



PHOTO BY KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

ZUGSPITZE. We have lift off!

JENISH ZALARIA, GENERATION 2022

After quite a long pause, it was happening again. We were going to Zugspitze — top of Germany, at 2,962 meters, by hiking to visit the Schneefernerhaus environmental research station — thanks to the M.Sc. WASTE program, and our professor Dr. Ulrich Vogt and his research team.

The journey was nothing short of extraordinary, filled with valuable insights and learning in the field of air quality, breathtaking landscapes from the German and Austrian Alps, and memories with my friends that will last a lifetime.

On June 5, 2023 — World Environment Day — we departed from Stuttgart and reached the KIT Institute of Meteorology and Climate Research Atmospheric Environmental Research (IMK-IFU) in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, where we had the chance to delve into the world of innovation and research using measurements and modelling to investigate the bio-geo-chemical and physical processes responsible for the interactions between climate, vegetation, soils and water availability. Surrounded by like-minded individuals and friends, the visit to KIT Campus Alpin was an immersive experience, offering a glimpse into scientific advancements. The campus visit opened doors to a world of possibilities and inspired a renewed passion for our respective fields.

Day 2 brought the real challenge as we began the hike to Umweltforschungsstation Schneefernerhaus, keeping in mind Dr. Vogt's words: "No risk, no fun. No pain, no gain!" We started from the Austrian side with lots of determination to scale the mountain in front of us. Just to keep the readers informed, for some of us the hike was indeed difficult and if you are one of the chosen ones to attend this excursion, start jogging the day you are informed about the possibility of the excursion, in order to conquer the peaks.

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MESSAGES FROM THE m.sc. waste office



“As always, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you to a novel issue of our M.Sc. WASTE Newsletter.

This time, we are presenting a refreshed design as well as some updates regarding our office team. Since last June Ms. Laura Scheurer, M.A. joined us as the new Course Manager. We are glad to have you in our team, Laura!

Sadly, we also had to bid farewell to one of our student assistants, Mr. Vinay Kumar Shetkar. We acknowledge Vinay for his generous support and engagement, and wish him much success in all his future projects!

Furthermore, we are very pleased to officially announce the support of new student assistants.

From M.Sc. WASTE, Ms. Laura Espitia Bolaños and Mr. Kazi Akib Bin Asad have started working during the last summer term, while Mr. Satheeskanth Navaratnam, master’s student of electrical engineering, just started this November to complete our renewed team.

Thanks to all of you for your commitment and willingness to make our M.Sc. WASTE even better! I wish us all lots of success and wonderful time working together.”

Dr.-Ing. Carolina Acuña Caro
Course Director, M.Sc. WASTE

Welcome to the M.Sc. WASTE family!

“My name is Laura Scheurer and I joined the M.Sc. WASTE team in mid-June 2023 as Course Manager.

My work as a Course Manager is very diverse and varied. The tasks range from answering various e-mails and helping to organize different events to drawing up HiWi contracts. I am also responsible for the finances of the degree program and for writing letters for the authorities on behalf of the students, for example. Every day here is different and it’s always interesting to see what comes next.

I’m originally from near Stuttgart, but I’ve been living abroad since 2017. I lived and worked in Boston until 2020. I lived in Innsbruck in Austria from 2020 to mid-2023. There I worked as assistant and project manager for the Entrepreneurial School (MCI) in the Biotechnology Department.

As I have always enjoyed interacting with students and I have a Master’s degree in educational sciences, I was delighted when I was offered the position of Course Manager in the international Master’s program M.Sc. WASTE in summer 2023.

I discovered yoga a few years ago and have been practicing it regularly in my free time ever since. I also love traveling or relaxing with a good book. I also like going out for a delicious meal and spending quality time with friends and family.”



GENERATION 2022

class speakers



**Sahar
Babazadeh**



Being the class speaker of M.Sc. WASTE Generation 2022 is an immensely rewarding experience, as I have the opportunity to interact more with my classmates, other generations, professors, and academic staff. As a result, I have made more friends.

As a class speaker, you have the opportunity to be part of the study committee and bring up your colleagues' opinions to the committee meeting. In this past year, we created delightful memories all together with my classmates helping with the preparation of the graduation ceremony of Generation 2020, Christmas WIM, Summer Party and more.

I always appreciate how we all organize events together. We are from different countries and cultures and I believe this makes every event more enjoyable, since you get to know different cultures and have the opportunity to know about their traditions. Now, after a year, cities in different countries that I haven't had the chance to visit are not just dots on the map for me anymore. It represents the good moments I spent with my colleagues from all those places.

I am also very thankful to Dr.-Ing. Carolina Acuña Caro and other academic staff who gave us all these opportunities, and to my classmates and especially Georgios for always supporting and helping me throughout this year.

A little over a year ago, Sahar and I were elected class representatives for M.Sc. WASTE Generation 2022. Perhaps a student evaluation of our work would be more constructive, but to quote Frank Sinatra, "That's life", so get on with it.

This past year has taught me a lot about our class, beyond the actual content of our courses. We have come together and got to know each other through common activities. I think that everyone feels comfortable talking to either Sahar or me about any problems or aspirations they may have.

It is always interesting to see how others perceive the same events as you, and this position has definitely given me the opportunity to experience this first hand. As class representatives, we try to bridge any differences that may arise and unite our group because, as cliché as it may sound, we are truly stronger together.

I cannot claim to be in a position (as of yet) to write a juicy exposé of my time in "the room where it happened". However, I would like to thank you all for allowing me to be present in those closed-door meetings, and for trying to organise and share some (hopefully) lovely, common memories.



**Georgios
Koilaridis**



EXCURSION

conquering zugspitze

Sometime around 2 PM we reached Knorrhütte for lunch, the mid-point of the hike, only to know we wouldn't reach our destination as the cable car for the last 200 meters had stopped operating.

But then, our saviour Miriam Chacón Mateos, convinced the authorities to keep the cable car operating for some aspiring students on the path to conserve and preserve our precious environment. As soon as we received the news from her, we resumed our hike and reached the top finally in the evening, struck with joy and pain. "No pain, no gain" indeed.



The next day, we were given a guided tour of the Schneefernerhaus station. At an altitude of 2,650 meters on the south face of the Zugspitze, just below the summit, it is the highest environmental research station in Germany. Essentially, it is a measurement station for projects led by various research institutions focusing on the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and cryosphere. We also went up to the summit to visit the weather station and looking at the wide ranges from up top is a view I will never forget.

Navigating challenging terrains and sharing moments of triumph at the measurement station on Zugspitze created a sense of unity within our team. The memories we forged during this excursion will undoubtedly be cherished, forming the foundation of lasting friendships that extend beyond the confines of our personal and professional lives.

Three days of physical tiredness vanished when we took a dip in the not-so-cold waters of Eibsee at the foot of the Zugspitze. In conclusion, the excursion was more than a journey; it was an adventure that encapsulated the spirit of exploration and learning. From conquering peaks to delving into the forefront of research, every moment was an opportunity for growth and discovery. I am grateful for the experiences and the knowledge gained during this remarkable excursion, making it a highlight of my year.

Here's to the adventures that broaden our horizons and the friendships that make the journey worthwhile!



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

a year that was

ASSUNTA MUTHONI, GENERATION 2022

When I came here, I never expected the community that is the M.Sc. WASTE fraternity. It has been a delight to be embraced by this family that fosters togetherness. It has made meeting students and alumni so much easier. They offer important advice on how to balance study and life in a foreign country.

As a DAAD scholar, my student life has been relatively convenient. The scholarship allows me to focus on my studies and explore other personal interests without financial strains. The scholarship is made much more special and meaningful by how invested DAAD is in our success. Meet-and-greets with alumni and excursions have offered me an indispensable way to understand and appreciate this country.

DAAD also holds weekend-long conferences for its beneficiaries where we get to know each other. Here, I finally met the faces behind the e-mails and phone calls, a team of individuals from all over the world. Imagine my delight on finding the DAAD official responsible for my region could speak Swahili, a tongue only spoken in East Africa. It made me feel heard, seen and appreciated.

Furthermore, there is DAAD Freundkreis, a group of alumni and current scholarship holders that organizes excursions to different cities. This is such a wonderful opportunity to meet peers from different generations and explore the rich culture of this place.



PHOTO BY PRATISTHA SHRESTHA

In addition, there are a multitude of opportunities outside of study that should be pursued. I was privileged to attend a summer school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, sponsored by several organizations, including DAAD. It was one of the most fun and informative experiences I have had.

I always thought that the best part of visiting different countries would be the things I would see. But it's the people, the culture and the language that make any place special. This realization has enabled me to appreciate my culture more as well as the cultures of all the other international students I have met here in Germany.

Visit to EEW Göppingen plant



Visit to MVV Mannheim plant



Visit to AWRM Backnang plant



Visit to SES Mühlhausen plant



WASTE SUMMMER PARTY

rain or shine, we dance!



LAURA ESPITIA BOLAÑOS, GENERATION 2022

On July 28 at IFK, students, alumni, teachers and close friends of the M.Sc. WASTE family enjoyed the traditional Summer Party, this year organized by the Generation 2022.

We all wanted the event to be perfect and to create beautiful memories that we could keep in our hearts for a long time, and I have to say with great satisfaction that we achieved our goal.

The organizing committee experienced a range of emotions, from the excitement of planning the event to the stress of an expected thunderstorm on the event day, and joyful moments during the party to frantic moments cleaning up and putting everything back in place. In spite of the terrible weather forecast, our party had to go on, so we joined forces and adapted to the scenario by changing it a little.



We kept the barbecue area outside the building, our many heroes grilled delicious vegetables and the meats under a tent. Inside the building we created a different atmosphere. We had a dance room where we danced to the *Macarena*, like we do at every event. The same room was also the stage for our international rock band, who rocked the crowd. In the hallway we set up the cash register and a fancy bar with fresh fruits, cocktails and Brazilian brigadeiros. Our well known room V23.01 was the main dining room, while its entryway became the spot for the shisha corner.

It felt amazing to see people showing up super early in the morning with high energy levels committed to participate in all the activities we had planned beforehand. Without a doubt, it was a day of great fun, exquisite food and much needed teamwork. I would like to express my gratitude to all the hands that helped to make this day unforgettable. We have set a high standard for next year!



EXTRA-CURRICULAR activities



Volunteering for Global Learning with WUS

DIEGO JARRIN VALENCIA, GENERATION 2022

On June 2023, I was selected to participate in a volunteering project called “Grenzenlos / Across Boundaries – Global Learning in Vocational Education” by World University Service (WUS). This project partners with vocational schools across German federal states helping students from Africa, Asia and Latin America gain qualifications in global learning.

The primary aim is to foster environmental responsibility in vocational school students by educating them about value-added processes and encouraging critical thinking about opportunities and risks with globalization. This program also promotes intercultural understanding by providing direct contact with international students.

To date, I have presented on several UN Sustainable Development Goals. One of my favorite presentations was regarding “Elektromüll” (electronic waste) where students learned how improper disposal of electronic equipment can damage different world locations.

Moreover, volunteering in Germany offers a unique opportunity to contribute to meaningful projects that address critical issues like education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. These programs often provide a platform for personal and professional growth, enhancing your skill set and broadening your horizon. This project especially helps me to improve my technical German skills.

In conclusion, participating in a volunteering program in Germany, as facilitated by organizations like WUS, has been an enriching journey that not only contributes to the greater good but also leaves me with lasting memories and a deeper appreciation for the world.

Exploring the world of environmental technology at Pollutec

KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD, GENERATION 2022

Attending Pollutec 2023 in Lyon, France was an eye-opening and transformative experience that left a mark on my journey in environmental technology. It was a convergence of innovation, knowledge, and passion, all dedicated to addressing the pressing environmental challenges of our time.

The vibrant atmosphere was contagious, and I couldn't help but be inspired by the diverse array of exhibitors, ideas, and products from across the globe. What struck me the most was the importance of collaboration at the event. Pollutec was not just an exhibition; it was a global community of change-makers, all focused on a common goal: creating a greener and more sustainable world. The experience taught me that true progress in environmental technology can only be achieved through the collective efforts of passionate individuals, organizations, and nations.

The discussions and live demonstrations were particularly impactful, providing practical insights and a glimpse into the innovative solutions that are shaping the future of environmental technology. I left Lyon with tons of conference goodies, a renewed sense of purpose and a deep appreciation for the role we all play in safeguarding our planet.

As I reflect on my experience at Pollutec, I am more committed than ever to making a positive impact in the field of environmental technology. It was more than an event; it was a catalyst for change, and I'm excited to be part of this transformative journey.



ASIA TO EUROPE TO AFRICA

a scholar's tale

PRATISTHA SHRESTHA, GENERATION 2021

As a child living in the breathtaking heights of Nepal, I was always allured by the stories of European cities; cobbled streets, captivating museums, tempting food and marvelous tales planted seeds of wanderlust in my heart. The seed grew into a tree when I came to the University of Stuttgart, providing me with an opportunity to stretch its branches into academic horizons and the rich tapestry of cultures, history and natural beauty.

My first international flight brought me to Stuttgart, my second home and the launchpad for my European expedition. Even though Germany has a lot to offer, from charming Heidelberg to cosmopolitan Berlin, my adventures began with a delightful taste of Central European culture: Bratislava and Budapest, the latter also known as the “Pearl of the Danube”.

Coming from a landlocked country, tales of rhythmic waves and deep azure to brilliant turquoise colours had filled my heart. As manifested, France charmed me with the sun-kissed city of Nice, on the French Riviera. The stunning, silvery blue Mediterranean offered my first dip into the sea. French cities hold world-famous landmarks, and Strasbourg's Christmas market is not to be missed. It is one of Europe's finest, welcoming you to a winter wonderland of festive lights and holiday cheer.



Next, Italy! From Venice's canals and carnival to the fashion-forward streets of Milan, it was just the beginning. Rome marveled at me with its ancient glory, be it the Colosseum, Roman Forum or the awe-inspiring Pantheon. From the Leaning Tower of Pisa to the Renaissance masterpieces of Florence and the unplanned trip to Pompeii – what a journey. Along the way, there was no resisting temptations. So I travelled to Naples to taste the true essence of the classic Neapolitan pizza. The Italians reminded me of home, of Nepalese people: warm, passionate and vibrant.

From the grand Rhine Falls in Switzerland to melodious Salzburg, from thrills in the Alps to Belgian delicacies, from the priest on the Charles Bridge in Prague to the sea organ in Zadar, Croatia, the list of experiences is endless. However, what is the same is my curiosity to learn how each city manages its waste and what their green initiatives are. That's another long article to share.

My story transcends Europe. It takes an exhilarating leap into Africa, to Ethiopia's vibrant capital, Addis Ababa. The Summer School program there provided me with learning opportunities with diverse fellows. I made unforgettable memories delving into the rich African culture and traditions – the communal dining experience, local arts, music and unique wildlife. Not to forget the incredible taste of Ethiopian coffee, where it all came from.

As I reflect on my global voyage, I can say that the pursuit of knowledge knows no boundaries. Beyond pages of books and four walls of the classroom, tangible experiences of travelling, observing, and immersing oneself in the landscapes, cultures and stories that the world has to offer is key to understanding the true beauty of life. Dear readers, I encourage you to stress less and embrace the opportunities of studying abroad. Like that, I can't wait to see where my next chapter takes me and which wonders I will uncover.

GENERATION 2023

class speakers



**Mohamed
Kotaish**



I am Mohamed Kotaish, a chemical engineering graduate from the American University of Beirut. Being passionate about traveling and food, I always seek gastronomic adventures and opportunities to explore new cultures and cuisines.

I am extremely excited to be, alongside Lizeth Marian, a class speaker of Generation 2023. With the support and collective effort and creativity of our generation, I look forward to identifying new ways and avenues to make our educational journey as smooth and pleasant as possible and to boost everyone's personal and professional development so that we can all make the best out of the upcoming two years.

I believe this role is the right opportunity to build strong connections not just with my classmates but also with our esteemed professors and previous generations, enriching this sense of family that our program aims to instill in every one of us. As much as I believe this role requires a special level of diplomacy and coordination and will carry its unique challenges, I feel this position will be a learning journey, allowing me to grow personally and getting to know more about the German social environment and work ethics.

I wish a prosperous academic year to everyone and I look forward to many joyful adventures and successful milestones together.

I am Liz, a new student of the M.Sc. WASTE program. I am from Colombia and have been recently elected one of the class speakers of Generation 2023. Even though I have not begun my formal duties, I can foresee exciting challenges ahead.

I clearly remember while being in the official welcoming event from the program that we should designate two class speakers from our generation. Nobody seemed to be willing to participate, and my plan was never to be a class speaker anyway.

However, I should say, after hearing some experiences from past generation speakers and all that the role involved, somehow I felt encouraged to apply. It turned out that with a voting percentage of 48 percent in my favor, among three other candidates, I was elected as a class representative.

Coming to Germany was the most far-reaching decision I have ever made, I promised myself to make the most of this experience and I think I have already started. I am certain this opportunity will allow me to connect with many other colleagues, to identify which are the difficulties they might be going through and being able not only to convey them to the academic committee but also to propose solutions and ideas that effectively contribute to the program's improvement.

I am so grateful to all the students from Generation 2023. Let's make our time here an unforgettable experience for all of us!



**Lizeth Marian
López Hormaza**



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

a new endeavor



SHISHIR DANDE, GENERATION 2023

Germany, so far, has been a journey of discovery for me.

A couple of times, I wondered if cars here are driverless, only to find out that they follow the right-hand drive and therefore on the left you don't see a steering wheel. The simplicity in German house addresses is crystal clear. In areas such as traffic, waste management and pollution, Germany shows its love for rules and regulations.

The waste collection system in Stuttgart is a new thing for me. Here, you have to separate garbage into three categories: One for plastics, one for paper and another for food waste. Bulky waste like furniture is disposed of by appointment. This is principle of segregation at source in action. Another principle we learned in class is the extended producer responsibilities, for example in the battery and electronic equipment production. The systematic methods day in and day out are a good sight. In recycling, too, you can return a bottle for recycling, and you get money in return — the *pfandpflicht*. A simple yet effective way of collecting waste, to recycle.

In the class, we are learning how strict European norms for vehicle emissions have contributed in reducing air pollution. Low Emission Zones are created to restrict vehicles under certain pollution standards to run. We are also learning the methods of sewage transport in the state of Baden-Württemberg. The sewage separation system in this region is unique, as taught in our waste water treatment course.

All these make me believe I am at the right place to not only learn about environmental protection but also see it very much in action. On a lighter note, despite all these rules, I think the biggest challenge is removing the fallen leaves on the walking paths and roads in autumn.

USWATUN HASANAH, GENERATION 2023

A desperate inclination to learn, explore and a desire to find solutions to the deteriorating state of our environment had led me to apply for the M.Sc. WASTE program. Since protecting the environment has been a lifelong goal of mine, I am eager to contribute to Bangladesh's and eventually the global environment, and studying here will enable me to overcome my lacking in-depth knowledge about waste management and pollution control.

So far, I have had a wonderful experience, since it feels like a family. The M.Sc. WASTE Office, especially Dr.-Ing. Carolina Acuña Caro, has been of great support to me. Leaving my child back home to pursue my dream in a foreign country is not easy for me. Thankfully, Dr. Acuña Caro gives me the advice I need, whether personal or academic.

For someone who comes from a tropical country, I found the weather in Stuttgart unpredictable. But as the German saying goes, "*Wir sind ja nicht aus Zucker*", I eventually got accustomed to it and learned to like it, in a good way. Furthermore, I would add that language is a major challenge in Germany, therefore the earlier one begins their preparations, the better.

Considering its cutting-edge curriculum in environmental and process technologies and internationalized environment, M.Sc. WASTE will be the best choice for those still deciding among three core sustainable environment-related issues: air quality control, solid waste, and wastewater treatment. Moreover, the program's practical approach towards academic training, combined with the opportunity to collaborate with people of different ages, backgrounds and cultures will act as a significant experience in preparing us as T-shaped professionals.

HIKE TO GEISLINGEN

walk. climb. rise.

ANAAN MOHAMED, GENERATION 2022

In a sun-drenched yet moderately cold October weekend, we embarked on a hiking trip to Geislingen an der Steige, nestled in the heart of the Swabian Alps. This marked the launch of a new extra-curricular activity by the WASTE Club, providing members a chance to unwind and connect. Given the program's international composition, it also served as an opportunity for participants to explore Germany and improve networking.

The hike began with a challenging climb, setting the tone for the adventure ahead. Our first stop, Helfenstein Castle, offered some photo opportunities and an early breather.

Moving on, we traversed the village of Weiler and a forest path towards another quaint *dorf* in a valley. Here, the hike took a more challenging turn. The path, steep as advertised, failed to mention its narrow and precarious nature, which was the first major challenge we faced. While the view was stunning, the fear of slipping down the hill kept us on high alert. After a tense descent, we emerged unscathed, adrenaline still pumping.

The trail led us to Waldkapelle Eybach, a charming chapel at the foot of the hill, where we took our lunch. In a bizarre twist, two colleagues who missed the initial meet-up in Stuttgart found us, 30 minutes behind but eager to catch up.

Despite deviating from our original route, our footprints (and the signs of slips, slides, falls, as well as the deathly grips on the trees) led them to us. After a well-deserved break, we set off exploring the town of Eybach, where we faced the disappointment of not finding *el baño*.

The journey continued through a steep yet relatively easy climb to Himmelsfelsen, where we enjoyed another pit stop with stunning views. The final stretch back to Geislingen train station was smooth sailing. Although the hike wasn't excessively difficult, the caring nature of the group shone through. In challenging areas, colleagues waited and assisted each other, ensuring everyone progressed safely and at unified pace.

As we reached the station after nearly five hours of hiking, a collective sense of accomplishment was palpable. The breathtaking sights of Geislingen and its beautiful yet murderous (as some would describe it) hills provided the perfect backdrop for moments of connection, resilience and collaboration. The mishaps of wrong turns, unexpected challenges and surprise appearance of more friends only added to the experience.

At the end of the day, the WASTE Club excursions are not just about conquering trails or exploring towns. It's also about expanding the bond between the generations, teachers as well as WASTE Club members.



NEWS FROM THE waste club

M.Sc. WASTE stands #TogetherForCleanAir

A webinar was organized on September 7, 2023 to observe the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies.

The event gathered M.Sc. WASTE alumni and IFK staff, namely Head of Flue Gas Cleaning and Air Quality Control department Dr. Ulrich Vogt; M.Sc. WASTE course director Dr.-Ing. Carolina Acuña Caro; research scientists Miriam Chacón Mateos and Abdul Samad; Dr. Ling He from Umweltbundesamt; Adolfo Uribe, researcher from Universidad de Talca, Chile; and Janette Mäkipää, Product Development Director at Lifa Air to discuss pressing issues related to air quality control and environmental stewardship. The webinar was moderated by Kazi Akib Bin Asad of Generation 2022.

With engaging discussions and valuable insights, the webinar underscored the importance of collective action for cleaner air and healthier communities and remains committed to fostering awareness and driving positive change to combat environmental pollution.



Generation 2023 observes World Cleanup Day



M.Sc. WASTE organized a dynamic clean-up hike on World Cleanup Day, September 16, aligning with the first welcoming event of Generation 2023. Students of the new intake embarked on the customary hike to Schloss Solitude, combining their introduction to the program with a mission to remove litter and promote responsible waste disposal.

Amidst the spirit of team building, and with support from Let's Do It Germany e.V., the participants engaged in hands-on efforts by using tools to pick up waste along the way and learning about proper disposal methods. The hike ended with a picnic and a tour of the 18th century palace.

M.Sc. WASTE remains dedicated to fostering a culture of camaraderie from early days and encouraging initiatives that contribute to a cleaner and healthier planet.

Announcing the WASTE Club's new podcast!

The WASTE Club is thrilled to announce the launch of a new podcast, WASTED, a platform designed to explore pressing issues in environmental technology through its students, alumni and teachers.

The name, a wordplay into "waste" and "education", dives into insightful discussions, interviews, and the latest trends in air quality, solid waste management, and wastewater processes, with what is taught in and out of the classroom.

The podcast is created in partnership with Hochschule der Medien. Available on major podcast platforms as well as the campus radio HORADS 88,6, the series promises to be an engaging resource for students, professionals, and enthusiasts alike. Stay tuned and subscribe now!



ALUMNI TALK

an explorer at heart

Who is Shakir Allawi? Tell us a little bit about you.

An explorer at heart with a curious soul, my journey has taken me across the oceans to the depths of my inner nature. Life flows through me in a variety of forms, whether it's music, philosophy or engineering sciences, I find myself being called to all. I find myself often in meditation or in endless jam sessions with friends and loved ones. I love connecting with people and luckily I find incredible people wherever I go.

How did you perceive the WASTE program when you started? Has your view changed now? If so, how?

While living in Hong Kong, promises to visit my European friends kept piling up. After having worked for many years, I felt the calling for a new adventure and to fulfill my promises. One evening, I stumbled upon M.Sc. WASTE on the internet, and everything about it resonated with me, from its focus on sustainability to an inclusive culture with diverse people.

I only had two days till the deadline. Luckily my application reached just in time, and I got in! As you can imagine, my views have not changed but only expanded my horizons further.

What challenges did you encounter while pursuing your master's degree, and how did you overcome them?

The biggest challenge, undoubtedly, was the Covid-19 pandemic and the harsh lockdown that followed. Isolation was hard enough but multiplying that with zero connections, no knowledge of the local language, entirely new culture, and being so far from home, it was quite a shock! Plus, all in-person orientation programs, classes and lectures were cancelled and adapting to fully online study was truly difficult. As time passed, however, I tried to contact my colleagues living on campus (luckily, we created a WhatsApp group) to go on walks on the fields behind Allmandring.

Can you share some highlights from your journey in WASTE?

Needless to say, those walks turned into meaningful relationships with people from different backgrounds, both personally, academically and professionally! The isolation led to the creation of deep friendships that I'll cherish for the rest of my life. Afterwards, once the pandemic eased off and we returned to in-person classes, it felt awesome to go together to the lecture halls, labs, and libraries and learn more about the environment and sustainability.



Are there any future goals or projects related to environmental technology that you're excited about?

Certainly! Given my background in civil engineering and having worked as a structural engineer, diving into the world of environment and sustainability through the M.Sc. WASTE program has been both relatively novel and rich for me. I consider myself fortunate as my experience and learning in diverse fields is coming together and harmonizing in my current work as a research assistant dealing with Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) with a focus in sustainable construction.

What are some lessons or skills you gained here that you want to apply in your professional life?

I have genuinely learned about the potential for human resilience, love and kindness, whether in my friends or in my own self, especially in the face of adversity. I feel these innate human qualities, once unlocked, can be applied both in the micro and macro level, not just as additional lessons or skills, but truly as some of the most pivotal and core solutions to modern day human challenges across every discipline. I feel one can acquire as many hard and soft skills as they desire, but if the heart and the mind are not in the right place, it is not possible to become inclusive as a generation.

LATIN AMERICAN NIGHT

celebrating diversity

KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD, GENERATION 2022

The M.Sc. WASTE program hosted an enchanting event and intercultural meeting on November 17, 2023, the Latin American Night, to celebrate the vibrant cultures and traditions of its diverse student body. This special night, filled with colors, flavors, and rhythms, aimed to foster cultural exchange and strengthen the sense of community among students.

A very popular event, the Latin American Night was a testament to the program's commitment to embracing and appreciating diversity. It provides a platform for Latin American students to showcase the richness of their countries' cultures. The event was not only an opportunity for cultural exchange but also a celebration of the unique backgrounds that each student brings to the M.Sc. WASTE community.

The highlight of the night was the engaging and colorful presentations by Latin American students about their home countries. Through these presentations, the audience got a glimpse into the history, geography, and traditions of various Latin American nations. The passion with which the students shared insights about their cultures added a personal touch to the evening.



No cultural celebration is complete without savoring traditional food, and the Latin American Night was no exception. Students took great care in preparing authentic dishes that represented the culinary diversity of Latin America. The aroma of Colombian arepas, Ecuadorean pristiños, Argentine chocotorta and other delectable treats filled the air, offering a gastronomic journey for all attendees.

The event also featured captivating music and dance performances, and a jaw-dropping game of musical chairs, that brought the Latin American spirit to life. Students showcased traditional dances, such as salsa and merengue, and the beats of Latin music filled the venue, creating a festive and joyous atmosphere.

In essence, the Latin American Night was more than just an event; it was a celebration of unity in diversity. It allowed students to appreciate and learn from each other, fostering a sense of belonging within the M.Sc. WASTE community.

As the night concluded, it left a lasting impression, echoing the program's commitment to creating an inclusive and culturally rich environment for all its students.

Up next? Asian Night. Coming soon!



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PHOTO: ANAAN MOHAMED

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