenView&Restr....> However, with recent cuts to CIDA, this is the last year for the International Youth Internship Program. The government does have a webpage providing advice/channels for finding a job in international development: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/NIC-5492333-HQE>. You can also search through the DFATD/CIDA links or search out the organizations themselves. For example I know that Free the Children offers an internship. There's also WUSC, United Nations Association of Canada, and Oxfam Quebec.

Their information can be found on their websites so it's often a matter of searching far and wide.

Amnesty International Internship Heather Ritchie, UNBC Graduate 2013



October 8, 2013

A group of twenty youths from across the country made their way to their seats in a meeting room of a small University in Canada's capital city. The room was suddenly overcome with a sense of emotional weight and apprehension as Naser al Raas entered the room, personally escorted by the secretary general of Amnesty International Canada.

Naser al Raas is a Canadian citizen who was detained and tortured in Bahrain for thirty days during a trip to visit his family in March 2011, and now here he was meeting with the participants of Amnesty International's annual Human Rights College located in Ottawa. This was the first time I had ever been able to meet with a prisoner of conscience and no lesson could have prepared me for it. This powerful experience was one of many that made up my position as a planning committee member for the Human Rights College. I sought out this opportunity in order to compliment my education and to increase my networks for when my university life had ended but I left with so much more.

This position was available to me because of the dedication and leadership skills I had previously shown during my involvement with the local Amnesty International chapter in Prince George and the networks I had already made. In this position I had the opportunity to plan workshops and meet dedicated and influential citizens from across the country. As an undergraduate student it is important to be involved with as many opportunities as possible because soon your degree will be complete and it will become more important than ever to stay engaged in the world around

you. Your university education is valuable but some of the most important lessons you will learn can only be taught outside of the class room.

International Criminal Court (ICC) Internship Kaleigh Milinazzo, Joint International Studies & Political Science Major - 2011



January 31, 2013

From April to August 2012, I completed an internship at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands. This year, the ICC celebrated its 10th anniversary as a permanent and independent court established to end impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern, specifically genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The ICC currently has 121 States Parties, with 22 warrants of arrest issued, 16 cases, and seven ongoing investigations.

As a member of the external relations team, I helped support the ICC Presidency in interactions with States, international organizations, civil society and other external actors. An excellent complement to my UNBC International Studies degree, this 'hands on' opportunity allowed me to gain valuable experience in the fields of diplomacy, public policy and international law.

Interested students can apply for internships at the ICC on the ICC website: <http://www.icc-cpi.int>.