

The DAN Internship through the eyes of a Finn

When I first arrived in Qala, a tiny village on the island of Gozo, I wasn't sure what to expect. The internship program looked intensive for sure, and the quiet village was almost deserted in the midday sun. Little did I know that the next few weeks would be filled with learning, laughing, making memories, meeting amazing people and building strong friendships.

It didn't take us long to bond and form a tight and a well working group. We were all so different coming from countries all around Europe and from varied backgrounds, but the love for water and diving united us immediately. Each intern was brilliant in their own way, some were medical experts, whereas others had a deep biological understanding of marine life and some even worked in the diving industry, thus having a concrete understanding of what was done in practice. Diving could be either a hobby or the source of income. This enabled many interesting discussions in the classroom or around the dinner table. It was amazing to see how we were all sitting through the same lectures, but paid attention to different details.



Photo by Arkadiusz Srebnik

The first week was highly theoretical but provided us with loads of information and made our brain cells tingle in all the right ways. However, when the second week started, we were all more than excited to finally get our hands dirty, and get in the water. On Monday morning a happy surprise was waiting for us—our classroom numbers doubled as students from the Bachelor Program joined us. Throughout the week we were working in pairs as one intern and one student, which of course meant getting to know more people and mixing the two groups. We had four days of diving, which were filled with practical skills both at the surface and underwater. One of the pairs was always diving and the other one was assisting

with the measurements and data collection. Additionally, the assistants helped with gear or getting a water bottle, which was quite luxurious.



Photo by Arkadiusz Srebnik

Out of all the measurements we learnt how to take, the coolest one was definitely the underwater Doppler. Basically, we went down in teams of four and took turns finding the signal, recording the audio, taking notes or being the test subject. Wearing headphones and hearing through them all whilst underwater was such a bizarre experience. At the same time, I felt proud of being able to test this new technology, which can potentially change the way we investigate divers and study diving physiology.



Photo by Arkadiusz Srebnik

My experience with DAN Internship was more than I could have imagined, and I will cherish the memories for many years to come. Especially for someone who comes from the cold and murky waters of Finland, spending time in the beautiful Mediterranean, while learning more about diving, was a dream come true. I feel motivated to continue research divers, and can't wait to explore more of the underwater world. Thank you DAN Europe, for organising this opportunity, and to all my fellow interns who made this experience unforgettable.

About the author

Sofia Sokolowski is a third year medical student from Finland. She has loved water and the sea since she was small. In her teenage years she used her time snorkelling, scuba diving and playing underwater rugby. In high school she discovered a love for research through a marine biology project, which has developed throughout medical school as she works in a scuba diving medicine research group.

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