

Dear Euan Crone Scholarship Committee,

As a 2015 Euan Crone Scholarship recipient I received funding to travel to South Korea and undertake a 5-month research placement at a Korean think-tank in the area of international development and foreign aid.

My time in Seoul was an incredible learning venture where I gained practical experience and insights that have supplemented my postgraduate degree in international development and given me a greater understanding of Korean culture and perspectives from the inside out, rather than from the West looking in. My experience in Korea has been incredibly valuable in giving me a greater understanding of Korean culture and people, the Australia-Korea relationship, Asian regional relations and Korea's role in the international community.

During my time in Korea I was able to network and engage with various academics, professionals and students, both Korean and foreign. I forged many long-lasting people-to-people relationships with my Korean peers and was able to understand cultural differences and similarities and discuss different perspectives on international issues, news and current affairs. While in Seoul I also engaged with the Australian community in Korea and met with officials at the Australian Embassy, state government offices and the Australian Trade Commission, as well as meeting with Australian Professors and Research Fellows.

Upon my return to Australia I plan to write pieces for the AIIA Outlook focused on the insights I gained in Australia-Korea relations and to raise awareness of aspects of Korea's incredible economic development and their involvement in international affairs as an influential global power. I would also like to continue promoting the incredible importance of studying abroad in Asia, gaining international experience and learning Asian languages. After returning from my internship placement with Austrade in Shanghai China from April 19 2016 – June 19 2016, I would like to continue as an ambassador and engage in opportunities to share more of my incredible experiences in Korea as a Euan Crone scholar with AIIA branches, young professionals and students, as well as promoting Australian engagement in Asia and greater cultural understanding. I am more than happy to give presentations, speak at events, become involved in workshops and forums, and write articles in any aspect related to this and Australia-Asia engagement.

I am incredibly thankful to the Euan Crone Committee and Mr Crone for supporting my placement in South Korea and providing young Australians with opportunities to pursue their passions in Asia and gain a greater understanding of Australia's regional neighborhood. I would like to continue to encourage the next round of young people to follow these footsteps and gain the same incredible insights in to Asian culture and relations through practical experience.



Yours sincerely,
Luisa Cools

2015 Euan Crone Scholarship Recipient

EUAN CRONE SCHOLARSHIP FINAL REPORT

I) Summary of Euan Crone Scholarship Experience

Initial Scholarship Proposal and Changes

Initially I had planned to undertake a Winter course at Yonsei University in South Korea in the area of international development and follow on with a one-month placement at a self-sourced Korean organization to supplement my learning. However, the international development research institute that I had made contact with in Seoul offered me a full-time unpaid research placement for a period of approximately 5 months. I decided to change my scholarship proposal to accommodate a 5-month placement, which in the long-term would provide me with a far more in-depth learning experience for my time in Korea. I alerted Mr Crone and the Scholarship Committee of these changes via email and sent through an updated financial plan and project proposal. Part II of this report details my placement overview at the organization and Part III gives a detailed account of my final financial expenses over the 22 weeks of my placement in Korea using the Euan Crone Scholarship funding.

Mid-Placement Reports (sent via email to Mr John Crone)

During my time overseas I sent through two mid-placement report/updates to Mr Crone highlighting my learning and experiences while I was in Seoul.

Update 1 [11/12/2015]

I am now over a month in to my research placement with the Re-Shaping Development Institute (ReDI) in Seoul. The people are amazing and so friendly, and the work atmosphere is very different in a Korean think-tank compared to my experience interning at a large Korean multinational. However, the work life is just as strict as ever! I only work 9 hour days, but my colleagues often arrive at 7am and leave after 7pm and are constantly tired - I am not sure how the Koreans do it.

The organization I am with is a think-and-do-tank, and they undertake research and monitoring and evaluation in the international development industry, and get contracted out mainly by KOICA (the Korean development agency). As such, I have had some incredible opportunities to attend major conferences and engage with a number of professionals, students, academics and officials in the industry. People-to-people interactions are the most crucial part of engagement and understanding, and I have already met with so many amazing and diverse groups of people and had the chance to discuss and share opinions.

In my first week in Seoul I attended the 9th International ODA Forum, which featured guest speakers such as the heads of international aid agencies, the World Bank representatives, the head of the OECD-DAC committee etc. It really gave me an insight in to how Koreans viewed their role in foreign aid and development and how Western nations also saw Korea's role in achieving the SDGs. Other conferences I have attended included; the Humanitarian Policy Forum where the head of UN-OCHA spoke about East Asian regional humanitarian cooperation and a number of professionals and academics from Korea, Japan and China spoke about East Asian styles of development and aid delivery; a lecture given by noted Indian economist Jayati Ghosh on Asia's economic crises; a Failure Forum hosted by the Korean Civil Society for International Development, which discussed open failures in development projects etc.

My office has also had staff and researchers from ODI in the UK come and give presentations and engage in open discussion with my colleagues about the reality of Korean ODA, the issues and how the government and organizational structure needs to change in the future for their policies to be more effective! On my first day in the office I actually formatted, edited and drew up a checklist in an OECD-DAC shadow report on Korean ODA progress that was given directly to the OECD-DAC peer review team to use as reference when they came to Seoul a few days later to undertake the 5-year peer review of Korea's ODA. I learnt so much from day one!

In my office there are two Korean interns who are currently studying their Bachelor's degrees in Korea and it has been great discussing with Korean students what their views are on international relations, regional development cooperation and a variety of cultural things and global issues! It has also been great to share with all the staff the cultural differences between Korea and Australia and swap perspectives on foreign affairs and our home country's role in international relations etc.

My manager studied her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at ANU and in the past did a lot of work and collaboration with AusAID - so it has been so excellent to discuss with her the future of Australia-Korea aid relations, the differences in the sector in both countries and sharing insights etc. I am working with her at the moment to initiate a series of seminars for foreigners working in international development and aid in Korea and foreign students studying in Korea in international development. We want to facilitate more open discussion and engagement of these professionals in to the Korean dialogue on aid and development effectiveness, as they are quite isolated.

I also know the head of the Australian Studies Center at Yonsei University, and will be attending some lectures by visiting professors from the University of Western Australia, which will focus on Australia-Asia relations. It will be great to hear what they say to a Korean audience about these relationships.

Seoul is as vibrant and as bustling as ever - the city that never sleeps. I have been studying Korean in the evenings and trying to see and do as much as I can on the weekends. Every week where I live in Sinchon, there is some sort of festival or public event on - music, markets, stalls, Oktoberfest events, Christmas markets, British tourism events, comedy shows etc. Another area close to me is Hongdae, which is the hip student artsy area of Seoul full of buskers, street performers, alternative artists and young people. While we are very fortunate in Australia, and while we have a lot of international and particularly Asian residents in our communities, we are missing something - that distinct vibrancy and culture that can be found in nations across Asia - which is part of the reason I love the region so much I suppose!

Update 2 [05/02/2016]

It has really been more of a journey than I could have imagined! I have met the most incredible people who work in all different industries in Korea: government and public service, academia, private, CSOs and students. I think the people-to-people connections are the greatest way to engage and learn, and I have come to understand Korea and their foreign relations and society so much more!

It has been so incredible to discuss things with them and get their different perspectives on Korea domestic policy, general work life satisfaction, understanding of international affairs and of course dispelling common myths about Australia - that we all surf, drink Foster's beer and have an ISIS threat!!

I have found that many Koreans I meet are so busy with their hectic work life that they are not widely up to-date or interested in international affairs outside Korea, which has been interesting. Even among the policy level people there is little knowledge of things like the SDGs etc. Our organisation works closely with the private sector and my manager told me that most of the civil servants did not know what the MDGs were.

It is interesting to hear what Korean students struggle with and compare our stories and experiences at university, as well as our career aspirations. A lot of Korean students only think that the job market is tough in their own country, and are shocked when I tell them that graduates can't find jobs in Australia either. Many students I have met who study international affairs do not seek to gain employment outside Korea, but rather within Korean public service, which was somewhat unexpected.

These past 4 months has taught me so much about Korea, but also taught me more about Australia. My undergraduate Professor Ronald Keith - who worked very closely with Prof Colin Mackerras (the foremost expert on China, acknowledged by XJP when he came to Canberra) - always told me that to truly understand China/a country, you have to view it from the inside out, and not from the outside looking in. I have always taken that to heart with my passion for Asia, but I also feel that you can say the opposite for your own country - I have learnt a lot more about Australia's international affairs and relations by viewing from the outside and seeing it from the Korean perspective.

I have also had the opportunity to help foster the Korea-Australia relationship while I have been here which has been wonderful! I have met with many Australian visiting professors, and engaged with students and academics who have studied or worked in Australia as well. Yonsei Uni has a great Australia Studies Centre that holds lectures and events. As well as this it has been great to talk to the Koreans and Australians who are here at the Embassy and with Austrade and get their perspectives and discuss life in Korea/Australia! I also helped out at the Austrade Australian Education Expo for the Griffith Uni booth (where I did my undergraduate).

My research is still extremely interesting and I have had some incredible insights in to Korean policy making and issues (through frank discussions with my peers) and also about the potential for Korea's growth and engagement on the global stage.

Final Summary

Having travelled to Korea twice before - once for an overseas exchange during my undergraduate degree and another to undertake an internship with a large Korean multinational corporation as part of the Australia-Korea Internship Program (AKIP) – this time I was able to experience the country and culture from a completely different perspective from within a Korean non-profit organization. During my time in Seoul I gained greater insights in to Korean society and issues with the reconciling of traditional customs with modern culture and trends, as well as a deep and first-hand insight into Korean governance, institutions and foreign affairs. Additionally, in coming back to Korea as a foreign professional within the CSO sector, I had a very different experience from being in Korea as a private sector intern with other Australians, and as a foreign student. I was able to engage with a different network of Korean students and professionals, as well as explore different parts of Korean culture and society that I had not glimpsed in to before. As well as this, spending an extended period of time in-country has allowed me to further my Korean language skills, which I believe are inherently important in engaging with a culture and communicating across cultural barriers to promote understanding and acceptance.

During my time in Korea I was able to discuss issues in international affairs, as well as both Korea and Australia's role on the international stage, with my peers, friends and colleagues. We were able to share and discuss cultural differences and similarities, as well as discuss trends in modern East Asian relations and society, and share differing perspectives on international issues and affairs. I was able to engage with members of other think-tanks and research institutes that function in a similar role to the AIIA, and see how they operate and function on a day-to-day basis, as well as the international affairs topics that they focus on.

Most importantly, the insights and experiences I gained in to Korean culture, business and society have been incredibly beneficial to my understanding of the country as a whole and for the progression of my career in fostering greater Australia-Asia relations. I was able to supplement my postgraduate studies with incredible hands-on experience and gain amazing exposure to international foreign aid and development assistance flows, Korea's regional relations and foreign aid in developing nations, as well as the wider role of developed nations in pursuing the SDGs and global development and prosperity for all through ODA and involvement with the OECD. Additionally, through gaining a greater understanding of these aspects in relation to Korea, I was also able to place Australia's role in international development in to context, and assess the regional, global political and social ramifications of the reduction of Australia's aid program and compare and contrast Australia's international aid efforts to the East Asian model and against the backdrop of international trends in the field.

The Euan Crone Scholarship has given me the incredible opportunity to gain these insights and pursue my passion for Asian culture and language, as well as promote awareness both at home and abroad of bilateral relations. My experiences in Korea and my continuing passion for the Asian region will fuel my goal to enter a career in fostering Australia-Asia trade relations and cross-cultural understanding, as well as promoting the importance of cultural engagement and foreign language study within Australian society.