

AUC Student Experiences during Netherlands-Asia Honour Summer School (NAHSS) 2019

HONG KONG

Consultancy with ING Bank, Summer School at CUHK and Sightseeing

Annemijn Ooms

As part of an enthusiastic group of 22 students from different universities across the Netherlands, I spent 6 weeks in Hong Kong, before travelling to Shanghai for the closing week with all 100 students. While studying at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (which is also an AUC partner university) and working on a consultancy project about the Chinese aviation



The NAHSS 2019 Hong Kong group with our local buddies

industry for the ING, there was plenty of time to get to know the beautiful city and its breath-taking surroundings. At CUHK, examples of courses on offer included Chinese Medicine, Chinese Culture & Politics and Psychology. I took two courses, namely Management and Marketing Management. We lived on campus with other summer school students from all over the world and it was very fun to get to know so many different people.



My project team

For the consultancy project, all NAHSS students attended several trainings on crucial skills to engage in consultancy practices prior to departure, such as brainstorming and presentation of findings. We also had workshops on giving feedback and pitching skills. I thoroughly enjoyed working on our project with 7 other students from the Hong Kong group, and it was a great learning experience to conduct interviews with professionals in the Netherlands and in Hong Kong.

Personally, the NAHSS programme functioned as a sort of mini-exchange semester since I didn't want to do a full semester abroad. Having 1 week in Shanghai and 6 weeks in Hong Kong provided for plenty of time to go hiking, visiting museums and landmarks of the



The Hong Kong skyline

city, and experiencing the local cuisine of dim-sum. There were also many local students who loved showing us around the bustling city and their favourite restaurants. In Shanghai, I really got to experience the Chinese business culture by visiting Philips, Huawei and many other companies. Overall, I'm very grateful for this experience and to be part of the NAHSS network, and I would do it all again!

If you would like to hear more about the programme or my experiences, feel free to reach out to me with any questions you might have and keep an eye on the NAHSS website (nahss.nl) for more information and the vlogs from all the cities of this past NAHSS edition!

SHENZHEN

The blend of the modern and the traditional: working in the architectural sector and the vibrant neighbourhood of the 40-year-old megacity

Josephine Geurts



The program of the NAHSS offers Dutch students the opportunity to explore academic, cultural and business aspects of China while living for six weeks in either Beijing, Hong Kong, Shenzhen or Chengdu. In a group of seven other Dutch students, I had the opportunity to work on a project for the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). This Dutch architectural firm asked us to find out how to make 'urban villages' in Shenzhen resilient against typhoons on the short-

term and on the long-term. In this short blog, I will demonstrate my experience with China, the NAHSS and my project.

Together with 23 other Dutch students, I arrived in Shenzhen in the beginning of July. The first days in Shenzhen overwhelmed me with the hot and humid weather, the busy traffic on the roads and the high buildings. This major Chinese city has been built in only 40 years, changing from a small fishing village into the technological and innovative breeding ground in China. Tech companies such as *Huawei* and *Tencent* have their headquarters in Shenzhen, also known as China's Silicon Valley. In addition, the city is known for its infrastructure as almost every vehicle drives electrically.



During the company visits, I had the opportunity to explore Shenzhen's technological identity. Together with the group, I visited the headquarters of *BYD*, the Chinese manufacturer of battery-powered vehicles, where we took a ride with the *SkyRail* across the area. This head office consists of apartment buildings for *BYD*'s employees, its design studios for electric cars, the show rooms, and many more. The hospitality and the overwhelming size of the headquarters demonstrated the Chinese business culture and its worker's mentality.

Yet, the city does not only consist of high-tech companies, green lanes and sky-rise buildings. Half of the population lives in the so-called 'urban villages', which are crowded

neighbourhoods with narrow alleys and known for their social problems. The project for the Office for Metropolitan Architecture offered me the opportunity to explore these 'urban villages' in order to find sustainable solutions for the most affected areas during typhoon-season in Shenzhen. To discover the traditional Chinese culture and to explore a typical urban village in the city, we decided to visit *Baishizhou*. What we observed was in sharp contrast with other parts of Shenzhen: instead of huge skyscrapers and well-ordered malls, there were small, buzzing and colourful streets with narrow alleys. Within these little streets, we found Chinese restaurants, food stalls, print shops, supermarkets, small cafes and a hospital. After walking for a while, we arrived at a small square in the middle of Baishizhou. Two separate groups of elderly people, mostly women, were practicing dance classes on traditional Chinese music while children were running around and men were doing their daily work-outs.

For me, the hustle and bustle of this neighbourhood demonstrated the two identities of Shenzhen. One identity refers to the rapid, technological developments, the city's modern forward-thinking, its large public transport network and its focus on sustainable development. However, the other identity reveals a much more cultural aspect of the city in which more traditional habits can be discovered. These two identities shed light on a much broader phenomenon in China: the combination of the modern and the traditional.

SHENZHEN

Developing business models for innovative solutions to tackle problems faced in the healthcare sector, following courses in a Chinese summer school and travelling around China

Justin Smael

In today's digital economy, the metropolitan city Shenzhen functions as an engine of innovation and economic growth. This Smart city strives to tackle pressing healthcare issues through digital solutions, benefitting the health and comfort of citizens. It aligns with the vision of Huawei, which is to create a fully connected and intelligent world whilst taking into account the sustainable and healthy growth of cities. Therefore, Huawei is interested in innovating the healthcare sector with Smart City solutions to help build a fully digitally connected healthcare sector. My project group was tasked with researching potential opportunities for Smart City solutions to assist Huawei in its goal to play an important and meaningful role within the e-Health sector.



During my project with Huawei, my teammates and I worked together to brainstorm profitable business models for innovative products in Smart Cities. We have developed two solutions that respond to digitalization and demographic problems in the current Dutch and Chinese healthcare sector. The first solution is about monitoring elderly using smart home care, allowing elderly to both live longer at home and require less physical attention of doctors. The other solution relates to clinical connectivity. Through building a comprehensive database accessible by hospitals around the country, AI mechanisms are employed to suggest recommended treatments and medications based on previous medical records and patient data. Such solutions also include a product breakdown structure, business model, return on investment, cost-benefit analysis and a sales model. We presented our final product to the staff of Huawei after which our (adjusted) solutions will potentially be implemented. I also had the opportunity to tour the headquarters of tech companies and get acquainted with professionals of Huawei, Tencent and UBTECH. Apart from immersion in Chinese business practices, NAHSS also

gave me the chance to travel within China and to follow courses in a Chinese summer school.

The highlight of my stay in Shenzhen was my interview with Hank (VP Enterprise Service) and Edwin (Chief Digital Transformation Officer) at Huawei's headquarters. My team members and I thought it would be awesome to visit the headquarters and simultaneously obtain plenty of useful information for our project. It took some time for us to find the correct location due to their enormous campus. A whopping 50.000 employees work at the campus and coaches are required to take people to other buildings within the campus. After the interview, we had a cosy and more informal lunch at a Korean restaurant. The most impressive part of our visit was definitely the tour in the brand-new exhibition hall, which would only be opened to the public a couple of weeks later.

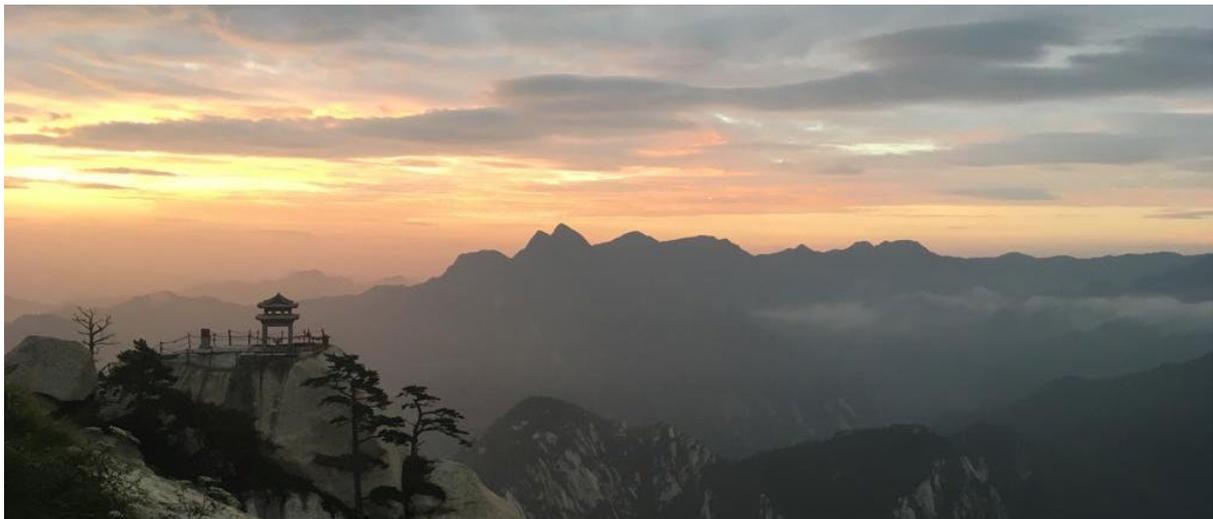


CHENGDU

Urban development alongside the Silk Road in the West of China, studying Chinese language and politics, and visiting Wuliangye, one of the biggest liquor producers of China

Ruurd Kouwenhoven

Forget everything you think you know. That is the best advice I could have given myself before I set out on a plane to Chengdu, China. I have been to Shanghai before, but my experiences in Chengdu hardly compare to the 'real China' that is still very much visible in Chengdu. In Chengdu, you really experience the grandeur of Chinese development. You can actually observe the Silk Road in construction; the whole of West China is being revamped into an enormous commercial district and one big infrastructural project with countless new highways, tunnels, skyscrapers, eco-industrial parks and much more. Of course, you know this before you go, but the sheer amount of construction and the speed of these Chinese collective efforts was beyond what I could have imagined. Through the NAHSS programme, I was able to visit multiple cities and development regions in West China and engage with politicians and companies actively involved in such projects.



Whilst undertaking my research projects in Chengdu, I noticed the the cultural differences between Chinese and Western culture. As my time there passed, I kept getting more and more surprised by the cultural divergence. Certain things, such as the Chinese kitchen, and the language, one can really delve into and learn about quite easily. However, understanding the Chinese customs, norms, values, social and technological developments, was difficult in the six weeks of the NAHSS program.

In Chengdu, I studied the Chinese Language and built on the Chinese language skills I obtained at AUC. Additionally, I took a course in Chinese Politics, which really emphasized Chinese traditions and how its political history has shaped the contemporary political climate. This helped to place the whole experience in context, and above all, it



was very interesting to learn from a Chinese perspective.

Additionally, the NAHSS offers its participants a lot of cultural and business-oriented opportunities. I have travelled across various Chinese cities, been to several natural parks, been on hikes, and got acquainted with various Chinese and Dutch industry leaders as well as start-ups. For example, we visited *AboutAsia*, a small Dutch company that focuses on the connection between Chinese and Dutch entrepreneurs. There, I learned a lot about doing business in China and extreme conditions and pressure that you have to deal with when operating a small business in China. In contrast, I also visited Wuliangye, one of the biggest liquor producers of the country. I had never seen scales of operations in such large scale. Their company complex is the size of a small Dutch city and the whole production process was done by hand. Ten thousand workers work in very extreme conditions, with hardly any health regulations, to produce very expensive bottles of liquor for a very insignificant pay. However, the most striking was the openness of the working staff. We were allowed to see everything and ask everything we wanted to know. Besides, the company is state-owned, which makes it even more special that we got to see and ask so much.

To conclude this small review of my time in China, I want to underline how great the social aspect of the NAHSS is. The program has 100 students with diverse backgrounds, all coming from different studies and different cities across the Netherlands and puts them, in a very new setting. Hence, you share a very special experience with your peers and built friendships for the rest of your life. I would truly recommend the NAHSS to all AUC students. You do not have to focus on business or have any corporate ambitions to enjoy the program as the programme offers a great way to engage with a new culture, make friends and put your studies at AUC into perspective.

