

A journey of exploration

Story by



Leila Talha

Student

Leila Talha was one of a group of 40 ICT students from Huawei's Seeds for the Future programme to visit the European Parliament in Brussels on 21 November, where they told MEPs about their visit to China as part of the Seeds scholarship.

When we students from Benin, Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands met in Beijing for our Seeds for the Future adventure, there immediately was a great group atmosphere. Not only did we get a taste of ancient Chinese culture through classes and excursions, we learned from each other as well. From the beginning, everyone mingled - talking French, Dutch, German, or even the occasional "Mandarin" we learned in class -, ending up climbing The Great Wall of China, playing Jianzi during breaktime and singing karaoke as one group of friends.

So, when Nancy - our guide in Shenzhen - offered to make seating arrangements for our first evening there, in order for everybody to get to know one another, we

cheerily replied that wouldn't be necessary.

Besides these buoyant experiences, our trip to China has been of high educational value as well. At Huawei's global headquarters – which, as a side note, are mind-blowingly beautiful – we were lectured on ICT, IoT and the future of cloud computation. Finally, we configured a 4G base station ourselves, dressed in slick lab coats and Bluetooth headsets.

Before I gratefully participated in Seeds for the Future, I was slightly sceptical about a future career in IT. Did I really want to spend the rest of my working life with geeky colleagues in a window-less basement office that could very well be the set of a British sitcom? It turns out that this image I had was merely prejudice. Huawei showed me that having a job in IT can be exciting as well and now I am more determined than ever to pursue a career in the technology sector.

During the graduation ceremony that marked the end of our time in China, we were asked what the image of the lighthouse and its accompanying motto, “Exploration lights the way forward”, meant to us. At the time, it was not my turn to reply, but I will answer now: through Seeds for the Future, Huawei has allowed me to explore the appeal of a career in information and telecommunication technology, guiding my ambitions and future career plans.

That is why I hope that, in order to attract talent and tackle the current shortage of skilled IT personnel, European governments will assist companies in establishing CSR programmes comparable to Huawei's Seeds programme, allowing others to explore the stigmatised IT sector in the same way that I have been able to.

Because exploration truly lights the way forward.