

JEMES ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



December 2014, second edition

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JEMES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION'S FIRST YEAR

With the end of 2014 approaching fast, we'd like to share with you the second newsletter of the JEMES Alumni Association. It contains student updates, our "alumni in the spotlight" section and an overview of new possible destinations for project mobilities. The JEMES family is expanding, both within the consortium with new associated partners, as in our alumni association. One year after the launch of our association, we have more than 100 alumni who registered, ranging from the very first cohorts of the JEMES programme as well as the group of students who started the programme this fall. In 2014, we also organised our first alumni activity at the past spring meeting in Hamburg. You might have received an email from me this year asking you to answer questions from prospective students about the JEMES (CiSu) programme. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to help out these prospective students and sharing your own experience about this incredible program. Happy holidays!

Wim Debucquoy

JEMES alumni coordinator

JEMES CiSu student 2013-2015



First year JEMES CiSu students in Barcelona in front of the new ICTA building at the UAB. The building received a LEED GOLD certification (Photo: Ulla Cyganik)



Dear readers,

In the first JEMES Alumni newsletter, I focused on transitions. Transition from one programme to the next, and from being a student to a graduate and alumni. With transitions also come notions of resiliency and sustainability, not least within the urban agenda.

Sustainable cities matter more than ever. We have just experienced yet another failed Conference of the Parties, which otherwise heralded itself as “the cornerstone for commitment to the future of our climate”. It was neither a cornerstone, nor was there any true

commitment. Cities therefore – rather than nation states – increasingly hold the key to the future of our societies, our wellbeing, our economy and planetary health.

At this point in time, more than half the world's almost 7.5 billion people and approximately 75 percent of its economic output (over USD50 trillion) are in urban centres of all sizes. Most new jobs and new investments are concentrated here, and therefore also most opportunities. However, with opportunities come also risks and vulnerabilities. The economic productivity of cities also come at a cost. For example, close to 70 percent of greenhouse gases emissions are from urban consumers.

Is it possible to transform our regions, cities, and towns, to address the challenges of today while at the same time incorporate the opportunities of sustainable development for our children

tomorrow? Will we be able to build resilient cities with infrastructures able to protect us from climate change, with meaningful employment opportunities, with availability of water and sanitation and access to sustainable modern energy systems for all?

I don't know, and at times I have my doubts. But, it will not keep me from trying. Because, resiliency is also about the ability to overcome challenges and keep on struggling. In the words of UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon “Our struggle for global sustainability will be lost or won in cities”. Will you join us?

Martin Lehmann

Associate Professor, Programme Director, JEMES CiSu

Department of Development & Planning

Aalborg University



Fall meeting 2014 in Aalborg with the entire group of first year JEMES CiSu students and coordinators (Photo: Ulla Cyganik)

New associate partner universities



THE JEMES FAMILY EXPANDS

As part of the JEMES CiSu programme, students have the opportunity to work on a research project as part of their 3rd semester in one of the associated partners of the JEMES CiSu consortium. So far, the consortium had 4 associated partners: Colombia University (New York, USA), Beijing Normal University (Beijing, China), Beijing University of Technology (Beijing, China) and the University of New South Wales (Sydney, Australia). This academic year, the JEMES CiSu consortium expanded the mobility options and welcomed 4 more universities as associated partners: Parson's New School of Design (New York, USA), University of California Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz, USA), University of California Davis (Davis, USA) and Mahidol University (Bangkok, Thailand).

Scholar mobility



NASA seminar at Aalborg University

NASA VISIT

In September, Aalborg University received guests from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology. Michael J. Joyce and Rishi Verma spent two weeks working with us on amongst others Climate Change and Megacities and Regional Climate Model Evaluation Systems. While in Denmark, Michael and Rishi held an open seminar titled 'Eyes on Earth: Climate Modelling, GHG Emission Calculations, and

leveraging the power of open source', organised in collaboration with The Danish Society for Engineers, IDA.

The visit was the first in an exchange set up on the basis of JEMES CiSu's strong presence in the US and the collaboration with institutions such as Columbia University, NASA Goddard Institute of Space Studies, and Parson's New School of Design in New York, and University of California in Davis and Santa Cruz in California, and will form the

basis for new research opportunities for our students and faculty, as well as open up opportunities for JEMES alumni to collaborate with NASA.

VISIT EARTH INSTITUTE

JEMES CiSu scholar Dr. Maria Rosa Rovira-Val from ICTA at the UAB spent 5 weeks in May and June in New York working with the Earth Institute at Columbia University to secure student mobility for the 2nd cohort of students. Maria Rosa also set up new research collaboration on Sustainability Metrics, which will result in a comprehensive effort by Autonomous University of Barcelona, Aalborg University and The Earth Institute on better understanding the landscape of sustainability metrics and reporting, improved frameworks so that metrics inform better practices, and enable better data for decision-making.

You can contact Dr. Maria Rosa (mariarosa.rovira@uab.cat) or Dr. Martin Lehmann (martinl@plan.aau.dk) for more information about the research, and opportunities to participate.

3rd semester mobilities



Temple in Amnat Charoen province, study area of Helene Kjaer

Helene Kjaer is currently doing her exchange at Mahidol University in Bangkok and is working on a forest conservation project in the rural province Amnat Charoen in Northeastern Thailand. She's using GIS to investigate the land use changes and their causes in a number of community forests. "During my stay, I got to go to Amnat Charoen for a local conference of the conservation project where I got to interview and talk to some locals with the help of a translator" Helene says. What is the most striking experience you had so far? "How open and friendly Thais are! They are very easy to talk to, and even though the language is a barrier at times, they will go lengths to help you. During the week, they show you around the campus and ask you to lunch while in the weekend, they make sure that you have plans or they take you with them to show you the local attractions. Thai students are great at welcoming foreign students! My professor even bought me a handcrafted rice basket on our trip to Amnat Charoen, thinking I needed a local souvenir"



Sofia Aivalioti at Brooklyn bridge, New York City

PROJECT MOBILITIES

This academic year, students are conducting research in several associated partner universities as part of the JEMES CiSu programme. Here we highlight 2 projects: Helene Kjaer and her mobility to Mahidol University in Thailand and Sofia Aivalioti and her research project at Colombia University in New York City.



Communal forests Amnat Charoen province, Thailand

Sofia Aivalioti went to the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law of Colombia University and worked on the adaptation of the electricity sector to heat waves. According to Sofia, "living in the US was a very fulfilling experience, the summer in NYC was great and even though I was researching on heatwaves, I was lucky enough not to experience one. It seemed to be the coldest summer in the last 10 years". During her stay, the UN climate summit 2014 took place in New York City, along with the biggest Climate Change March in history (over 400 000 people). "That was a great coincidence! I also had the chance to see Dr. R. K. Pachauri, the Nobel Prize winner and Chairman of the IPCC, at a presentation in Colombia University". "Not only did I learn a lot about climate adaptation and the electricity sector through my project, I also expanded my knowledge on climate change law through lectures, discussions and presentations from my colleagues and other professors at the university". Besides professional development, Sofia also highlighted the cultural opportunities in NYC: "Cultural events is what the city does best! I really met a lot of great people"

Alumni in the spotlight

What happens to people who graduate from the JEMES programme? Where do they end up? And how did JEMES influence their (professional) life? We try to find out by putting a couple of alumni in the spotlight every newsletter. Hello there!

The first alumni we interviewed was Meera Supramaniam, a person from the very first cohort of JEMES! She's originally from Klang, Malaysia and holds a Bachelor in Environmental Managements, before embarking on her JEMES adventure in 2007. Hi Meera!

Q: How did you experience the JEMES programme?

A: Oh I loved it. We were the very first batch, so there were moments that were a little chaotic, I moved, every semester on top of it, so it was a lot of change. But it was my first time in Europe, first time really living abroad, so it was all very exciting.

Q: What are you currently doing?

A: I stayed on. I am now finishing my doctorate in ICTA, UAB. I was offered a one year scholarship with an European Project to start my doctorate, then applied for the Spanish doctoral scholarship, and now I'm finishing and planning the next adventure! My doctorate is a socio- environmental study of a case



Meera Supramaniam, a JEMES graduate

study in Barcelona. Looking at a positive example of “resistance”, that adhered to agro-ecological values rather than urban values, and my research work focuses on understanding why this happened through researching the perception of the persons and communities involved.

Q: How did the JEMES programme help you to get where you are today?

A: Clearly, the position was offered by my then supervisor of the masters, who is now the supervisor of my PhD. The mobility was something I appreciated a lot, and I think almost anyone who applies to JEMES does. The mobility typically attracts a scholar curious about those differences. Also the fact that our groups were of different disciplinary fields, helped a lot to see how a discipline can colour a person's perception.

Alumni in the spotlight



Vu Ngan Binh from Vietnam

The next Alumni in the spotlight is Vu Ngan Binh from Vietnam. She first studied chemistry at Hanoi University of Science before becoming a member of the JEMES family in 2009. Hi Vu!

Q: How did you experience the JEMES programme?

A: my JEMES journey started in Portugal, then Denmark, and back to Portugal in the second year. Overall, I had great time and wonderful experiences in JEMES program. The classes were diverse, including both technical and social perspectives and given by many enthusiastic professors. JEMES gave me a big picture of what the European people are doing to evaluate and protect the environment.

From the moment I was accepted, I got help from many people, even when we didn't know each other. I got to know many friends in JEMES and other courses. It was truly an international environment. We had international dinner where we brought and tasted food of many countries. We taught others cook, dance, sing, make up, play sports, we travelled together...the 2 year just flew by. After the program I still keep in touch with many professors and friends.

Q: What are you currently doing?

A: I am a lecturer at Hanoi university of pharmacy. I teach environment and analytical chemistry. I got the job offer right after my graduation in 2008.

However, I only became an official lecturer here after finishing the JEMES program.

Q: How did the JEMES programme help you to get where you are today?

A: during the JEMES program, I gained not only knowledge but also many skills: group work, project planning, implementation and presentation, language, and problem solving. Those help me to be more confident after the program. I have applied all of those in my current job. The thing that changed me the most was group work. I experienced this in many JEMES courses, especially in Denmark, where we had many projects done through group works. I was unfamiliar with this way of working. Before that, I used to only work individual, and I was quite good at that. I did not like to work in group because each person had a different speed and attitude towards the group work and it felt unfair that only few people really worked. In JEMES, I did many projects in group and I learned how to conduct a group work in a fair and responsible way. I have applied this knowledge in my current job. I am carrying out some research in group and I also asked my students to work in groups. I told them that sometimes the project result is not as important as the way it gets done.

Alumni in the spotlight



Ahmed Abbas during this first semester at Aalborg University

The last alumni we interviewed is Ahmed Abbas, 29 from Egypt. He is part of the first cohort of 21 people who graduated this summer from the new JEMES CiSu programme. He holds a bachelor degree in Chemistry and Environmental Studies as well as a diploma in Software Development. Hello Ahmed!

Q: How did you experience the JEMES programme?

A: Joining the JEMES programme was one of the best decisions of my life. At first I was extremely skeptical about going abroad to study. But I must admit I learned a lot while there. JEMES gave me the opportunity to study in more than one country (one semester in Denmark and three semesters in Germany) and that was a great chance to get to know a lot of people from different cultures and different backgrounds as well. At the end I would say that studying JEMES programme gave me so much more than I can put into words. I made close friends and travelled a lot within Europe.

Q: What are you currently doing?

A: Actually I was searching for work during my last semester at TUHH.

Fortunately I made some interviews in August and September. Afterwards I got positive feedback from two companies. One company is a wind energy company and the other company called ESRI Deutschland (Environmental Systems Research Institute). Then I

have decided to go for ESRI because the work nature is closer to my practical as well as my academic experience. Before working for ESRI, they asked me to attend a GIS training to learn about the different mapping platforms with which the company works. I am going to start working for ESRI as a Software Developer with Geographical Information System applications. ESRI's ArcGIS is a geographic information system (GIS)

for working with maps and geographic information. I am going to work with the development team who is responsible for creating and supporting different mapping software applications on top of ArcGIS. These applications manage different activities, for example underground electricity cables in cities, underground gas pipes, underground water tubes, heating systems and streets network.

Q: How did the JEMES programme help you to get where you are today?

A: Studying the JEMES program for two years was an additional value for my academic life as well as my personal life. Getting to know people from all over the world strengthened my language skills and broadened my mind regarding different cultures. I even learned a new language: German. These experiences definitely gave me the confidence which made it possible to apply for and find a job in Europe.



Ahmed Abbas during his last semester at TUHH

Master theses 2013-2014*

Name	Thesis title
Long Nguyen Tran Bao	<i>Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of different options of utilizing wheat straw. A case study in Randers Municipality.</i>
Nicholas Saracena	<i>Urban Agriculture as a driver of Environmental Gentrification in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn</i>
Aziz Ahmed & Kefelegn Sileshi Workneh	<i>Adaptive Capacity of Local Public Institutions to Climate Change Adaptation: A Comparative Case Study of Badin and Dire Dawa City</i>
Sebastian Florian Schwarz	<i>Cities in Transition towards Zero Waste: A Case Study of Aalborg Municipality</i>
Jovana Milic	<i>Possible Influences of Near Shore Wind Energy Development on Local Development – The Case of Frederikshavn</i>
Lydia Patricia Botero Baez	<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment mainstreaming Ecosystem Services. The role of Stakeholders</i>
Sam Cornelis Agosto Nierop	<i>Energy poverty in Denmark?</i>
Mariya Ivanovna Kutelova	<i>The adaptive capacity of urban communities to climate change: a case study of institutional and socioeconomic drivers in the face of increasing heatwaves</i>
Ramiro Mata	<i>Marine planktonic biocalcification during the last glacial-interglacial rise in atmospheric CO₂ concentrations in the Central Mediterranean</i>

* the thesis titles of TUHH were not yet available

Scientific Publications

Sam C.A. Nierop, Envisioning resilient electrical infrastructure: A policy framework for incorporating future climate change into electricity sector planning, *Environmental Science & Policy*, Volume 40, June 2014, Pages 78-84, ISSN 1462-9011, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2014.04.011>.

Licht, C., Talens, L., Villalba, G. Forthcoming. Global Substance Flow Analysis of Gallium, Germanium, and Indium – Quantification of Extraction, Uses, and Dissipative Losses within their Anthropogenic Cycles. *Journal of Industrial Ecology*.

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