

Julie Barot about the internship at Transsolar May – October 2020

How did you hear about Transsolar and what convinced you to apply?

I was looking for an internship in sustainable building in Germany and in fact, there are not many of them. I talked with an Alumni from my engineering school in France who told me about Elise (Roussel) who studied in the same school. I contacted her and she explained me her work at Transsolar. After that, I decided to apply for an internship. And then I was an intern in the Munich office for 6 months.

What did you hope for when you started, what was your aim for the internship?

I wanted to learn about sustainable buildings and finally apply the content of what I learned in my engineering school. It was my first internship, that's why it was very important to me to see how an engineer is working in terms of content, interactions, working hours etc.

Were your expectations met? If so, how? Was there anything surprising?

Yes my expectations were met, I learned a lot about the field of sustainable buildings but also a lot about how a company works. It was very surprising to see how flexible Transsolar is compared to French companies where there are many rules regarding working hours, not be late etc.

I also expected to attend meetings or workshops in order to see the interactions with people outside of TS. In the first four months of my internship, I almost didn't attend any meeting and I was very disappointed because I had the feeling to sit the whole day in front of my computer and not to see where my work was going. Of course, the covid didn't helped. After that, I decided to tell the project managers that I would really like to see this other part of the job (discussing with architects, building engineers, even clients etc). And it worked because I attended more meetings (most of them were online of course).

Please try to describe your internship experience in one sentence:

This internship was very challenging and various in terms of technical work and interlocutors!

How would you describe the most important impact of Transsolar?

I would say the most important impact of TS (the whole company) is to change minds and not only help against climate change. The work of this company is in my mind cutting-edge and represents an entire field of future engineering skills. The work, design strategies, technical studies etc.. never stop being developed and improved.

What were some of the most useful experiences during your internship?

One of the most useful experience was to work with Wolfgang Kessling on projects located in Singapore and Sydney. Thanks to him and to this work, I think I really understood what "Climate Engineering" means. During the first 4 months, I almost only worked on projects situated in Europe, so I didn't really saw how differently we have to think and to work if the project is located near the equator, or on an isle ...

What was your favorite project? What did you like the most in the time spent?

Why?

I think it was either the School of Design in Singapore (for which I did a Life Cycle Analysis), or the Atlassian Tower in Sydney. I didn't do much for this latter project but I learned a lot about passive design strategies and indoor comfort.

The study for the School of Design 1&3 was particularly interesting because the base building remained. It was a refurbishment so I saw the impact of such strategies on embodied carbon.

What did you find difficult?

In the beginning, I found it very difficult to manage working on different projects and with different people. When someone asked me to do a study, it was very difficult to assess how much time I would spend on this study and if I could "accept" this work considering the other tasks I had to do. Also, finding out what is high-priority or not is not easy for an intern.

Finally, from a personal point of view, I found it tiring to stay all day in front of my computer. Maybe it is because it was my first internship. I know that it is very usual for engineers so I maybe just have to "acclimate" myself to that aspect.

What will you take with you from the Transsolar internship?

A lot of knowledge, contacts and the desire to stay in Germany!

What are your next steps? And in what way does the experience support these steps?

I just applied for a Master of Science in "Regenerative Energiesysteme" by the TU o Berlin. So if I am accepted, I will spend the next 2 years finishing my studies in Berlin. If not, I will finish my last year of engineering school in France with a specialization in *Energies* or in *Civil Engineering and Environment*.

How can Transsolar support you in future?

Maybe I could come back for my Master Thesis 😊

What would you change for interns in the future?

Maybe it was due to Covid-19, lockdown and everything, but when I came to the office for the first time (beginning of July) there wasn't really anyone to welcome me, to explain me how the company works, who is who etc. Of course, the beginning of my internship was special because I began it with 4 weeks of home office, but still I think it is something very important for new interns.