

## International Student Exchange 2016 – 2019

### Student Feedback Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the lessons learned of the AIR international student exchange.

By filling out this feedback report, you agree that your picture and experience will be published on the homepage of the AIR project. <http://www.air-project.org/>

Name of student:	Armand du Plessis
Gender:	Male
Age:	26
Degree:	BEng, MEng
Hosting university:	BIUST
Sending university:	Stellenbosch University
Period of exchange:	10 days
Field of study/major:	Electrical and Electronic Engineering (Renewables)
Field of interest during exchange:	Electrical and Electronic Engineering (Renewables)
Further graduation plans (e.g. PhD program):	PhD

Please tick the appropriate box	I strongly agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
<b>Program</b>					
I gained insights into the practical implementation of RE in the host country (sight visits etc.)				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
I gained knowhow in field of my study		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
The courses were helpful for my further research			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
The agenda was well structured		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Organization</b>					
The journey preparations were well organized	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
The support during the exchange was good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

The post processing of the exchange was well organized		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
The reimbursement process was satisfactory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
The accommodation was pleasant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Local transportation was well organized	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
I socialized with local students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
I recommend the exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Others:	What would you like to be changed/ be improved for the future? - Did you experience any difficulties during your exchange? -				

### **The experience**

This was indeed one of the most exciting trips I have been on. Everything was superbly organized and I met everyone there is to know at Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST). The people were extremely friendly and interesting and I often found myself engaged in the most interesting conversations. In terms of accommodation and food, I was given the royal Botswana treatment!

Botswana itself is not a country with a strong participation in renewable energy, especially solar. This was a shock to me at first, but as I engaged I was provided with the opportunity to understand the unique challenges that are faced regarding renewables. Because Botswana has issues regarding the standardization of their grid, I truly gained insight into the 'behind the scenes' details of issues regarding renewables energies and grid integration. Being from South Africa, where renewable energy has been widely adopted into the grid, I was not as aware of the immense planning concerning the adoption renewable energy sources. As students, we only see the practical and design aspects of renewable energy, but often forget about the administrative and regulatory components, which are an important part.

I further had the opportunity to partake in the BIUST Symposium, where I could present my work regarding my research on solar power in South Africa. In turn, I also had the opportunity to see what BIUST students were doing regarding their own research projects. It was a fantastic platform to learn from one another and to see how students and academics think about similar problems currently being faced today. I once again realised the importance of interacting with people who are in and from a different academic environment.

I made wonderful friends over at BIUST and this project definitely paved the way forward for future collaborations. It was a privilege to have experienced the friendly people of Botswana, and to have had the opportunity to share and discuss our thoughts.

If you are a student considering the AIR project, I would not hesitate for one moment if I were you. Remember that you can always learn from anyone and that anyone else can also learn from you. When embarking on this journey, seek to discuss and interact as much as you can and remember that it is not just about you gaining experience at another academic institution, but it is also an opportunity for you to add to others. And finally, don't underestimate the importance of the friendships that you will gain, because ultimately the aim is always to build relationships.

