limes international Hochschule Aalen



The semester magazine for international partners, students, and parents No. 19, September 2017

- Themes: Stay curious, kids!
- Think big! Start up.
- We are all Ambassadors!



Dear Readers,

Explorhino is a figurehead for the University of Aalen. For almost ten years, the Young Researchers Workshop has excited children and young adults about science and technology—an important service in times when there is a shortage of educated people.

Children naturally curious. are Explorhino helps them stay curious about why things are the way they are, and lets them have fun figuring connections. The rainbow out rhinoceros helps everyone from small children to High Schoolers through exciting experiments, lab visits, workshops and vacation camps. It's strong, enduring, quick (when it's motivated), and most importantly, curious.

In this issue of Limes, we are introducing Explorhino, and helping little tinkerers and child researchers discover scientific phenomena so they can get their own view of the world of science and technology. To do that, we are introducing people who fill Explorhino with life and will look quickly to the future with Neubau and Science Center . We would love it if you joined us.



Yours



Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schneider President of Aalen University



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Stay Curious, Kids!

working in technology.

Everyone is born into this world a curious explorer and researcher. Nobody needs to teach them to have an interest in science and technology, but you have to make sure that they can express it and grow up developing their interests and abilities in science and technology. People make it difficult for children to do this far too often, and they lose interest in science and technology. A lot of technologies you use in your daily life have user interfaces that cover up the working parts so that the actual mechanism can't be understood. The classic dad's workshop in the basement often doesn't exist anymore. Science classes are often theory-heavy and abstract. On top of that, technological jobs are often seen as dirty, loud or solitary, which is not representative of an average work day for engineers and people

This is where Explorhino comes in. Aalen University's workshop of young researchers has offered a extensive program for kids and teens for ten years. The goal is to add an intense and exciting engagement with science and technology to the experiences of young boys and girls. "The only people who seriously consider jobs in

technological fields are the ones who have been exposed to technological skills and scientific mindsets from Kindergarten until their career choice." Says Dr. Susanne Garreis, leader of Explorhino. The chemists in the integrated program from Kindergarten to the career choice are particularly important. Science and technology should be a normal part of growing up for children and teens. The workshop gets parents, teachers and mentors closely involved with this process.



The rhino is always there

The focus in Kindergarten is on observing and describing natural phenomena and learning simple technological tools like nails, pipettes and saws. More complex technology like soldering and coding comes later, along with discovering and understanding the laws of physics and creating experiments to try to answer questions you have. "You always have to keep the excitement in the foreground" says Susanne Garreis. Towards the end of their time in school, they get authentic projects in the university laboratories, in formation about different jobs, and information about training and studying possibilities, along with information on career choices and transitioning to training and studying.

Explorhino's portfolio is readily available: Kid's University, further training for subjects they are strong in, project days, vacation classes, research clubs, almost 100 birthday parties and over 100 classroom visits per year, and lending materials are all managed by a small, highly engaged core team with creativity and flexibility with the help of a lot of volunteers. Susan Garreis knows that "Explorhino is extremely involved in our society," and is extremely excited about the "big fan club" made up of about 300 families, 50 schools, 150 day cares, and in the meantime also a lot of

professors, politicians and managers: "Explorhino makes its presence felt throughout the entire region."

As the strongest university for applied research in Baden-Württemberg, Aalen University is an ideal place for explorhino: Kids and teens get an insight into actual themes in modern research and can see the actual everyday life of scientists working with modern tools in 150 modern laboratories. Students are also good as motivating caregivers and "colleagues" and are believable role models.

Explorhino is going back to, among others, the private foundation of the Grimminger Family, who opened doors with the University, district administrator Klaus Pavel and the former Aalener mayor Ulrich Pfeifle. In 2008, the 3.5 million Euro Dr. Albert Grimminger endowment was established. In the meantime, a further endowment came from the Stadt Aalen, and more patrons and endowments are coming aboard, and made it possible for Explorhino to open programs for students up to grade 12.

There were a lot of hurdles to jump over during the planning and implementation. Susanne Garreis remembers: "Strictly speaking, Explorhino today became what it is because of a need for money and space." In November 2008 as the endowment was being founded, just when everything had been set up, interest rates crashed. At the same time, more students were registering at the university than ever before; everything burst a little at the seams. The result was no rooms of their own and half the budget they wanted. "The plan to make a museum like Technorama in Winterthur couldn't be translated into reality," explained Dr. Garreis and added proudly "Over the past 9 years, we've managed to get through the drought with flexibility and mobility. The elementary schools are especially happy to get the Explorhino workers and students into their classrooms to bring experiments into the classroom."

Moving into the Bohlschule education center in the 2015/2016 school year was an important milestone in Explorhino's story. "We finally had our own rooms and a workshop, and finally enough space to put our collection of teaching materials," said Susanne Garreis.

The next milestone is coming up: putting up the new Explorhino Science Center in Hochschule Aalen's Beethovenstraße campus. 120 exhibits are going to be put out to experience. Then, explorhino will get its own building for its own even more attractive program for everyone that is curious and wants to stay.



Nico Mösner (left) and Luca Lutz with their award winning smart chicken coop.

This is Explorhino

Experimenting by yourself: Every handling leaves its own mark in the mind and improves understanding. Putting your whole mind to the task of learning reality strengthens your trust in your own understanding of the world and in your abilities.

Success: Experiments that work motivate students to do more: Self-sustaining research is ideally supported with input, kids and teens should experience for themselves that technology and science explainable and reproducible.

Role models: Information needs to be relayed through people that are themselves excited and love what they do. Kids and teens don't just say "I also want to do that", but rather, "I want to be like them."

Learning as a lifelong process: Learning and research don't depend on your age. Parents are also brought into the projects, teachers and parents alike continue to be educated.

Positive opinion of technical fields: Explorhino shows an attractive and realistic picture of engineering, shows all kinds of possibilities for a career, lets school children have contact with other school children, college students and businesses, and helps establish internships at businesses.

Monika Theiss Public Relations Director

Indian Consulate General visits University

Sugandh Rajaram was invited to Aalen University by President Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schneider. The consulate general from the Republic of India learned about the fields of study, research projects, and numerous co-ops that the university maintains with the South Asian country. Rajaram was happy to learn about the many Indian students at the University of Aalen—there are 72 master students enrolled. The University of Aalen maintains numerous co-ops and relationships with India, for example, since 2003, a co-op with Jawaharlal Nehru University of Technology in Hyderabad and in the last year, a new co-op with Symbiosis University of Applied Sciences in Indore was signed. "This signing means a union for a strategic partnership with the Rajagiri School of Engineering and Technology in Kochi" said Pr. Dr. Jürgen Trost, who is working to build up relationships with India.

ssk



To South Africa!

Master's students at the Central University of Technology

Sixteen masters students in mechanical engineering participated in the first ever foreign study week to South Africa. Throughout the week, the students went to lectures and took exciting trips. The students received a warm welcome from their lecturer, Prof. Deseré Kokt of Central University of Technology (CUT) in Bloemfontein. She gave lectures on personnel management for 4 days. The trips outside the lecture hall were just as exciting. There were two company visits on the program, one to BMW in Rosslyn and another to Atlantis Foundries. There was a Safari in Pilanesberg National Park where the group saw elephants, giraffes, cheetahs and zebras up close. At the end of the trip, there was a visit to Cape Town.

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The Man Who Swims With Sharks

White sand, crystal clear water, a dream view of the Indian Ocean, spectacular sunsets... Cottesloe Beach is one of the most beautiful city beaches in Western Australia. 15 minutes from Perth and 50 meters from Nico Oefele's shared apartment with an ocean view. Oefele talks about his semester in Australia with huge enthusiasm and a little melancholy. The half year went by ridiculously fast. Nico Oefele organized the trip himself, without the help of any of the University of Aalen's co-op contracts. "That's why I had to pay tuition fees myself, which wasn't cheap. It was really helpful to have the support of the Deutschlandstipendium (National German Scholarship)," he explains.

Nico Oefele is one of 34 students at Aalen University who got substantial help from the Deutschland-Stipendium. They are given to students from whom you can expect great things in their studies and in their careers. In order to qualify for the scholarship, good grades are just as important as community engagement and the successful mastery of life and career. The people

who qualify get at least 300 Euros per month for two semesters. Private entities, like corporations, foundations or alumni, pay for half, with the other half being paid for by the state.



Nico Oefele

"I would encourage everyone to apply for the Deutschland-Stipendium. It gave me a lot of flexibility and experience," says Nico Oefele, who is being supported by Voith GmbH. He heard about it through a friend and decided to register. He was very happy that everything with the application went OK. "It really is a financial help. It's how I managed to realize my dream of spending a semester abroad in Australia." Oefele was excited about the Down Under for years, having graduated high school and spent the subsequent 5 months in New Zealand wwoofing. Wwoofing is short for "Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms," and is an opportunity to work on a organic farms in exchange for free room and board.

"It was a great opportunity to get to know a country and its people, much better than doing it through a travel agency" said Oefele, who comes from Nördlingen. There were a few curious experiences included, like working for a family who maintains a 600 hectare estate with access to the sea owned by a Swiss Billionaire. "It was kind of surreal," laughed Oefele. It was a good time, and he liked the people there. It was clear to him that he wanted to go back for his semester

abroad, and also, that he would engage with the other side of the world as a beneficiary of the Deutschland-Stipendium.

While he was preparing for his trip, Oefele found out about the North Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club via the internet. It was founded in 1918 and was one of the first Surf and lifeguarding clubs in West Australia. As a passionate athlete, Oefele enjoyed it a lot.



Nico Oefele at Cottesloe Beach: one of the most beautiful city beaches in Western Australia

When he was a teenager, he was at the soccer boarding school for FC Nürnberg, but he decided against a career in soccer in favor of travel and study. Since then, he has taken up the Triathlon. "Part of it is the discipline of swimming; training to be a surf lifeguard helps with that," he describes, "coincidentally, one of my flat mates also worked as a full-time lifeguard. I really had a

good time with him."

After his successful training to be a lifeguard, Nico Oefele was constantly patrolling the beach and helped the full-time lifeguards with patrol flights over the coast. "We patrolled for sharks in the helicopter. It was really cool!" said the 24-year-old and added "I'm an adrenaline junkie who always has to try new things." Fortunately, a big adrenaline rush because of direct contact with sharks never happened: "I saw some from the helicopter, but luckily, I never saw one when I was in the water. Of course, sometimes you get paranoid, since sharks can swim pretty fast." It was hard to get too paranoid, though, when all the Australians are so relaxed: "I got to know a lot of good friends as a result of my working with the North Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club. It was a great group," said Oefele. "And I could give



Nico Oefele (right) with the lifeguards

something back to the region that was my home for half a year." Saying goodbye to Australia was tough for him, but now, he's busy finishing his Bachelor thesis on block chain technology. Oefele wants to do his master's after that, and, of course, go back abroad. The passionate triathlete brought back his red and yellow Lifesaver gear, which have been retired to his closet. Maybe at some point, they'll come back out.

Saskia Stüven-Kazi Communication

Career

KarMen Plus

Mentoring for female students and scientists

KarMenPlus is a mentoring program that was originally intended for female students. The name of the program, KarMen, is a portmanteau of "Karriere" (career) and "Mentoring". The "Plus" is for the science mentoring, because since 2016, in addition to female students, experienced mentors help female scientists plan their careers in science or else find a leadership position.

Twelve months of intense talks, personal exchanges and valuable life experience—that's what science

mentoring means for the participants. Whether the student-mentor pair meets at the university or in their free time is up to the two of them. The content and themes of the meetings are just as personalized. While one pair might opt to tackle writing a paper or starting a new project to get a promotion, others pairs might choose to ask and answer personal questions about life and career plans; "What happens after a promotion," "Can I get to a place in my career that right now I can only dream of?"

The themes are just as broad as the personalities in the group. It doesn't matter if they're looking to become professors or businesspeople, the mentees get completely personalized support. Aside from the individual meetings of the mentor teams, the program also has a lot of secondary materials. Group coaching lets the mentees contribute their own strengths and competencies, and learn from other mentees' experiences. The small groups are very valuable. The mentees get openness, honesty and trust in the safe space set up by the group. Networking and group meetings give the girls a good chance to share experience and expand their own professional networks.



Mentor Prof. Carsten Lecon surrounded by mentees Marina Burdack, Dr. Sandra Meinhard and Sylvia Kraus (right to left).

Sabine BraunKarMen Plus Project Coordinator



Think Big! Start up.

Up until now, startups have been a very unattractive option for a lot of people in the region. Unemployment is low, East Wuerttemberg is full of countless companies and global leaders that take students directly from the university. Working independently doesn't seem to be necessary for most. The university wants to change everyone's minds, even the businesses'.

Since the innovation center got finished, startups have found a home in Aalen. This gives the university an important job: to convince students that starting a company is an actual alternative. The university should quell students' fears as early as their 1st semester. "They shouldn't immediately connect startups with

risk" explains Prof. Dr. Holger Held. The professor of Business Startups and Strategic Planning is a co-founder of the initiative stAArt-UP!, whose goal is exciting people to plan, talk about ideas, and develop.

Whoever wants to follow up on an idea can find ideas in the "Incubator" in the innovation center InnoZ at the Burren Campus. A lot of people operate here hand in hand: University, businesses, the chamber of handicrafts, development associations, and the chamber of commerce and industry (IHK).

The East Wuerttemberg IHK, all the universities, community and regional business interests like banks, and other partner institutions have set the goal of creating a new spirit of founding. "East Wuerttemberg has to become a part of the startups scene" said Markus Schmid, leader of the "Business Founding and Support" section of the chamber of commerce and industry. "There are exciting business models and successful startup teams in the fields of 3D printing, software and IT, light materials engineering, optics and the food sector."

Holger Held: "Start-ups are becoming ever more important in supporting corporations; they are dependent on the flexibility of young entrepreneurs." Markus Schmid: "We are seeing successful middle class people at the cutting edge and innovative startups with enormous potential in the world of Industry 4.0." On July 14, 2017, the regional start-up ecosystem in East Wuerttemberg will be showing itself at the trade show in Stuttgart. Startups from the region, along with established members of the middle class, will be presenting here and networking with other people in the country.

Here startups can ask for mentors with contacts and experience who can help inspire the entrepreneurial spirit.

"We are excited to use the founding and innovation center to help bring Aalen University into the start up initiative" said Dr. Andreas Ehrhardt, Innovation manager and InnoZbusiness leader. The innovation center is not just there for the entrepreneurial students in every field, but also has offers to help every entrepreneur in the region. Ehrhardt: "Even corporations that aren't the most involved with us are welcome. If they want to partner up with the strongest research University in the state and profit from it, they are welcome to do so." President Prof. Dr. Schneider: "The startups should become a motor that helps power the economy and creates good relationships with the companies in the Ostabkreis."

Monika Theiss

International

We are all ambassadors!

With globalization, intercultural communication takes on a deeper meaning. Different cultures have different ways of understanding one another, and because of that, it's not enough to know the language; you also need to be able to understand and interpret behavior.

As the global workplace, mobility, open borders, mass tourism, and new communication technologies become more prevalent, intercultural skills become more and more important.

What is considered to be normal, natural, good, pretty or important? In an everyday context and in the usual environment of friends and the family, it might still be easy to define those attributes. But what about the more international environment of studies nowadays at universities, not to mention the future workplace of a businessperson or engineer who will most probably work within an international setting too?

Students from over 60 nations on every continent of the world come to study at Aalen University. This makes intercultural competency even more important. At the latest, the students will find out during their internships, before they become professionals, just how international corporations are: "Wow! They work with foreign colleagues every day, and there are special requirements for doing so?!" In the face of these challenges, the students should start learning intercultural competency as soon as possible. This is why programs like the University of Aalen's buddy program are so important.

By helping foreign students for one or two semesters, students can get valuable experience and plenty of tips from foreign students, thereby developing cultural competency. The success of the Buddy Program led to it being put the framework of a state-wide initiative called "Structure models for Furthering Student Success." Within this frame, the pilot project of the International Relations Office of Aalen University focuses in particular on the study success of degree seeking foreign students.



Aalen University students take on their role as engaged diplomats at Jönköping University's international week, a Swedish partner of Aalen University.

Every student at the university that wants to study in a different country is an important ambassador too. Students Silke Bee, David Köditz (both Industrial Engineering students), and Denis Stein (Industrial Management) can tell from their experience. As part of their studies, all three participated in the International Week at a partner university in Jönköping, Sweden, representing Aalen University honorably.

international

They started getting ready for the trip weeks in advance. They held international meetings, planned presentation booths, figured out what they were going to wear, made programs and presentations with the help of interested students, and prepared delicacies. The German table, far from being satisfied with something as basic as meatballs, pizza or hot dogs, went for Maultaschen, Spätzle and Pretzels. During the event, the students got their peers excited about Aalen University. The things the Swedish students were most interested in were the master courses in Polymer Technology and Business Development/Product management & Startup management.



MAKEATHON team Julian Bofinger, Marius Schmitt, Prof. Dr. Bernhard Höfig, Prof. Dr. Peter Eichinger, Christian Wenzel, B. Eng. Julian Fuchs, B. Eng. Philipp Althaus, Patrick Henrich, Tim Schmidt (from left to right) at the MAKEATHON in Spain.

There was more internationalism at the "MAKEATHON" Workshop, where ideas for future technological breakthroughs were exchanged. It gave it a certain appeal that it was located at Gran Canaria in Spain.

The topics, like future breakthroughs in robotics. cars, digitalization and industry also helped add some panache. There were 12 teams who participated, made up of 73 students from 19 different universities and 12 different countries. The 12 international groups figured out new technological innovations and presented them to representatives from various industries. Philipp Althaus, Julian Fuchs, Tim Schmidt, Julian Bofinger, Marius Schmitt, Christian Wenzel and Patrick Heinrich are all either getting a bachelor's in mechatronics or a master's in systems engineering. "We wanted students from different semesters and from bachelor's and master's tracks on our team," explain Prof. Dr. Bernhard Höfig and Prof. Dr. Peter Eichinger, who accompanied the students. The Aalen team got support from two Italian students and one Spanish student, and had the job of creating an indoor tracking setup for a production facility with Bluetooth and wifi. They got this job from Mitsubishi Electric, who wanted to make more security mechanisms for one of their robots.

It becomes clear that here as well, students are prepared to perform with close to real world project work in an international setting at an early stage, presenting the results of their work in front of company representatives.

In view of a long term skills shortage in the region, the four state Universities in East Wuerttemberg, Aalen University, the University for Professional Education Heidenheim, the University of Design Schwäbisch Gmünd, and the Teacher Education University, together with the Regional Economic Development Corporation East Wuerttemberg (WiRO), are trying to strengthen the ties of international students and graduates with the region of East Wuerttemberg. For this reason, they are starting in close cooperation with the regional and local governments a certification program to make international students honorary ambassadors of the East Wuerttemberg Region. Foreign students will be certified through hands-on integration activities and events in connection with business-related networks and cultural organizations. Indeed, already many foreign students like the East Wuerttemberg Region, with its strong identity, job opportunities, an attractive multicultural climate, and a distinctive culture of welcoming, and decide to start their

career at a company in the region. Even students that decide to go back home after completing their degree can help play an important role in developing the East Wuerttemberg Region. As an Ambassador for the region, they can use their experiences to let the world know about the advantages in culture, free time, sports, work force, job opportunities, and careers the region has to offer. You can find more information about the program at www.tie-talents.de. Whether you are going out or staying home, every student has a diplomatic function they can take on for the university and the region. It's important to be aware of the role and prepare yourself for it early. It is in your best interest do so in our rapidly globalizing world.

Pascal Cromm
 Director International Relations



Foreign Students can obtain a honorary ambassador certificate while studying in East Wuerttemberg

India Impressed



Technology in Hyderabad. In the past year, they established a co-op with Symbiosis University of Applied Sciences in Indore and recently another with Rajagiri School of Engineering and Technology in Kochi. There are 72 Indian students currently studying at the University of Aalen. Gerhard Schneider found out that it's a small world, even in the giant country of India, as he tapped a young Indian man on the shoulder at one of the biggest Machine expos in South and Southeast Asia. "He was a master's student that I taught. His father is the boss of Mapal India. He sat next to the Minister of Economy, Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut and State secretary Petra Olschowski at one of the receptions, gushing about Aalen and the university." They made important contacts on the trip and the president got to present on Ostwürttemberg's advantages: "Winfried Kretschman was impressed by how well-connected the University is with the local businesses."

SSK

We are blown away... from Portugal to Aalen

Olá.

Being 45 and coming back to school for a master's? My former boss didn't think that I would turn my plans into a reality. But here I am—I have been working on my master's thesis in mechatronics since January. Lifelong learning is something that I think is extremely important. In Portugal, where I'm from, I studied electromechanics and worked for a few companies that supplied parts for car companies. Lately, I was doing quality control for gauges. I had a lot of contact with German companies because of this, and I learned a few things about the way Republic German companies operate. The Germans are very goaloriented and have well-established rules. There's always a result at the end. I like that.

That's why I wanted to go to Germany for my master's. The setup here at the University is really nice. The labs have the newest technology, they react to new trends, and they look to the future. I also like the close contact that they have with companies. And I love how supportive everyone here is. I feel at home here. Almost. The Germans would do well to take it a little easier sometimes. What I notice in particular is that you don't talk in the streets much, and it's completely quiet at night. In Portugal, there's always something happening in the streets, even at night. We especially like to celebrate Wednesdays. I miss that, along with the ocean and fresh meat.



Portugal

Language: Portuguese

Capital: Lisbon

State form: Parliamentary

Area: 92,345 km²

Number of inhabitants: 10.6 million (2016)

Attractions:

Algarve, Porto, Castle of Óbidos, Convento de Cristo, Sintra, Jerónimos Monastary

Mostly, I miss my family. My wife, my 9year-old son, and my two-year-old daughter live in Braga—about 2200 km away from Aalen! It's really hard for me to be that far away from them. Even if we skype every day or send each other letters, sometimes it's only a small comfort. But I'm not going to complain too much; it was my decision to come here. And who knows? Maybe my family will come here soon. I would love to work for a German company here for a few years. The job market in Portugal isn't exactly rosy. Unemployment is at 12 percent, for people under 30, it's at 30 percent! It would be great if I could get a job here. The international experiences are the treasure that I will bring back home. I think it's perfect to be doing this at 45.

> Adeus! José Alexandre Alves de Figueiredo





We are blown away... from Aalen to Britain

Hello,

are you all right?" That's how they would greet me pretty much every day in Great Britain. I did my internship for six months in South London. Aside from the turbulence of the city, I got to know the culture and the Brits. Before I started my studies in International Sales Management and Technology, I got a technical diploma and decided to get credentials to do something in medicine. While I was in London, I was able to help one of the affiliates of Rolls-Royce Power Systems AG in their After Sales department. It was a great opportunity to get a lot of job experience and work on my English.

Because I had to go abroad for my major, I got a lot of help from Hochschule Aalen's International Office. After the applications got filed, everything went pretty fast. The company took care of everything except the flight. I flew relaxed all the way to London, and lived in a house with four other people doing internships. It was always my dream to spend some time in England. That's why I got there 10 days early. The weather was perfect in the middle of August to take a road trip along the south and west coasts of England. While doing that, I found out about Cornish Cream Tea. During my internship, I also took a lot of trips and can recommend the beloved coastal city of Brighton, and a detour along the way to Cambridge and Bath.



Great Britain
Language: English
Capital: London.

Constitution: Constitutional Monarchy

Area: 243,820 km²
Number of inhabitants: 64.60 Million (2016)
Sights: House of
Parliament and Big Ben,
British Museum,

Stonehenge, Canterbury Cathedral, Edinburgh Castle



The biggest highlight was Central London, because the city is an unbelievable multiplicity of activities and landmarks.

I'm very thankful that I got the chance to collect these valuable experiences. I think the thing that struck me the most was how I could develop so much in so little time. You grow up, whether you like it or not, and you learn what it means to be self-sufficient. Also, your horizons broaden automatically, just because of the cultural differences, and you begin to see the world with a fresh pair of eyes. I will definitely remember these beautiful moments for my entire life.

See you later! Sinem Ilhan





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By Aalen University

In the next issue:

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