

Erasmus Mundus Master's *Journalism and Media within Globalisation: The European Perspective.*

Blue Book 2009-2011



The 2009- 2011 Masters group includes 49 students from all over the world:
Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, Czech, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt,
Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan,
Norway, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, South Africa, Spain,
Ukraine and USA.

Mundus Masters Journalism and Media class of 2009-2011.

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INTRODUCTION: INGER MUNK

“Globalisation at all levels.”

On a sunny August day in Aarhus, having the MundusJournalism 2009-11 group of 49 students representing more than 28 countries in front of you, it's difficult not to feel the global sun is shining on you.



Having arrived in Denmark, —the home of fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen— the students all seem to follow his philosophy of life: “To live is to travel.” This is definitely an experienced group of travellers who cover a broad range of languages and other experiences to be expanded

throughout this program. As mentioned by one of the participants “Travelling gave me different perspectives on values that I had before.”

All the participants within this fifth cohort of Mundus Journalism have different approaches as to why they want to take part in the Erasmus Mundus Journalism, and they have very different experiences to bring to the program, both regarding their life adventures and work experiences with different media and academia around the world. Practical work conditions show a variation from locations where it might take three days to download the Blue Book to countries it is done within seconds. We also see a group of students bringing different art and cultural aspects to the new network. There is talk among creating several bands, theatre and sports groups to supplement the studies.

In bringing all these experiences together, the group is able to cover all media and collectively have a broad academic approach. This covers experience not only from their own countries but from a wide variation of places where they have both lived and worked while getting to know the unique culture. Some parts of the world are less covered than others, but reading the articles from this group of dedicated students, eager to conquer the global world, we may expect that this is going to be compensated for in the future. A quote from one of the articles: “Able sees his role as a journalist as a changing agent and his ultimate aspiration or message to the world’s population would be not to forget about the poor people in the world that are less fortunate in their ways of life.”

The group started the introduction week with a focus on environmental and climate issues, where they shared their own personal experiences with the whole group. Experiences, which are going to be shared with more participants in the Global Dialogue Conference in November. We will also see some of the students reporting from the COP15 Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, bringing their own knowledge to a broader global public, and hopefully helping to improve the information on a critical worldwide issue with implications covering most parts of society from economy and politics to basic survival.

The 2009-2011 class covers a cosmopolitan oriented group of individuals, who know how to get the best out of the places they live in. With the start of the program in a

quarter of a million-size city like Aarhus the cosmopolitan aura is very different than the bigger cities students are going to stay in during the program. However, you see MundusJournalism students from this group participate in the local culture life from flea markets to arts exhibitions and embed themselves within the life of the specific environment in which they stay for the first half year of the MundusJournalism program. Other places to be explored by participants of this group of MundusJournalism are Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, Swansea, Sydney and Santiago. A quote from the articles: “Going to a country is the best way to get to know it, and living and studying with people around the world is the best way to get a global perspective” and “being in contact with people from many cultures will provide me with a wider perspective of the world’s issues.” Be sure that we will hear much more from other places of the world from the MundusJournalism network including the new members of the family, the 2009-2011 class. Together with the four other MundusJournalism groups they are part of the MundusJournalism alumni with more than 200 members of the MundusJournalism network representing about 40 different countries.

Enjoy reading the biographies below of each member of this dedicated global group of globally oriented students and what they expect to bring to the global MundusJournalism program and the global world.

Photo: The World map of origins of participants of the MundusJournalism 2005-2009



Inger Munk
Coordinator MundusJournalism

BELINDA REMEDIOS LOPEZ (by Lía Pedro)
blood.”

“An Australian with ‘Latina’

Despite her name, she doesn't feel very Spanish. Belinda Remedios Lopez was born 24 years ago in Australia and when she was 1 years old, moved to Spain with her parents



where she spent a year before going back to the land of kangaroos. She defines herself as Australian, but through her veins runs Spanish blood — although she only has basic knowledge of this Romanesque language because her parents decided to only speak to her in English.

She started studying public relations and politics because she was interested in working at an NGO such as ‘Amnesty International,’ but her studies weren't exactly what she was expecting because everything was “too much about fashion and business.” Lucky for her, the light eventually appeared in her life in the form of radio- journalism. It was at a community station in Sydney when she discovered social journalism and it fascinated her. If a news report was being covered in mainstream newspapers, her station covered it with an alternative point of view and tried to give a voice to minorities.

After that, she decided to build her career on journalism, where she studied the medium in Australia. Belinda worked as a journalist and studied at the same time, sharing her time between the two but always found room for partying and enjoying her social life. Her plan had always been to travel and work at the same time. While she had often considered moving to Spain to get in touch with her heritage and learn Spanish, she ended up in Indonesia instead. It was there that she worked as a journalist for two different newspapers, in English.

Living in this country was a great experience. For most Australians, Indonesia isn't well known, in spite of it being their closest neighbor. Once she was there, she felt that there was more to Indonesia than what she had heard in the news- as it only made worldwide headlines for either conflicts or tragedies. Her experiences in this archipelago in the Pacific and Indian Ocean was really productive. She became interested in Islam and the more moderate way it is practiced in Indonesia, and she even learned to speak Indonesian.

As she says: “Going to a country is the best way to get to know it. For her, being able to study in three different countries during the two years of the program is “awesome” and living and studying with people around the world is the best way to get a global perspective. During her experience in Indonesia she worked at the business desk, where she discovered how useful understanding the world from a business perspective is, because from there one can explain many the source of many conflicts and policies. Because of that, she'll be finishing her masters in London, with the business and finance specialization.

Teaser: Caroline saw a lot, worked a lot and learned a lot. One of the most valuable lessons: Relax and stay cool. For this lesson she had to leave her busy home country Brazil behind and move to Mozambique, where she educated the new generation of journalists.



Growing up in Brazil's megalopolis of Sao Paulo with its 19+ million inhabitants is an adventure per se. It was here where Caroline started her journalistic career. Not at a university but at two; studying social science at one and journalism at another.

That should be enough one might think, but not for Caroline. So in addition to her studies, at the tender age of 19, she did her first internship at a sports-magazine and instantly became a sports addict herself. In order to know exactly what she was writing about, she tried a variation of sports, including: adventure racing, climbing, parachuting and many more. And what were the valuable lessons that she learned from her mainly male colleagues? “I think that all the cuss words I know, I learned during that time”.

After working for a bigger magazine, Caroline invested her savings into a language-vacation in Britain. Afterwards, she found a job at Radio Eldorado, a big Radio company in Brazil, from where she moved onto Globo TV, one of the biggest broadcasters in Latin America.

The prospective could hardly be better, still Caroline felt continually worse. “I didn't want to realize it in the first place but I developed a number of allergies.” That was eventually the tipping point, wherein she decided something had to change. After rather short stopovers as a freelancing website developer and spin-doctor, she made plans to start a new life as an Anthropology student in Mozambique.

Though, once again nothing went according to plan. Her mentor didn't show up at the airport. “Back in those days you couldn't find information about Mozambique on the internet. So I had no idea where I could find a proper accommodation.” That was just the beginning of a long and tough acclimatisation phase as she began to realise that public life and service in this country follow their own rules. “I'm a very organized person but I was forced to learn to *relax*. The bus arrives when it arrives and the plumber shows up, when he shows up. To cope with this way of living was the most important lesson I learned in my time there”.

In her second semester she got offered a job as a teacher for the newly established Journalism course. It was a hard task as she hardly had any access to proper equipment but because of this, she was enthralled by the motivation of her students.

Still, after four years, Caroline felt the need for a change. And the master program follows a pattern. “I never had a lot of money but I'm absolutely sure I have a lucky star. I had many great chances and I'm sure this program is another fantastic opportunity”

CASSIE WERBER (by Judy Wanderi)
The journey never ends..."

"From a playwright to a watchdog:

Meet 28-year-old blue-eyed Londoner, Cassie Werber. Born of liberal hippie parents, Cassie was homeschooled and spent her early childhood in the English countryside.



By the age of 12, Cassie knew that she wanted to study English and become an actress; she had grown up in a household where her father was an actor and her mother a visual artist. Their passion for this form of expression rubbed off on their young daughters' career aspirations like a bush fire.

Indeed while at the University she did pursue her Bachelor's degree in English with the dreams of becoming a theatre director. However, Cassie decided that a BA was just not enough for her intellectual as well as creative pursuit and therefore went back to school for her Masters in Advanced theatre practice. After

graduating she began work as an actress, later co-founding a performance company in London but mainly holding shows in Edinburgh.

I curiously enquire about why she made the major shift from performance arts to Journalism. And she explains that while working as a theatre director and actress, her work involved a lot of storytelling and politically themed plays or scripts. Nevertheless, she still felt a burning desire to pursue something that she loved more and which would offer a platform of expression more than the one she had known all her life. She sought out something that was less fictional and more of the real world events. In the journey to finding her true passion she even contemplated studying medicine, but fortunately the Erasmus Mundus Masters in Journalism came knocking at her door soon enough.

Cassie believes that she has now found her true calling in the Mundus program. According to her, Journalism is a self-directed career that will work well with the discipline she has garnered from her years in the theatre. Without doubt she feels complete within the Mundus career path. She describes it as a 'homecoming' long overdue.

Her spirit of enthusiasm and steadfast focus on what she believes in, will lead her back to the UK, this time not as a performing artist but as an intellectual seeking to specialize in Business and Finance Journalism at City University, London. Well there is no doubt about her resolve to excel in a new field, and she does not seem deterred by all the challenges that may lay ahead. Her ambition after the Mundus program is to work within the UK for respectable media organizations such the British Broadcasting corporation (BBC), the Economists or in New Media.

It was a muggy mid-August morning in 2008 on the tiny island of Awaji (Japan). After twelve months of living there, Amy got up, ready to go back home. “This chapter of my life is over”, she thought, while she packed her last things and mentally said good-bye to what had been “the most challenging adventure” she had ever experienced. Indeed, the past year had been a tough test for Amy. Secluded, isolated, surrounded by people who looked, spoke and thought differently from her, trying to teach English to 7 and 8th-graders who didn't care much about learning the language, she discovered more about herself and the world –she was able to travel to Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, South Korea and Taiwan—than she had in her previous 23 years. That hot suffocating morning she boarded a flight to Indonesia, where she spent her last 2 weeks in Asia. When, by early September, her plane landed in Toronto, her home city, she took a minute to reflect about what had been her life up until that point and, more importantly, what would be her next big adventure.



Born on the 26th of July in Toronto, Ontario Amy Astman Baker was predisposed to live an intellectual life. Her mother, Barbara Astman, is a famous artist who left America to come to Canada in 1970, during the Vietnam War. A feminist and left-winger who, among other things, designed the windows of the Canadian embassy in Berlin, Barbara introduced Amy to the world of art from an early age. Amy’s father, a “super smart” intellectual, who has traveled the world and once lived in Morocco, also contributed to Amy’s liberal upbringing. In such a poetic environment --watching her dad start as a self-practicing lawyer and her mother develop her art in the same loft-- grew Amy (and her sister Laura), in what she calls “an easy-going, loving childhood, surrounded by artists, activists, intellectuals and generally quirky people.” It was no coincidence that, while contributing to *Teen People* magazine in High School, she realized her love for writing. “Until then, I was more into photography and art”, she says. Her passion for culture landed her a spot at McMaster University to study Multimedia and Cultural Studies. This interdisciplinary program, where web-design meets essay writing, was barely enough for Amy's cultural thirst. During her 3rd year of her undergraduate degree, she spent a semester in Copenhagen, where she met her boyfriend Lars (who, three years later, is responsible for “stealing” her from her Mundus classmates every other weekend). Not surprisingly, when she finished at McMaster University, she wanted more. She applied for a teaching job in Japan and the rest is history.

Back in the Toronto, after a few months of readjustment, she landed an internship at St. Joseph's Communications, the largest privately owned communications company in Canada. She ended up writing for *Where Toronto*, a monthly tourism magazine. By that time, she was already applying for different Masters of Journalism programs both home and abroad. In April 2009, she found the Mundus Program online, and she realized she needn't look any further. With the deadline fast approaching, she applied and got in, landing a spot in the War and Conflict specialism. But why war? “I don't necessarily want to be a war reporter, but I want to apply the knowledge we gain during that year to other fields, such as diplomacy or maybe NGOs,” she says. By August 2009, Amy was again hopping on a plane, heading to her new cultural adventure, a program that, in her own words, offers you invaluable “intangibles” like traveling, meeting young professionals from across the globe and learning to adapt quickly to different countries, language and environments. “I describe myself as a cultural DJ, sampling different cultures, music, art, films, literature, design”, she explains, “and for me, those intangibles, are everything.” Aarhus, Amsterdam and Swansea will no doubt be essential elements to DJ Amy's new set.

SARKA HALAS (by Stephen Robert Morse)

“Life Begins at 30.”

As the Cold War raged in Eastern Europe, there was a brief moment where the metaphorical guns were put down and the missiles were disabled: Sarka Halas was born in Zlin, Czech Republic. It was like the Prague Spring of 1968 all over again.



After spending a portion of her childhood in Dubrovnik, which was then part of Yugoslavia, she immigrated with her family to Fort McMurray, an oil town in Alberta, Canada.

At 18, after riding a freight train from Calgary to Quebec (note: she’s not a hobo), Halas decided to leave her rural roots and make Montreal her permanent home. Once settled in Montreal, she began steady stream of education that was complemented by a stint in a girl band/collective called The Deets. (Sadly they never made a Myspace page.)

In 2004, Sarka earned a diploma in Clinical Phytotherapy in Vancouver, British Columbia. (And for all of you ignorant folks out there, phytotherapy, according to the almighty Wikipedia, is the study of the use of extracts from natural origin as medicines or health-promoting agents.)

Sarka hearts education, so one diploma clearly wasn’t enough to keep her active mind from craving more stimulation. So she once again packed her pencil case and this time found herself in the classroom at Concordia University in Montreal where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism. Shocker.

While completing her degree and in the two years since, she has worked at *Journalists for Human Rights* (Montreal), *The Concordian Newspaper* (Montreal), *Radio Prague* (Prague), *BBC World Service: Europe Today* (London), *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* (Montreal), and *Canadian Business Magazine* (Toronto). Baller. Oh yeah, and her radio voice is really, really hot.

Now for the essentials and tangentials:

Favorite food: Vegetables. Never McDonalds

Favorite Color: Black not pink

Favorite Movie: Some Like it Hot

Favorite Book: The Unbearable Lightness of Being

Favorite City: London and Montreal, not Toronto

Favorite Word: Stoked (As in: I’m really stoked to do this list)

Favorite Vacation Spot: West coast of Canada

Favorite Canadian Prime Minister's Wife: Margaret Trudeau

Favorite Holiday: road trips with beat up old vans and endless supply of coffee

Favorite Band: whatever bands my friends are currently in

Favorite Clothing Style: all black, new wave

Favorite Dessert: Figs and black coffee

Biggest Fear: forgetting

Favorite Alcoholic Drink: wine from Sonoma or Napa not beer

Glasses or Contacts: glasses

Shark attack or Sarkattack: no comment

YING DIAO (by Charlotte Jørgensen)

“A proud Chinese.”

In 2009-2011 the Mundus team will have the privilege to get to know Ying Diao. Ying is a 26-year-old woman from China, who came to Denmark from Beijing, where she has



lived the past 8 years. The contrast from the crowdedness of Beijing’s 10 million people was not something Ying thought she would miss - that was until she experienced the wide quiet fields of Skejbyparken in Århus. However, the coldness of Denmark doesn’t terrify the Asian globetrotter, who is originally from a region of China where temperatures dropping below - 35 degrees celcius are not uncommon.

Back in Beijing, Ying was very busy, so the calm and silence of Ying’s new apartment in Århus is welcomed as she now has plenty of times to do some of the things she appreciates.

Besides hanging out with friends, cooking Chinese food – often for her friends, Ying’s biggest hobby is to read books. Her favorite authors are Hemingway and Jack London, who both started out as journalists. And she always buys books wherever she goes, because traveling is another thing she is very devoted to.

She has traveled many places so far, among others, New York, Brussels and Tibet. The latter being her absolute favorite and a place she hopes to visit again.

Besides traveling to the peaceful and thought-inspiring Tibet she has another goal. Ying’s own head is full of stories too and she dreams of one day being able to put all the stories together and write a book. Taking a peak at her talented writing makes one believe that she will achieve this goal.

In Beijing, Ying worked as a journalist with a specialization in economy and trade, hence the last year of her Mundus Masters will be in London. Her goal with this master program is to get more knowledge on business and finance and to reflect upon her strength and weakness as a journalist, but also to get an insight in European culture.

The working and living conditions as a journalist in China can be challenging and different than the ones in Europe and this juxtaposition, along with the European Institution with its norms and values, fascinates Ying. But make no mistake Ying is proud of China and wishes that everyone could visit the middle Kingdom at least once to explore its wide range of culture, friendliness and amazing nature.

JENNIFER PIÑERO ROIG (by Jeanette Jordan) “Even when I’m sleeping I’m learning.”

The whole world opened up for Jennifer Piñero in August, 2009 when Jennifer arrived in Aarhus from Cuba. “In Cuba, we don’t have all this like all these books, mobile phones and the Internet



just at your touch. You don’t have Internet in your home in Cuba; it is only for your job or at the university.”

The Erasmus Mundus program put Jennifer online to what she believes will be the start of a great path of new experiences, new people and a new way of looking at life.

Jennifer graduated from the university in Havana, Cuba where she also worked as a freelance journalist for online magazines.

Jennifer also completed studies and film, after developing a passion for screenwriting.

Jennifer will be following the Hamburg track in the Erasmus Mundus program; but she first learned of the program after coming across a City of London website. She said it took her three days to download the Blue Book; but she was determine to find our more about the program and see if there was possibly a place for her.

If you ever get a chance to meet Jennifer, there is an immediate joy in watching her be amazed at every aspect of life. Even Jennifer admits that she feel as if new things are coming to life for her now 24 hours a day. When she’s awake, she is taking in new information and when she attempts sleep at night her brain is still processing all the new data.

When Jennifer is not studying, she enjoys movies of course and reading. She says in Cuba there are only five government channels; so cable television and all the selections keeps her glued now to the remote every time the television set comes on here in Denmark.

As for family, Jennifer is an only child and she says her father says it is time for her to consider marriage and to give him grandchildren. But, that is on-hold now while Jennifer gives life to a new world of opportunities.

Charlotte thinks the major goal in life should be having fun, and that is why she is always lively and cheerful ---- or at least tries to. When some bad things happen, she would think there must be a good reason for it. So if she misses a train, she would think she might meet her future husband on the next one, and that is why she missed the first one.



For her, playing sports is a major source of having fun. She is enthusiastic with all kinds of sports and has been busy playing soccer, tennis, and squash all her life. She started tennis when she was 6. She has been on the junior national as a teenager and travelled around Europe to play tournaments. Her former opponents include Caroline Wozniacki, who is now the number 8th in the world. Each year, she would try to go to London for Wimbledon games, getting up before 6 am and standing in lines to get the tickets.

In fact, she went to journalism class because she wanted to be a sports commentator. But later on she found each time she tried something new in journalism, she liked it. She worked at a national news agency and Danish Agriculture Centre for a year and a half as part of her journalism training. From the work, she found reporting on crimes can also be interesting. Crossing the boarder amazes Charlotte. She said living in a new environment always gives her new perspectives and teaches her more about herself.

She did her thesis in Beirut, Lebanon and found the life there completely enchanting. She spent a semester in Tennessee, US, and travelled around the country. There she shared a bedroom with several people. The idea frightened at first but later she found it is a lot of fun. There she was linked with the smart, good-hearted spider in the fairy tale “Charlotte’s Web”.

Her overseas experiences made her realize the good system of Denmark that she would not realize at home, and made her cherish the life that she has now. She chose the more theoretical route in Hamburg as her specialism, for two reasons. Firstly, she said she would like to learn German and secondly, since her journalism training in the Danish School of Journalism as an undergraduate is mostly practical, she’d like to pick up more theory, which will offer her more insight in the industry and make her better equipped for future career.

MARTIN KIIL POULSEN (by Sara Al Mojaddidi)

“An epiphany at the age of 18, A Dane who would rather choose the hectic and omnivorous life of a war correspondent over the serenity of growing old in a rocker, reading the paper and sipping hibiscus tea!”

A Vj by night and a student by day, explains Martin Kiil Poulsen, a local Dane who was born and raised in Aarhus. “ I actually work as a VJ 2-times a week for 2 months now and before that I



used to work for a TV company and my main beat was covering football.” Poulsen said.

When asked which Danish team he supported, he said that Danish football was boring and actually prefers ‘Fenerbachce’: a professional sports club based in the district of Kadıköy in Istanbul, Turkey.

Born and raised in cosmopolitan Aarhus, at the age of 18 he had an epiphany that he was destined for a more precarious life beyond his stable and lackluster hometown. He moved to the U.S for year to study at the Gorden College in Georgia. Funniest moment in Martin’s life would be his infamous role in “ Booby Jack”. While studying in America, he got his first taste of show biz by being entangled in a play that depicts a farce

between a clumsy guy (Martin) who gets a princess.

When he returned to Aarhus, he did 4 months of military service and felt it was a huge consumption of his time. Realizing his wasted efforts and time in the military he fled to the warm sultry beaches of Barcelona for 8 months, he divided his stay over there between two months enrolled at a language school and 2 months of working so he could have a grand total of 4 months of excessive extra curricular activities in other words ‘ partying full time’.

When asked, where he sees himself in 10 years, “ I see myself as a respected journalist and aspire to become a leading war correspondent, I am scared of getting older and retiring...hence this realm of war reporting fascinates me.” Poulsen said.

He even applied to the Erasmus Mundus Program in futility of not landing his dream job of becoming a foreign correspondent, he argues that he did not even apply on account he feels that unemployment in general has risen and has become exceedingly difficult in the journalistic sphere.

Due to the Erasmus Mundus program he hopes to learn about all countries associated with war and conflict resolutions and acquire a basic understanding of how their policies have had a deep impact on the world. He would love to visit all countries of the world, but realistically he would rather embrace each country one month at a time and actually make an effort at living there for a longer period. So as to integrate socially within its norms and traditions instead of the typical tourist stuff.

The world is anticipating the rise of Poulsen’s career and be sure to watch out for his international reports on an international crossfire in a war-zone near you.

NASRIN BILLIE (by Abel Adamu Gebeyehu)

“Born in Somalia, nurtured in Denmark”

Born in Somalia but nurtured in Denmark, bright chocolate face, easy to approach and to communicate with. She always says “I am Somalian by heritage, Muslim in religion and



Danish in citizen”. She was six when she left Somalia with her family. Now she is living in Denmark since then. She is also faithful to her religion-Islam. Her proper name is Nasrin Sharif Billie age 26 and unmarried. During childhood she was accompanied by many Somalian colleagues but now she is living with more Danish friends.

Nasrin is a multilingual and multicultural young girl. She speaks Somalian, Danish, Italian, German, English, and Scandinavian and understands a little Arabic. She is a bridge between Somalia and Danish culture. And she says, “I am trying to balance both cultures - practicing both harmoniously.”

She has got BA degree in Journalism from Southern University of Denmark in September 2008. After graduation she worked as freelance journalist writing for magazines, for example CV Magazine which is exclusively women magazine in Copenhagen. Then she also worked as a journalist at MS Action Aid Denmark. All her experiences come from print journalism and communication.

Nasrin hopes to be a cosmopolitan. After completing Erasmus Mundus she wants to be a foreign correspondent- reporting conflicts in the world. She believes that reporting conflicts in balanced manner can bring peace in the world. This in return will make her peace agent. She is an optimist girl and expects many things from Erasmus Mundus program. She wants to explore the world via the given courses in the classroom and of course to use them in real life situation.

She dreams to go back to her birthplace; Somalia and to visit the foot-print of her ancestors- experience the changes that have been made since she left, and to make some flashbacks of her childhood, the games she played with peace, schools she attended and sweet memories of early days. But she knows it will never be real by near future since it needs time to clear the weather, which is polluted by artilleries of many factions and invaders. Nevertheless, she for sure knows that the dream will be true whatever time it will take.

Nasrin hates authoritative (totalitarian) people who look at the world only through their egoistic perspectives. She loves traveling and her happiest movement so far is the time when she joined Southern University of Denmark. Because of high competition, she didn't expect to get accepted but she did and this gives her more confidence and helps to realize that she can do more in the future. This experience was the beginning of a turning point in her life.

IDA ZIDORE (by Ana Sofia Cerquiera) “Climbing her way through the scene of International Politics.”

Ida Zidore is a 23-year-old Danish girl that has gone way beyond her country's borders. She was born in Aalborg, in the very north of the country, and spent some years of her



childhood in Greenland. Impressively beautiful, Ida hides behind her discrete ways a persuasive and adventurous spirit that has impelled her to discover the world.

After finishing high school, she decided to travel around Asia and Europe and finally settled in Berlin for a few months. Back to her homeland, she picked Copenhagen as her city, where she aimed to pursue her journalism studies. Driven by the circumstances, Ida ended up studying film and media studies, but she never abandoned her desire to work as a journalist, which she indeed started to do, as a film critic.

Meanwhile, she found time to take a long journey until New Zealand, where she spent 8 months in an exchange program. From the Maori world she brought a passion for rock-climbing, hiking and surf – which is why she’s eager to go to Swansea, the specialty that most suits her desire to understand the depths of international politics. Ida believes that studying war and conflict represents one of the essences of being a journalist, “encouraging us to not get lazy and pushing us to be there, where things happen, trying to understand them.” To comprehend and put in perspective the complex panorama of foreign affairs is one of the thing that most fascinates her in this job.

Laziness is definitely an attribute that doesn’t fit Ida’s personality. From her job as an assistant to a researcher EU correspondent, she strengthened her analytical capacities and her will to work on investigative journalism or as a correspondent in a conflict zone. Used to discuss politics with her father since she was younger, Ida is as ready as can be for higher achievements. In fact, being at the top is nothing new for her, as she is a former national champion on high jump. Her determination may turn sometimes in stubbornness, she concedes, but working on a team – in such a diverse group of students – is one of the many things she’s willing to improve by choosing a multicultural program as the Erasmus Mundus Masters.

In the meantime, if you don’t find Ida on the heights of a climbing wall, you might see her dedicating herself to other of her passions – music. She sang in a choir and in a band, she played the piano and the guitar, but her preferences go to the saxophone (as if she wasn’t already such a powerful young lady!) Such variety of skills can only predict a successful career in journalism, probably on print or, maybe, in documentaries, where she could apply part of what she learned in her undergraduate studies. Where? After living in, at least, eight different cities, that is something one can never know.

“Hot date tomorrow sounds great. I'll be the one with a flower in the buttonhole.”

This could be the slogan of a cheesy womanizer. Granted but in fact this was the quick-witted answer of Lasse Berg, a charming Danish journalist, when asked for a Bluebook-interview.



In terms of identification, however, the colour of his shoes proves to be a more reliable indicator at a first meeting than any imaginary flowers: bright green sneakers – or possibly also multicoloured ones – are his trademarks. That green is his favourite colour one will notice at the latest when crossing the doorstep to his modern furnished apartment where lime-green decorations lead the way to the kitchen.

“Do you want some coffee? This one is my favourite” he asks and wags a bag of original Starbucks beans – a reminder of his exchange semester at the University of

Missouri in 2008. “In the United States every day counted somehow more than in Denmark,” Lasse remembers his stay there with a smile while sipping his homemade coffee. Lasse is a man on the move. At 13 he lived a year in Iceland with his family. Once at the Danish School of Journalism he did internships all over Denmark. And it was this longing for another intense experience in a new environment, which made him choose to become a Mundusian after finishing his journalism degree this year. “I am afraid to get old too quickly,” commits the 24 year old who is likely to be found on an Indie concert in one of the local music venues on a Saturday night.

However, the current plethora of social events gives the “pleaser” – as he describes himself his character – difficulties to decide where to go, not wanting to disappoint anybody. His social, responsible and pleasant nature makes it basically impossible to dislike him. No wonder that the reactions among his fellow journalism classmates are overwhelmingly positive.

Lasse is known to be a happy person. When asked about his secret, he responds: “Life is short and meaningless. That is why I focus on the small things like being with my family or good friends which give life meaning.”

That said, you could imagine that it is indeed quite easy to get lost in philosophical discussions with Lasse over nothing less than the meaning of life, religion (“I would give everything to be religious since ignorance can be a blessing”) and the sarcastic side of journalism. Actually ask him about the concept of the “happy cripple” – everyone from the Danish School of Journalism will know.

MADS HANSEN (by Eeva Eronen)

“The Dane who may miss mackerels.”

Amsterdam. Mads Hansen, 24, would be ready to take the bus to the airport tomorrow. Århus, he stresses, is ok, but a bit too familiar to him because he grew up in a nearby city called Silkeborg.

Besides, Mads graduated from the Danish School of Journalism just few months ago.



Even though Mads is keen to move on, he says it's certain he will miss liquorice and mackerel soon after settling down in Amsterdam. “Canned mackerel. It's disgusting – I know – but though you miss it when you're not able to have it,” he laughs.

On the other hand, missing mackerel's means one has to find something else on his sandwich. And that's something what Mads loves to do, literally. “I'm really fascinated about having an everyday life in a foreign country,” he says. “And going to the grocery store is an essential part of that.”

After these words it is easy to understand that Mads is one of those lucky guys who has a great gift of being excited about almost anything on Earth, especially about everything new. And, naturally, that is one reason why he decided to study journalism. “Subject or area doesn't really matter to me. Even agriculture can be interesting,” he says, based on his six months work in the magazine of Danish Agricultural Council. After that Mads has been working for the newswire News Paq and local radio.

If Mads weren't a young talented journalist, he would work as an architect. In the end Mads decided to forget the idea because he is “really bad at math”. Nevertheless, he is heading to London 2010-2011 to specialize in economics and business. He claims his knowledge on economics is next to zero. “Business and finance tend to frighten people. And me too,” he says.

Both of the coming countries are familiar to Mads. He spent four months in Utrecht, Holland, during his last study year in Danish School of Journalism. Additionally, he studied media for one year in small city in southern England. But, he stresses, in England his focus was more on learning English and having fun rather than on getting high marks.

“Never insult Dutch people. Don't tell them their language is a mix of other languages”, he advises other Mundusians. Secondly, everyone should try Dutch pancakes. And those who are heading to England, Mads encourages getting familiar with the pub culture.

Mads says he loves going out and spending time with his friends so much he doesn't have any “real hobbies.” Among Mads' Danish friends he is known to be the one who organizes get-togethers and keeps people in touch. With the Mundus group, he promises to try his best.

SARAH AL MOJADDIDI (by Naoul Abbadi)
a journalist.”

“An artistic passion of being

Ahlan Wa Sahlan or should we say Salam Alaykum! Let me introduce our Egyptian Erasmus Mundusian; Sara Al Mojaddidi, a real Arab-cocktail!

Sarah is an Egyptian citizen, with origins from Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. When you look at her, you see the Orient. Her brown eyes, her dark hair, and her honey coloured-skin transports



you into the serene deserts of an Arabesque landscape. Her spontaneity and her love for challenges, debates, and vivid discussions, let you discover her Orientale temperament.

She was born and raised in Riyadh, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where she also studied in an English international school. At the age of 16, she got accepted at the American University in Cairo and moved to her matrilineal side of her family in cosmopolitan Cairo, Egypt.

Sarah specialised in broadcast journalism with a minor in theatre. A youthful endeavour at only 16, she managed to pass her IGCSE's O/A levels in one year thus gaining her admittance. She was adamant about climbing the social journalistic ladders of becoming a leading Arab journalist.

Adventure and hobbies? Sarah only demands that. Her first dream was to become an actress! She loves acting and being able to live a thousand lives. She studied voice and movement and acting during her sophomore year at the university but paradoxically, you would not find her in the limelight of the scene, but in the shadow of the wings. Sarah prefers to be involved backstage: willing to help in dressing, in make up or props master, and being able to grasp the bohemian atmosphere and the intense energy of preparing for a live show case.

Sarah loves interviewing people with controversial agendas and she enjoys the 'psychology behind conflicts and phobias'. She obtained her bachelors degree in “Mass communication” in 2003. Then, she worked as a print freelance journalist for various magazines and English independent newspapers, but selling her stories was quite a difficult task to do. On that account, she opened her competences to other fields, and worked in business/PR and communication domains, and put her journalistic happenings on hold.

Nevertheless, after several years of different but enriching experiences, she returned to her true vocation: “It took me six years to realize that I have what it takes to become a serious journalist”. Last year while browsing all the search engines from her ex-job's computer, she spotted an interesting program: *Erasmus Mundus Journalism* and was really attracted to the title and little did she know that her acceptance into the program was going to be her turning point. This program was her' pot of gold'... a grandiose opportunity for her to gain an international perspective and an eye-opener to European countries, in contrast to her home country.

Sarah is a real cosmopolitan woman. She likes to meet new people from all over the world and considers herself a true globalised citizen, eager to share and mainstream different cultures and experiences of the world. Her objective is instigating liberalist news values within a Middle Eastern culturally censored conservative world and to conduct various investigative reports.

ABEL GEBEYEHU (by Nasrin Billie)

“Success through hard work.”

“I have experienced so many things and gone through so many hardships, that yes, I feel like my age in spirit, even though I don't look it,” says 35-year-old Abel Adamu from Ethiopia.



Abel was born and raised in a remote rural area in about 600 km from the capital, Addis Ababa. His family originates from a long line of farmers. From an early age Abel started working on a daily basis after school in order to support himself since he wanted to educate himself. The work mainly consisted of servicing the local church and taking on small labour projects.

Soon enough young Abel found out that he had a very special gift. A very profitable gift of writing small plays in his native mother tongue, Amharic. Regularly Abel would come up with peculiar stories about social issues in his community and of a more general interest in his country that would be conducted in his local church.

Most of the plays sprang in one way or another from religious themes. “I am a very religious man”, Abel tells me. Worship is taken very seriously in Ethiopia, where the majority of the population is

Orthodox Christians. “I grew up with Sunday school learning in the local church. And all through elementary school and high school, the church was a big part of my life.”

As their eldest son Abel's parents encouraged him to follow in their footsteps and take over the farm. But Abel has never been the type to just obey orders. He was very set on getting an education, so at the age of 12 he went off to the city to get an English diploma. After completion Abel worked for a year as a journalist at a large regional mass media, until he had saved up enough money to go to college.

“I basically took my destiny in my own hands and made things happen for me. I never received any help from my parents, who cut me off when I didn't want to become a farmer, but my religion and my friends were of great comfort to me during that period.”

After getting his Bachelors degree in Arts in 2002, Abel immediately landed a job as a producer and presenter at a regional radio station. Here he was in charge of conducting radio programs about family planning and how to deal with HIV-AIDS. The listeners of the program called in and asked Abel for advice, and very confidently Abel would guide the callers according to his religious believes.

“I know the Bible by heart, and I am very intrigued by the dogmas of the Christian Orthodox faith. The deal with family planning is that our religion requires us to do fasting, as in not eating anything and not engaging in sex while fasting. And the fasting takes up 2/3 of the time available in one year, so family planning becomes very crucial for the devoted Christian,” Abel explains. He admits though that he himself has trouble with living up to his religious obligations.

“I'm only human, and I would have to save that there is definitely room for improvement,” he says with a smile.

After working one year on the radio program, Abel decided to go back to learning and took a job as an assistant instructor at Arba Minch University. Soon after he received his Masters Degree in Journalism and Media in 2006 and went on to work as a lecturer. Abel sees his role as a journalist as a changing agent and his ultimate aspiration or message to the world's population would be to not forget about the poor people in the world that are less fortunate in their ways of life.

After so many years as an academic Abel now feels that he has come to a point in his life, where he just want to meet a nice girl, settle down and start a family. “I am hoping to meet a nice girl and marry her,” Abel tells me in confidence, before he breaks out in a big laugh.

EEVA ERONAN (by Mads Stampe Hansen)

“On a quest to making a difference.”

The story about Eeva Eronan, 29, from Finland, is the story about a girl that, in her own words,



grew up “in the middle of nowhere”, on an Island of only 70 inhabitants. It’s a story about a girl, who wanted to make a difference.

In fact, that’s why she settled on Journalism. She wanted to do make a difference. Though, Eeva’s mind hasn’t always been set on journalism. A small detour to becoming a sports-instructor took up a few months, but finally she gave into what she really loves: writing.

Moving away from her parents at just 17, Eeva is no stranger to moving around. In the past four and a half years she has moved no less than 14 times taking her from the second biggest city of Finland, Tampere, through Estonia to study their language and economic system, to Copenhagen where she worked as an intern with the UN World Food Program.

After Amsterdam Eeva is going to London to specialize in business and finance journalism, a field of journalism she has worked in before, as business reporter for a Finish national newspaper.

It’s quite a leap to going to one of the biggest cities in Europe, when coming from one of the smallest, one might think; but not doing it, would be even worse for the adventurous Finn.

“I believe in learning by sharing with and seeing other cultures. Normal life is too boring,” Eeva says when I ask her why she chose to become a Mundusian with the rest of us.

“Last winter I traveled around Central America all by myself. It was amazing, and I wouldn’t have missed it for a thing,” she continues convincing me that she really is here to make a difference – just like she intended to when she took up journalism in the first place.

NAOUEL ABBADI (by Martin Kiil Poulsen)

“The Frenchy spice.”

Take some fresh prunes, olives, raisins and lemon. Add some lamb or beef and spice it up with a bit of cumin, paprika and Ras el hanout and you will have the base recipe for the Moroccan cuisine Tajine. In Montpellier this recipe has often found its way to the kitchen in which Naouel Abbadi grew up.



It is now Naouel’s favorite dish, and is one of many proofs that her parents have enriched her with the cultures of both Morocco and France.

Naouel was born in Montpellier, in the south of France. Even though she likes very much her Mediterranean area, she moved to Lyon (in the center of France) to study communication in the Institute ICOM, and for her third year, she studied in UK.

While she was student, she wanted to gain more practice of her knowledge. She got different internships in communication in Morocco, Oxford and Montpellier.

It has however, not always been destined that Naouel should be a journalist. It was not until a year ago that she changed her direction of study from marketing and communications to journalism. She did it just in time so that she could change her major and graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in journalism this summer in Oxford University (UK): “It was so interesting to have another journalistic view through the Anglo-Saxon model in extra of the French or Moroccan one”.

This degree however, can’t provide her with the job of her dreams. Naouel wants to travel and cover many views of the Journalism. In order to succeed, she decided to enroll in the two years Erasmus Mundus program because the French degrees in this area not well known around the world.

A major reason for enrolling with the program was the belief that she can then land her dream job in two years time, and of course, gains so many Medias perspectives from different Europeans countries and confronts the different student’s Media view from all over the globe. Naouel is a “travel Fan”! So when she heard of the opportunity to live in three different countries, she wasn’t long to decide that Erasmus Mundus is THE tailor made program for her.

Though Naouel finds different countries and cultures very interesting, you will often find her cooking the same Moroccan dish she so often has had before. Track her down and you might be lucky to get a taste of this Moroccan spice she is so fond of.

ANGELA WOICIECHOWSKI (by Magda Kufrej) “How to multitask? Ask Angela!”

In Freiburg, Western Germany, it was just another cold and rainy day in March when Angela saw the world for the first time. After this date, 7th of March 1984, she has never stopped wondering,



observing and exploring. Describing Angela in 400 – 500 words is a damn difficult task. But let’s put it in order.

Part 1. Mundusian: Angela decided to apply for the Erasmus Mundus program with the specialization in Hamburg (Media Systems) one year before it started. This thoughtfully – considered decision is a result of her previous work experience and studies. While doing a BA in Media Management, Angela took different internships in German Radio/TV, the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, and the Goethe - Institute in Shanghai. In the future, Angela seeks to specialize in foreign affairs and continue her journalistic work in TV.

Part 2. Multi – language: Angela speaks German, English, French, Latin, Spanish and a little bit of Chinese. The second two languages she learned in school, the third at university. To improve her French she decided to become an au pair in Paris, France as a 17-year-old teenager. However, it wasn’t enough for such an ambitious and creative person. Thus, Angela went to Shanghai where she worked for the Goethe - Institute and became acquainted with basics of Chinese, which – as she claims – is extremely difficult. Finally, after finishing her BA in Media Management, Angela bought a flight ticket to Panama, and after 3 months she discovered that she is fluent in Spanish! Danish is the next language in which Angela wants to put on her list, so you can observe her progress in studying the language on Facebook, where Angela puts comments written in Danish. ;)))))

Part 3. Multi – cultural: The two cross-continental journeys helped Angela to understand cultural variety. Comparing East culture (Shanghai, 4 months), Latin American way of living (Panama, 3 months) and European style made her aware of cultural boundaries and specific characteristics. In Panama she did a voluntary service at “Fe y Alegría” where she taught children and teenagers. – “*By doing this I wanted to give something back by considering good things that I experienced in my life*” – she claims. Yet, Angela knows where she wants to settle down: it will be Europe, but she keeps her favorite destination in secret. – “*It’s too early to talk about it*” – she laughs.

Part 4. Musical: You wouldn’t believe that Angela plays the piano, guitar and flute! When she was 5 years old she started ballet. Later, she took other dance lessons: she is keen on jazz and Latin American dance. She also sings, so if anyone of you is eager to set up an Erasmus Mundus Blues and Jazz Band, you don’t have to worry about looking for a singer!

Part 5. The Epilogue: I’m sure there are some curiosities you don’t know about Angela. She wakes up at 5.30 am every morning and walks to the beach (even though it is soooo cold outside!). She can’t handle technical stuff like washing machines or radio equipment. She puts attention to people’s eyes. She wants to try kite surfing. And in the future she’d like to have a white piano, a house at the seashore, and... a horse.

“I’m Lena, 25 years old, a bouncy, German redhead, talkative.” She couldn’t have done a better job, Lena, describing herself on the Mundus Facebook group a couple of months



before the very first meeting in Aarhus. And she definitely doesn’t disappoint; Lena is indeed bouncy, redheaded and very talkative. Even though she is German, you might add. According to Lena’s friends she is way too touchy-feely to be German. “I like the responsible way Germans are, but they are not as touchy”, 26 years old Lena says.

According to herself, Lena’s warm and friendly behaviour comes from all the travelling she has been doing the most of her adult life, where she has been in touch with a lot of different people from around the world. It all started at the age of 15, when Lena took a year abroad in high school in Minnesota, USA. Ever since the world has been Lena’s home country, so far counting The Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Peru – and now Aarhus, Denmark.

“My first e-mail address was called ‘lena-international@gmx.de’, which has almost become a theme of my life. I have always been way more attracted to everything that is international,” Lena says about her tireless travelling.

After her BA in European Studies in Maastricht (“a tiny town, but you know, the treaty”) Lena-International did several internships before applying for the Erasmus Mundus program, which combines her main interests: Journalism, international relations, politics and political communication.

Even though she comes from the academic world, Lena is split between academia and journalism: “I struggle to find a place between the theoretical and practical world. A job in the academia seems really dry to me and doesn’t have much social context. I don’t want to be one of those social geeks who sit around with their nose in a lot of books. I want to be in the world of people.”

Lena likes to interact with people to such a degree she jokes about her being ‘The Queen of Smalltalk’. “I can engage with people quite quickly, and I feel comfortable with open people. When you open up you get a lot in return. I give a lot of myself and I am a very transparent person. I am really bad at keeping secrets about me from other people,” the self-proclaimed Queen of Smalltalk says.

“You’re not making that the headline, are you?” Lena asked anxiously after describing herself in these words. But in fact no headline fits the constant smiling, bouncy redhead better.

“Doing PR is like selling your soul!” is the first answer to the lack of imagination of your dearest interviewer while re-abusing the most typical question “Why do you want to be a journalist?”



The second answer is though, more honest, or at least more self-defining. “I’m the kind of person that believes that informing the public about what’s going on in the world is one of the most important things we can do”, confesses Rabea. A sentence that wouldn’t be either surprising or original was it not for the sheer belief one feels while hearing her pronouncing it.

Although German in heart (and yes she is going straight to Hamburg in her second year), Rabea reveals a deep appeal for what are the worldwide issues... or in other terms, she “just can’t do local”.

So, even if “Mother Germany” seems as appealing as the next glass of red wine, she did not put aside the possibility of becoming a foreign correspondent, “France”, she argues, is a strong possibility among many. According to her, “Paris is just too beautiful”.

From all the things she did in life, broadcasting journalism seems to be the one that caught her heart (only a German to say that she was working in “the happiest moments of her life”, right?), and to be honest, it would be a waste not to have her angel face in front of a camera.

But for the time being she is a student, and she considers her self as one. After founding a newspaper in high school and having done more internships during her bachelor than most of the world (non-German world) would find normal (and this includes going to Ghana to work in the PR department of an embassy – right!! That’s where she found out that she wanted to keep her soul intact) she is now dedicated full time to the exhausting challenge of knowing all the bars in Aarhus... I mean... of doing all the readings for the Erasmus Mundus classes.

She tells me she likes music, although she can’t sing and she stopped playing guitar a long ago, and that she likes sports, although instead of playing football she prefers to do yoga (go figure!!!), but, most of all she seems to be into Hungarian writers of the end of the 19th century... I don’t get it either.

By the end of our short meeting she strikes me with this statement. “There’s some chance that I’ll become an academic investigator instead of an actual journalist”. To my surprised expression she replies, “People seem to undermine academia, but it strikes me as a fundamental aspect in every area”.

For Rabea, to understand the reality it is not enough to live it. One must realize the concepts that govern the generalities, to understand the idiosyncrasies of the details.

You got it right? She isn’t just a pretty face.

We are constantly surrounded by people every day. It is only human to assess where all these people stand and what they mean to you. There are many people who have unique ways of interacting with you socially. They can talk, sing, dance, debate, teach, help and even instigate. Time is irrelevant in human interaction. We make most of our judgements about people the first time we meet them.



However there are some special people who only appear when the time is right. I know I have met someone like that just recently and her name is Katja. What’s her story? Where is she from? What does she do? All you need to know is that Katja is from Germany and she is here to learn something.

What is it that she is here to learn? Is it not the same as the rest of her class? Well, yes and no. She is studying the same material that everyone else in her class is studying but she is learning something quite profound. You see what you need to know about Katja is that her life is about making sense of it all. She is trying to find out the secret of people. We study social sciences because human beings are complicated bunch.

In a world where we let so much go wrong, there has to be some reason for it and if we can change this reasoning maybe things will be better than ever. No one knows this better than Katja. She has studied Cultural Sciences and even a little bit of Theatre, Film and Media Sciences. She is in the business of knowing people. The young lady from Darmstad has been doing everything in her power to get out into the world and see what makes society and people work. She travels extensively and she has the energy and drive to keep searching for new destinations and new people to meet.

It would be wrong to say that she is quiet and soft-spoken because she only speaks when the need for speaking is apparent. Katja is ready to talk anytime you need to talk which means she is not shy or scared. It is just that she is observing and absorbing all things human and collecting little pieces of our mundane small talk. Katja is calming presence which accepts you and probes and prods you without making anyone feel uncomfortable.

We all have something to learn from each other but I can say already that what I have learned from Katja so far is that listening is a virtue that cannot be underestimated. There is great journey up ahead and what needs to be seen and done will be seen and done. Until the end of the journey however, at every party, during and after every class, there will be pair of hauntingly deep eyes and a big grin watching and collecting all the little pieces of humanity, putting it all back together and making sense of it all and I for one can’t wait to see the big picture that Katja will someday paint of being human and loving it.

Torsten Müller might be as German as you can get. His family heritage may date back many generations and he might have the same surname as half the country but, unlike his compatriots - who he feels tend to stick within their own circle of reference - “I am more open and willing to address topics that Germans don’t typically address.” In this way he is a bit of a paradox - and is increasingly escaping his “German world” by expanding his borders, both mentally and physically.



Torsten left his hometown of Schwalmthal (meaning ‘valley by the river Schwalm’ - though there are no mountains, hence no valleys in the area) to the moderately larger city of Siegen, where he studied Literacy, Cultural and Media Studies, and began making small documentaries and radio features, writing articles and designing websites. With many fingers in many pies, Torsten views himself as more of a generalist than a specialist - as the saying goes, “jack of all trades, master of none” - although it seems Torsten is a master of many.

He is a particular master in the realm of cutting-edge technology and mass communications; and always has his finger on the pulse of modern innovation. Working for a PR company for the past two years allowed him to engage with clients in the IT sector and kept up his familiarity with current technological trends. However, the company’s vision did not have space for Torsten’s revolutionary ideas, and this limitation influenced him to apply for the Mundus program, where refreshing ways of thinking are encouraged.

The Mundus program encompasses one of Torsten’s favourite pastimes - travel. His family instilled in him a love for travel on their many trips within Germany when Torsten was a child. These were followed by Eurotrip backpacking adventures to Spain and France during his student days, as well as his most recent vacations to Thailand and Japan where, knowing no one and with very little knowledge of the language and culture, his preparation skills and ability to adapt ensured that he rose to challenge.

Another thing he loves about the program is the opportunity to meet others who are so diverse in terms of ideas, reactions, languages etc; but also who have many things in common. What you notice about Torsten when you first meet him is that he is ‘Very Nice Guy’ - the kind of person you’d take home to Mom and Dad. He admits to being very diplomatic, choosing to avoid conflicts, and easily adapting to the personalities amongst whom he finds himself.

However, Torsten *is* able to let out his competitive side on the basketball court, where he plays a forward, getting the ball to the basket and setting up the shots. He compares basketball to a jazz composition: “There are a group of individuals that work together, but everyone gets a chance to do their thing, to stick out at any given moment.” It’s a perfect combination for someone who is a team player, but who can also step and be a leader when the time is right. Not only this, but being able to soar through the air towards the hoop brings Torsten closer to another one of his dreams - being able to fly.

Some people might think that “white men can’t jump”, but Torsten Müller is most certainly going places; and his strategy is simple: always remain one step ahead of the game.

It seems that a great part of Felix’s life is based on a specific-to-general order.

“I focus on details;” he says “I’m interested in all things that go beneath the surface: when it comes to people, when it comes to stories, when it comes to countries”. Travelling turned out to be the best way to go beneath the surface and to catch sight of some of the interesting details.



Felix was born in Freiburg, Germany. Then he studied Journalism and Communications Studies with an emphasis on Television Journalism and International Politics at the University of Vienna. During his studies he started travelling. After the second year of studies he went to Senegal for an Internship with Radio Teranga, a local radio station in Saint Louis. After the third one he went to Johannesburg for an internship with ZDF (German public broadcaster) Bureau for Southern Africa. During that time he was also working as a freelancer for the ORF (Austrian public broadcaster). After graduation, he worked for Frontal 21 Berlin (an investigative political TV magazine in ZDF). He has travelled a lot and has already visited over 40 countries.

In every single place under the surface he sees some peculiar detail to discover. However, even the most interesting ones are sometimes difficult to present in media.

“I was sometimes disappointed by the fact that the headquarters often only wanted to have stories, that, in my eyes, reproduced stereotypes,” he explains. Asked for some examples, he says. “For example, I had a great story about a NGO that was trying to detect landmines, still present in Mozambique. They wanted to use rats since it turned out to be the easiest and cheapest way to detect them. Landmines are harming more and more people, including children. Nobody wanted that story. There was another story of German migration workers that didn’t get their loans. That wasn’t interesting as well. All we did was the story on violence, crime, tourism and soccer”.

From all those specific details that he sees on his way, he draws some general conclusions. Asked what he likes about travelling the most, he says: “ To be able to get different perspectives, different insights, to be able to learn something about myself. Travelling made me aware of big part of my surface; I mean I knew, that I am white European man from Germany but I didn’t care about it. I still don’t care about it but I learnt that there are situations, where it is important to be aware of that as well. Before I had this idealistic idea that people everywhere are the same. Travelling gave me different perspectives on values that I had before. I also learnt a lot not only about people that I met but also about people that I knew”.

Asked if he is not afraid that after seeing so many countries, he won’t be able to manage too many pictures and details in his head; that travelling can have a negative impact as well, he answers: “I don’t think so. Usually it comes back to the same general question of human life and they are all beyond places. One thing for sure, that is in a way not that good for me, is that I am probably less idealistic and sometimes more sarcastic” he says.

The only question he could not find answer for was:

“What do you hate?” “I do not hate that many things,” he says.

FREDERIK FISCHER (by Caroline d'Essen)
to economic journalist.”

“From a punk band drummer

A family of mice were gathering food for the winter that was coming, except for Frederik, who was collecting the sun's rays, the colors from the flowers and words for long winter days. Once winter hits the field mice slowly run out of food and become sad. At this point that Frederick cheers the days with his treasure of words and colors to help them endure the long winter.



Coincidence or not, Frederik, the journalist, has the same philosophy of the character of Leo Lionni fable. “I want to have lots of stories to tell people. Life is not just about getting a nice job, a good position or making some money. It’s about living intensely and changing experiences. That’s one of reasons why I wanted to do this multicultural program”.

Once that you get to know him better you start to better understand this philosophy. When he was 16 years old he dropped out the school to play drummer for two years in a punk band called Sick Sinus around Bavaria, in Germany. Unfortunately the band didn't work out quite well and he had to get other jobs such as working in a retirement home and organising concerts. “Along the way I studied for my University entrance diploma and as soon as I passed, I quit the job and started studying Journalism in the University of Applied Sciences Hannover,” his hometown.

The option for journalism was because of his vast interest in many different subjects. In his first year he worked in the marketing department of SPV, the biggest German record company by that time. He also developed the first online campus magazine in Hannover, called I'n'k.

In a training semester he worked for Kobalt Productions which is a private production company, delivering TV-Magazines and documentaries to the biggest German public broadcasters. “There I also passed my traineeship for which I took two holiday semesters. In that time I was editor for several TV-Magazines (Polylux, Tracks, Chic and Foyer) and did some commercials for Red Bull.”

In January of 2009 he was with his TV team in Iceland to do a report about the effects of the crisis on the creative community there. Some day's later people threw over the government. “We witnessed the first, biggest and most important riot on 20th January. Afterwards there have been smaller riots until the government resigned on the 28th. We were in the center of the conflict. I felt that I was being part of a country's history and this was an amazing feeling” This experience became his graduate thesis film.

His specialization will be Business and Finance, at City University in London. “I'm really interested in economy in order to understand modern times in general as everything is more or less linked to economics.”

He is definitely someone who takes each opportunity that life offers him. That's why he has already so many stories to tell and probably will have much more after this program.

Ilka became aware of her desire to be a journalist very early on in life. She was only 17 years old, when she got her first journalistic experience with a 4-week internship for a local newspaper from her hometown, Lübbecke, a small town (of 30,000 inhabitants) in North-Rhine-Westphalia.



She had to do this internship as required for the 11th grade of her high school in Germany and this short experience changed her life. She fell in love with the profession immediately and started working as freelancer for the same newspaper for 2 years and a half.

"Actually, at the first sight, the stories I needed to cover seemed to be a little boring, but soon I realized that you can usually learn something. For instance, one of my first articles was about an exhibition of old-timer tractors. To be honest, I have no personal interest in that and no knowledge at all, as you can imagine. But then, when I came there, I interviewed an elderly

man, who explained me the different brands etc. It was more like a talk between grandfather and granddaughter. In the end I learned, for instance, that the famous German car brand Porsche produced tractors several decades ago".

It was during this period that Ilka got the funny nickname 'Carla Columna', a character of Benjamin Blümchen, a cartoon for children. Benjamin is a big elephant and Carla Columna is a girl, a journalist, always driving a red Vespa. "Well, as I had a silver Vespa, when I was in school and I covered local stories, this comparison was kind of evident," she says laughing. After school diploma, young 'Carla' decided definitely to study journalism but, unfortunately, there were just a few journalism programs in Germany and she had to give up, but only initially.

Ilka studied two semesters of Law in a small town of Bavaria, but the journalism attraction was again much too strong. She left for Vienna, where she studied communications theory, but this course left her unsatisfied, because it was too theory-orientated. Once again, Ilka decided to move, this time to Iserlohn, a small town close to Dortmund, where she got a Bachelor's degree in Business Journalism. *"I really liked that program, because it was not only theory, but also a lot practice-orientated. Half of the course was business-related, the other half journalistic. And, above all, I had two integrated studies abroad, one month in Brussels to cover EU-journalism and three months in Perth, to report on media and politics in Australia and Asia".*

No break for Ilka. She turned 24 years old on 15th of July, submitted her thesis in late August and directly drove to Aarhus to start the Erasmus Mundus Masters. *"As you can imagine, my specialism is London, as I want to gain more experience and, perhaps, also get an internship abroad."*

Always being on the go is not a problem for Ilka, as she is used to working also during her semester break: 'I did internships in another local newspaper, Lufthansa inflight-magazine, local radio station, Phoenix, the German press agency DPA and the economic section in the online editorial board of Süddeutsche Zeitung. Some may wonder where Ilka gets all this energy from ..."Well, I should admit to being a coffee addict!"

She acted in an Indian movie, fought for her love in real life, studied in London and finally became one of the Erasmus Mundus students! This is no Bollywood story. When Rashmi is sitting in front of me in the



student's canteen at the Danish School of Journalism, she looks as far from the fairytales as possible; a modern, pretty and bright-minded young lady with a beautiful smile. A complete 'bengaluru hudugi' ('Bangalore girl' in her native language Kannada). "You know, I come from that back office of civilization, where transnational companies do their outsourcing from, just what we were talking about in the class the other day."

What Rashmi modestly describes as a "back office of civilization" is in fact Bangalore, India's third biggest city and a huge industrial and research centre and the country's Silicon Valley. And this is also a place where modernity meets traditions. "I was brought up in a really traditional family with some 50 people living under the same roof," Rashmi says. Her great-grandfather was a pioneer of a musical tradition unique to India called 'harikatha' where traditional Indian mythological tales were put to music and narrated. Rashmi's grandfather and his brothers continued the tradition

by starting a recording studio that still exists.

Therefore it does not seem unexpected that Rashmi has been trained in Indian classical music and dance and has also acted in a Kannada movie when she was a bit younger. True to traditions, Rashmi's family initially did not approve of her relationship with her another-caste boyfriend whom she met at the college. Rashmi showed strong persistence to save her love. She broke all contact with her beloved for several months, just to say to her parents afterwards, "You see, we haven't talked for months and we still love each other and want to be together." The couple married in 2002. Now relations within the big family are all hunky-dory.

"My husband and I hope to be able to travel the world (that's our biggest dream) and settle in a stone cottage in a hilly town. Also, my another grand dream is to chronicle the story of my family, perhaps in a novel," Rashmi recounts. Love has always meant a lot to this strong woman. In her pre-university days she took up science, which she hated, all because a boy whom she had a huge crush on at that time, had opted for the same! Rather predictably, she soon shifted to humanities and did her bachelor degree in English literature, journalism and psychology.

Later Rashmi entered the Asian College of Journalism, one of the most prestigious post-grad journalism institutions in India. "Once I got in, I discovered I truly loved it. I loved writing. It came naturally to me and I loved the fact that a journalist could be a jack of all trades and not looked down upon," Rashmi smiles. "After my post-grad diploma, in 2000 I got a job immediately in a national newspaper 'Indian Express' where I worked for six months on continuous night shifts, which made my biological rhythm go haywire. And then I shifted to another leading daily 'Deccan Herald' where I had been working as an editor of the lifestyles section till I got the Erasmus Mundus scholarship."

In 2006 Rashmi already took part in a prestigious international program, the Chevening scholarship, which gave her an opportunity to spend three months in London as a scholar at the Westminster university. "I cherish those memories as one of the happiest in my life. I am hoping I can say the same after the Mundus course. I am thrilled to have got this opportunity and I have never been so intellectually and culturally stimulated before in my life", Rashmi says.

This time she has embraced the War and Conflict specialism in Swansea. Rashmi believes that her artistic background will help her in studying conflicts as it can facilitate understanding of the 'others' and the way life is, in general. According to Rashmi, "What really keeps me going is music. I love listening to Sufi music. It touches my soul and enlivens my being. I'm also a fan of semi-classical and Bollywood music as well. I really believe it is only music that can truly break barriers and 'globalise the mind' as it were."

GAYATRI PARAMESWARAN (by Mats Wedervang)

“Finally I can breathe.”

She comes from a city with a population 46 times bigger than Aarhus. No wonder Gayatri Parameswaran is surprised by the quiet nature of Aarhus.



Imagine sitting on a packed train. The heat is overwhelming, and it is difficult to breathe. Gayatri Parameswaran travelled 55 kilometres by train to work in Mumbai every day. There was no room for comfort. “Once I actually fainted on the train,” says Gayatri.

The 11th of January in 1922 insulin was used, for the first time, to treat diabetes in a human patient. In 1935 Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo from Hawaii to California and in 1972 East Pakistan renamed itself Bangladesh. Gayatri Parameswaran was born 15 years later.

- My name is Gayatri Parameswaran
- *Sorry?*
- Pa-ra-mes-waran. I’m always ready to tell my name again, she laughs.

At the age of six Gayatri went to primary school. The same year she was introduced to a sport that was going to be an important part of her life: swimming after her parents took her to a swimming pool. The next 12-13 years she spent a fair share of time in the water element.

“When I was 11 years old I went professional. I was one of the best swimmers in my state. I continued to swim until I was 19 or 20 years old. Why did I quit? It was difficult to combine with my studies and I also had to travel a long way to get to the swimming pool,” she says.

It was not only in the swimming pool Gayatri impressed others with her talent. She was a hard working student, and her good grades initially secured Gayatri a place at the science faculty. She later switched to mass media, and at the age of 21 she graduated from the University of Mumbai. Gayatri’s passion for sports propelled her into a newspaper called Daily News Analysis. Here she worked as a sports journalist, covering tennis and cricket.

Gayatri first heard about the Erasmus Mundus Masters when she studied at the University in Mumbai. This autumn is the first time she’s left India. She could hardly have picked a country that is more different than India. “I think it is a quiet country. Finally I can breathe,” she laughs.

Outside school Gayatri likes to go climbing, watch movies, blogging or drink beer with good friends. “And I love to travel. I’ve been travelling a lot in India, and after this Masters Program I have plans to go back and visit new places,” says Gayatri.

GUARAV DIKSHIT(by Katica Djurovic)

“Gaurav’s cocktail of history, fiction and journalism.”

Imagine a place where smells of the intense sticks dangle in the air, where you can eat as much pineapples and bananas as possible and walk barefoot all the time. That’s India. Now imagine



place full of beautiful gardens, courtly manners and nice people, full of history. That’s Lucknow - the Golden City of the East, place where Gaurav started his lifetime journey 29 years ago.

On the first glimpse he seems like a quite and shy guy but underneath is a hidden passionate fiction-stories writer.

“My name, Gaurav, means ‘pride.’ It also means I am a Hindu”, Gaurav starts. His hometown used to be capital of Islamic civilization. That’s why Gaurav is fond of history; he fell in love with it, discovering his hometown’s past.

However, Gaurav didn’t graduate history just because he truly wanted to study it. He just liked the landscape around university. “I was going to study literature. However, I got admission in the best history department in India, and the university had a beautiful campus, it was built in the middle of a forest. I fell in love with the place, so I took up history.” He even tried to continue with his studies and was enrolled in pre-PHD in New Delhi, but soon changed his mind and discovered new passion: journalism!

“As a mainstream journalist working in New Delhi, I had a first-hand experience of how the agenda and working of a ‘global media’ had arrived in India. So one day at work, when I had become too frustrated with the job and wanted to escape professional journalism, I searched Google for scholarships in Europe. I always wanted to see Europe. And then suddenly I found this course on the very subject of globalization and the media.” This is his first trip outside of India. He finds Denmark as a country of nice people, fun loving and helpful, clean, quiet and less crowded than India!

Gaurav is truly worshipper of laziness, although he does things in his life like going to cinema, reading books and traveling with friends. However, his main interest is writing fiction stories for which he finds inspiration from small, simple things about human nature. “I try to imagine people who have been pushed to the margins by history, people who are alone, and destitute, mad, shunned, misunderstood. I just wish to hold a mirror to ordinary people and show them their true self. This is because I want to understand myself; writing is for me a process of self-discovery. I am sure there are some people like me in this world; writing is a way of expressing solidarity with them.”

Gaurav’s favorite animal is tiger, followed by cat, while if he were an instrument he would probably be a flute. “It has something sensual about it: it’s played by the mouth, there is the touch of lips. I like the sound, as if it is coming straight from the lungs, from the stomach, from the heart.” The future can’t be predicted, but if Gaurav could choose, he would like to be a woman in his next life. “I try to understand women but I always fail. I think one cannot understand a woman unless one *IS* a woman.”

Gaurav is smart guy. We’ll probably see more of him in the future, probably not as a woman but as a journalist, professor or famous fiction author, or something totally different. He doesn’t really think about future; as long as he is happy with his life.

If somebody couldn't wait to get the program started it is Siddhant.

This innocent seeming young man isn't what you expect. Raised in India, Bombay, at his



grandparent's house, Siddhant enjoyed a privileged life. As a globalised Teenager he had always the possibility to live his dreams. He went to a dream college, had a dream job and dream friends. This seems a little contrarian to his self-assessment being always in trouble.

Working for a computer magazine during the last months, Siddhant wanted to study again. He loves to learn, if politics or war; it is fun. That is also the reason, why he knows a lot about history and war, because for him it is always fun to learn.

Anyway, life changed to everybody when he created the Mundus group on Facebook.

You cannot escape his curiosity about people, even while hiding behind your cyber identity.

Curiosity nearly in everything can be described as a main character trait. This seems like a suitable starting point to become a war correspondent, another dream job after graduating the master program.

Siddhant wants to discover the world. So why stay at home? Too many places want to be experienced. What a fortune, that he is also great in making friends. No matter to which country Siddhant travels next, due to his open-minded way of living, he will never get lost. Siddhant is a traveller, not a tourist. So are there any hidden secrets you should expect? Hardly any. But be aware about his sense for time. He will never be punctual.

To avoid getting bored, he likes to keep doing things, like for example watching movies, reading comics or going out. Even he can get bored easily, this in turn keeps him on thinking, which makes it interesting again.

The world is open, that is what he likes, and that is why he is here.

He is “here to start!”

NAMITHA JAGADEESH (by Vitaly Pojarsky) “An Indian in search of new perspectives and northern constellations”

She can stand on her head, play the guitar and is able to find 45 constellations in the night sky with a naked eye. She has a Bachelor’s degree of Engineering in Instrumentation Technology and can tell you the thousand and one story about venture capital and entrepreneurship, particularly in the areas of digital media and technology. It’s hard to believe that all these qualities are combined in one individual: Namitha Jagadeesh.



When you are born in Bangalore – a huge software hub in the south of India – your future is practically predestinated. You almost undoubtedly will be a student of one of nearly 100 engineering colleges located in this area. And if you are an excellent student, the doors of all the best engineering companies are opened for you.

Namitha could have worked with such companies but she chose a different path. After finishing engineering she went directly to a national newspaper in Bangalore, more on impulse. She wanted to meet the editor and to her surprise he agreed. Thus she got an internship and started her career as a reporter covering mainly transport problems, local news and a wide range of city topics. And this was her birth as a journalist. Later on she moved to a business magazine in Mumbai.

“I wanted to write”, she says. “I love learning new things. Journalism gives me a freedom to ask questions. And to travel, of course. I like travelling”.

In fact, Namitha traveled a lot and covered huge events in China, Japan, Germany and the USA. But her most memorable journey was bicycle ride through the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

Journalism is a unique profession; it’s not like many other jobs. You can have MBA or degree in arts and still be a good journalist. But wasn’t it difficult for her to switch from engineering to journalism?

“Not really”, smiles Namitha. “I read a lot and have a good command in English. That has helped me. And, of course, engineering somehow disciplines you. It taught me to be analytical in my reports”.

Following the example of her parents, Namitha has been practicing yoga since she was 10. For her it is, first of all, “a good physical exercise and... fun, of course”. She managed to bring her lovely guitar from India and sometimes plays for herself and the closest friends. As she admits, it relieves stress during exams.

She is very happy to be a part of an Erasmus Mundus group.

“I want to be a better business journalist. This program is incredible because it gives perspectives from journalists from different countries and helps to establish contacts. It opens possibilities for you. That is very important”.

No, not the famous district ‘Little Italy’ in New York, but this young guy will probably have any problems with almost 30 different nationalities combined in this Masters program either. That’s



because he himself has a cultural diversified background – just as the melting pot New York. Alessio Pisanò is an Italian 27 years old boy, born in Lecce - in the South of Italy - but raised up in Verona - in the North of the peninsula, two totally different regions, as he emphasizes.

He wasn’t really sure, what to do until he attended university, where he just followed his instinct. That’s why he studied Communication Science in his Bachelor’s degree. He also got a Master degree in Journalism, both from the University in Verona. Afterwards, he realized that the studies were interesting, but he wanted to gain a broader perspective. That was, when he realized his profession is to be a journalist.

During his Masters Alessio worked for a couple of years for 'L'Arena', the main newspaper of Verona. Talking with people on the street and covering local events let him understand the real power of communication. In the same time, he also worked as press officer of an Italian consumers' protection association. Defending people's rights, helping them to solve economic problems, strengthened his decision to become a journalist. "I definitely understood that journalism is the best defense of people's rights. Nevertheless, I felt the need to go beyond the national boundaries."

The first step out of his Italian boundaries led him to Brussels, where he passed an internship at JEF Europe, the international association of young federalists. The institution’s aim is to make the 27 member states aware of the importance of the European Union. “This experience let me completely understand, how important working with people from other countries is and I acquired consciousness about being European not only Italian.” After that he did another internship at the Directorate General of Communication of the European Parliament as Italian web-journalist. He amongst others was in charge of the Italian articles concerning the European Parliament's activities to be published on official website.

In Mai 2009, he was lucky, because he got the chance to follow the European elections in Brussels. “In fact, I experienced the unforgettable election night from the backstage area of the European Parliament. For the first time I saw the European public opinion take shape, an experience that has strengthened my idea of a needed European public opinion.” Brussels cleared his mind another time. He realized that he wanted to write about European issues for the European reader. “Because I believe that people need Europe and Europe needs to be told.”

His mission for the future: Work as a freelancer ‘from Europe’ to cover stories with a European or even global perspective. “I am sure the Erasmus Mundus Master is going to help me with this aim.” That’s why he decided to move from his 'little Italy' to gain even more international experience and - last but not least - to study this Masters, in order to finally get an 'European perspective'.

For Guia Baggi, journalism was just waiting for her to wake up. Literally. She discovered her passion for journalism during an internship at Controradio in Florence, a radio from



the Italian Popolare Network that she was already familiar with. “When I lived in Milan, I used to wake up in the morning listening to it – then I completely fell in love with radio during that course.”

The Erasmus Mundus Journalism program isn’t the first time Guia has been a foreigner in a new place – she was born in Milan, but moved to Tavarnelle, a village in Tuscany, when she was 10. It was “quite an isolated place” and “for them I was a bit of a foreigner, because everybody was born in that place”.

By middle school, however, everything had become fine and “fun”, after which she moved to Florence for high school. Guia then took a gap year during which she did some babysitting – and the Controradio course. This led her to enroll in Media and Journalism at Florence University.

She claims she “finished university quite late” (she started in 2003, and finished last year), but this is because she was involved with many different projects. One of them was a cultural project she followed from the start, which included everything from concerts to a canteen: “We had no money, no anything. So we tried to create everything from nothing.” It got a little tricky when she realized that the people who moved into the building where the project was conducted refused to move after it was over, a less than perfect ending to the experience. But she says that, overall, it was “quite challenging, and very formative.”

Guia also worked at a community radio during her “social year” – a voluntary social service program that started as the alternative to military service, but is now available to both men and women. There she got to “practice a bit of everything – a bit of news for the newsroom, a bit of technical stuff. It was great to get an overview of things happening at a radio station.”

Erasmus Mundus appeared during Guia’s research for her graduation thesis on access to the journalism profession in different countries and she thought it looked like “quite a unique experience” and decided she’d “really like to do that.”

Guia is very interested in the European perspective and would like to work in an open-minded, European environment. She is looking forward to trying new things as a journalist (freelancing is one of them) and learning from both the course and the other students. “I’m quite curious to see what will happen in these two years.”

Guia likes fried green tomatoes.

JUDY WANDERI (by Cassie Werber)
and a core of steel.”

“Outward calm, inner conviction

The first night I meet Judy Wanderi, we end up waiting together at 2am for a night bus that never comes. Judy goes to ask a man filling his van at a nearby petrol pump for a local taxi number, and comes back with both this and a proffered lift home. Is she sure she wants to take up the offer from a stranger? Apparently so. We're heading in different directions, and as I watch her disappear into the night, I think the woman must be very brave or very reckless, possibly both. And I hope she'll be alright.



Luckily, she is and two weeks later, in her sun-bathed kitchen, I ask her about the incident over milky tea and Digestives (“we were colonised by the British, you know...”). Would she have done the same in her native Kenya? “No way!” She exclaims. “Never. It’s the number one rule”. And why did she feel that it was possible in Denmark? “Sometimes I do these things which are...impulsive. And afterwards I think of the consequences. But also I trust my instincts. I know it is possible that this can be like one of those psycho movies, that this man can take you to the forest and rip out your eyes. But somehow I think it will be ok.” It’s serious, but she’s laughing. Another reason it would never happen in Kenya is that most people would think twice before offering a lift to a stranger: “people are more afraid of women than of men because women are more easily trusted; thus they would make better criminals.” She tells me of stories of

women concealing guns inside thermos flasks and using them to hijack buses at remote locations.

Recalling some difficult experiences of her own, she tells me of her dislike for passivity in situations where someone needs help; the “it doesn’t concern me attitude” which produces in her “feelings of anger towards apathy in people.” Perhaps it is partly this need to fire people up or call them to action that has led her so consistently towards journalism,

With a mother determined to make sure her third child had the education she did not, Judy began her schooling at a prominent ex-colonial primary. Without money for the bus, they walked to her interview, and only discovered she had been accepted because a well-to-do neighbour saw Judy’s name next to her own child’s on the list. From here, Judy was able to attend high school, then Journalism College and finally the American University in Nairobi. Despite it never being possible to fund her own studies, she has always trusted that the means would come and – through luck and generosity – they always have. Judy tells me about the huge support she has had from her family; the uncle who funded her through high school; a cousin her own age, working in America, who paid for her university; her brothers. Suddenly, she is covering tears with the royal blue scarf that has been framing her face. “I just wish we all had the same opportunities” she says, deeply conscious of the luck, chance and circumstance which has attended her life so far. But while these have played their part, true grit has also been a factor. When she arrived at the airport to find her plane already departed for Denmark (she misread the timetable: “I have a tendency to miss flights”), Judy refused to leave the Turkish Airlines office until they found her another seat. They said it would take fifteen days. After nine hours of insistence, they put her on a flight the next day.

Our conversation ranges over Kenyan politics, climate change, tribal segregation, Judy’s passion for documentary films, for “telling stories with visuals”, her attempts to “run away from journalism”(it always pulled her back), her mother (“whenever I go to visit her, the second day I tell her ‘I’m leaving!’”). We talk about the need for silence and the fear of failure. Thinking back to the first night we met, I ask Judy if she thinks of herself as a calm person. “I sometimes present the image of being calm, but could be in turmoil. I hate being needy, making someone feel I need something from them; now I’m in a place where I don’t have to ask anything of anyone.” With the exception of the occasional lift home? “On hindsight, I should never have done it; anything could have happened, even in Europe!”

As a child, Vitaly Pojarsky witnessed the birth of his nation. He was eleven when the Soviet Union collapsed and his country Kyrgyzstan, in Central Asia, was born. “It was like living in two countries,” he recalls. As a ‘pioneer’ - a boy scout in Soviet land - Vitaly used to wear special ties and practice salutes at school. That way of life disappeared the day the Soviet Union broke up and he realized he lived in an entirely different country, despite never moving from the place.



“From being a part of one of the biggest and most powerful countries in the world, of people who fought and won in World War II, imagine being part of (such) a small country that almost no people know where it is,” he says. Vitaly reflects this duality when he talks of his country’s current state and the potential he sees for its growth.

Kyrgyzstan is located close to three of the BRIC countries – Russia, India and China, considered the most important emerging economies of the world today. “In terms of development, we are a very poor country, but we are strategically situated so many superpowers are trying to influence our governmental policies,” he says.

Vitaly chose the Erasmus Mundus program to learn more about business and finance journalism, so he could practice it back home and teach fellow journalists in Kyrgyzstan. He rues that despite its strategic location, media in Kyrgyzstan is mostly focused on internal politics: “They are so crazy about politics, almost nobody pays attention to economic issues.” Vitaly, who worked as a reporter for seven years in the capital city of Bishkek, started writing on the economy a few years ago and found it “interesting and exciting, though other people found it boring.”

His love for journalism itself came much earlier. A good writer since school, he decided he wanted to be a journalist at the age of fifteen. “I watched a television series about news agencies and thought wow, why not?” He studied journalism for five years, earning a bachelors degree and two special diplomas in the field. He cherishes most his coverage of the Tulip Revolution of 2005, when the country’s president was overthrown. Thousands of demonstrators marched to the president’s house and Vitaly was among them, reporting for his newspaper. “When they finally captured the president’s house, they were throwing computers out of windows!” he exclaims.

In his spare time, Vitaly likes to head to the mountains. “Kyrgyzstan is a very beautiful country, with many mountains, rivers and lakes.” Unsurprisingly, he also enjoys reading, and favours Russian, French and English literature.

MATS WEDERVANG (by Gayatri Parameswaran)
flavour.”

“Adding to the Scandinavian

While most Mundusians are spending their windy autumn mornings cycling or hiking up to the School of Journalism way north of Aarhus, he vrooms in to park his green Peugeot in as much style a graduate student can afford. That’s Mats Wedervang for you.



The Norwegian, born in Bergen and partly raised in London, can be singled out from the rest for another reason -- finding Denmark inexpensive. “It’s way cheaper than Norway. That’s why I can afford a car,” he tries convincing as he digs into some pasta at the cafeteria after a long day of lecturing and debating.

Mats, a name that’s most likely a modernised version of Mathew (one of the four writers of the New Testament), confesses he doesn’t really match up to the religious conviction it projects. If there is one religion that Mats devoutly follows, it’s football.

Mats spent a year after graduation working as a sports journalist with TV2 news channel and website. While on the job, he mostly covered Norwegian premier division football. That wasn’t an unfamiliar ground for Mats – he had himself spent many years playing for second division Norwegian teams.

In fact, Mats changed sides when he donned the role of a journalist. “I have been interviewed as an indoor football player, and it was a funny experience. I’m actually going to a training camp with the indoor football national team in November.” So don’t be surprised if you spot Mats dribbling away on football fields in Aarhus colours at a second division club contest – he has been signed as a midfielder for Aarhus Fremad and has begun practice for the season that that’s already underway. So what does Mats do when he isn’t in class or at the football ground? He is having a beer or more with friends at the city centre or spending time with his new Danish girlfriend. “It’s really nice to have a Danish girlfriend. I would recommend it to everybody,” he jokes.

And now down to the mandatory requisite of this write-up -- Mats’ academic background. He acquired his Bachelor’s degree in Journalism from the University of Bergen with a B grade in his thesis on ‘The influence of advertising in sports broadcasting.’ “You almost never get an A in Norway. It’s always B. So I think I did pretty well,” he says modestly. Prior to that that Mats spent a year training in the Norwegian Navy – a routine that all graduates go through. This was right after passing from his high school in Oslo at the top of his class, something predictable given his illustrious academic career ever since he stepped foot into school. Here’s hoping he finishes this degree right at the front the class too.

Declaring Aldous Huxley’s “*A Brave New World*” as the very first book to both move and influence him, Ángel Ricardo Martínez, was destined to be a rebel from an early age. Born and raised in Panama City, Ricky (or Naris – the nose – as friends call him) excelled in Physics, Math and Chemistry during High School and went on to pursue a degree in Telecommunications Engineering at the Technological University of Panama. Upon graduation, he landed a job working for a Spanish multinational company in Panama where he worked the conventional Monday to Friday, nine to five desk-job while donning the perfect professional attire until one day, during a business trip to Madrid in July ‘08, he realized, it just *wasn’t* his thing.



After ripping off the tie and suit, attempting to produce an independent anarchist magazine and freelancing for a weekly foreign affairs website, Ricky began thinking about journalism as a new career possibility. As fate would have it, the punk rocker with a persuasive smile scored an interview with the editor in chief at *La Estrella*, the oldest paper in Panama City

founded in 1853. Ricky originally started off writing articles focusing specifically on the American continent until the opportunity arose for him to travel to Israel, where he would be able to attend a seminar in Jerusalem with important scholars in the field. Within 2 weeks upon returning home from the very successful trip, he was offered the position of foreign editor at *La Estrella* and won the national journalism prize in ‘Best Interview’ category for an interview he did with Amira Hass, in which he raves as being one of the happiest days in his journalistic career. Other notable achievements have been interviewing Taiwan's president, Ma Ying-jeou in Taipei and political activist/philosopher, Noam Chomsky. The cautiously optimistic and intelligently idealistic Ángel Ricardo Martínez had officially found his calling.

A Buddhist by day and a punk by night, Ricky rebelled against Catholicism at the tender age of 12 and a couple years ago found solace in Buddhism, which he finds very similar to punk music. He believes the two offer him a spiritual interpretation of life that does not conflict with his scientific/rational way of being and that he loves punk music such as *Bad Religion* and *Rise Against* because it is all about defiance. “I started listening to punk music when I was 11 years old and have always loved [it], not only because of the music but because of the ideas. It is a philosophy of life.”

Joining the 2009-2011 Erasmus Mundus group after finding the “*war and conflict*” specialism at Swansea University online, Ricky’s “foolish dream” (his words, not mine) is to be a war correspondent. When asked where, he simply replies “anywhere!” ... but hopefully somewhere in Africa because he believes it is truly under reported. Ricky plans to travel to different places such as Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo or Uganda, to better understand and learn about forgotten conflicts, as those are the ones he deems “most exciting.”

Ángel, Ricky, Naris or Uncle Rick (whatever you decide to call him) the Buddhist Punk Rocker from Panama, who originally wanted to help people by volunteering in Africa using his engineering skills, is now shifting his attention to improving global crises through his new career ambitions. “I think journalism should be a the receiving end of powerful peoples policies. It’s about monitoring the centre of powers around the world.” And so it begins, one man’s story to radically change the world through journalism.

MAY BELLE GUILLERGAN (by Patricia López Villalón) “Spring Philippine Beauty.”

Yes, that’s the meaning of the name given by her parents. But May Belle Guillergan offers far more. She has great wisdom and a strong heart; features that adapt perfectly to her career in the academy. May has been a teacher for seven years at the University of The Philippines (UP) in Mass Communication studies and now she’s returning to the other side of the desk.



“A colleague in UP recommended me to apply to this masters, that is how I learned about the Erasmus Mundus program”, she says -- one more step in her internationalist projection. In fact, multicultural experience is not new for May, who in 2000 decided to attend a Diploma program in Multimedia and Media Arts in Germany.

“Writing in German was a real challenge”, she tells, but by virtue of it now she’s ready to undertake the Mundus specialization in Hamburg. The advantage of language exposure beforehand will provide her opportunities that sometimes remain secret in Aarhus.

Although the cultural agenda of the second most extensive town in Denmark is up to the standard of any other big European city, May thinks, “everything is so expensive!” She misses the warmth in relations with local inhabitants, though she yearns more for her friends and family, from whom she acquired her natural way with languages.

“My father is a native speaker of a dialect called Kiray-a and my mother speaks the Ilonggo language. We ended up speaking the latter, but English is also used as a common language”. Not for nothing, the Asian country has ten official languages and considers another three hundred as dialects under the law.

In Ilô-Ilô city, where May Belle grew up, her two dogs, Bimbol and Arik, also await. But there are two other things that she’ll miss during her European stay: the naïve Philippine humour and soap operas. No surprise, as a cinema student in UP, she helped write some of them. She still continues dreaming of becoming a novelist in the future.

Nevertheless, her place as assistant professor is still reserved when she returns. Will she take something from the Danish insight with her? “Well, the type of teaching is different! Here, the content is discussed in classes so students have to grasp their own concepts from the models given by the teachers, but there it’s spoon-fed: theories are completely explained to the students. I don’t think teachers here work that hard!” she concludes with a sly smile on her face.

ULA PAPAJAK (by Felix Sebastian Gaedtke)

“I couldn’t imagine my life

without the polish language or music.”

Since her primary school teacher made her write essays, Ula Papajak fell in love with writing. So in order to write, she wanted to become a journalist and this is exactly what



she did. To know more about the issues at hand, Ula decided to take an MA in Pg.7international relations in her hometown Lodz. Here she also had the opportunity to go sailing on the nearby lake, which, apart from writing, is another great passion for her.

If you’re lucky you might see her next summer sailing for her first time on the sea, with her friends in the Mediterranean. As a little girl she used to hangout in concerts and radio stations where her father was working as a broadcast sound engineer. That’s how music got in to her life and still plays an important role.

Her first internship was at the “TYGODNIK FORUM” a Polish political newspaper. There she was kept busy researching and translating. She also stayed as an Erasmus student in London. Stemming from her fascination about British history, Ula slowly became interested in Indian history.

So like the Beatles and many others, she took time to go explore India, where she taught English in an elementary school. She enjoyed working with children and through this work gained an inside view on life in India. Back in Lodz she had to go to the mountains to clear her mind. While writing her thesis about India (what else) she got the opportunity to do an internship with the BBC in Cardiff. She had lots of fun getting into TV Journalism, but she also realized that writing is one of her basic needs.

So back in Poland she started working as a journalist for the “Krytyka Politycsna”, a Polish newspaper with emphasis on the field of international relations. But she knew she wanted to learn more. When she found the Erasmus Mundus program she figured out that is the thing she was looking for. It was like a dream come true for her when she got accepted.

After a few weeks in the Erasmus Mundus Program she still sees it as the best decision in a couple of years. She is impressed and surprised not only by the academic program within the classroom but especially by the people participating. Even though she is into writing, meeting all these new people, made her want to learn more about TV Journalism. She is looking forward to go to Swansea to continue her way through journalism and international relations.

She was always interested in other countries and cultures, that’s why she chose Swansea. After the program she doesn’t know where the wind might take her sailing boat...

MAGDA KUFREJ (by Angela Woiciechowskie) “Writing was my first love ...”

In the middle of Trafalgar Square – that’s where we meet after years that have spun away. Magdalena (friends also call her Magda) with her awake looking sight, her busy movements and



her short blond hair is now editor in chief of a well-known newspaper in London, where she stayed after finishing her Erasmus Mundus Masters in Media and Journalism in 2011. As fate would have it, Magda married in London and raised her two kids bilingual in Polish and English.

Either way, that could be the short track record of Magdalena Kufrej, born in Krakow the 22nd of April 1985 as the youngest of three children. Although she knew very early that she wanted to become a journalist, however she decided to study Economics and International Relations at the University of Economics in Krakow. Willing to write, write, and only *to write* she aspired for a position as a journalist at the polish newspaper “Dziennik Polski” and was the lucky chosen one (under hundreds) who got accepted.

Since her second study year she writes political and social stories for the Newsroom of the “Dziennik Polski”. Besides, she used to work (as a freelancer) in two other Krakow’s magazines, where she was more concentrated on writing social reportages. Missing the journalistic study background she decided - after graduating with an M.A. - to quit her job at the newspaper and broaden her horizon by applying for the Erasmus Mundus Program in Århus, Amsterdam and London. Matching to her previous studies she will specialise in Business Journalism and spend her last year in London.

Magda describes herself, as an ambitious person “If I really want to do it, I will do it” is her credo. In the nearest future she seeks to work for a newspaper or magazine in the area of economics and marketing, because in her opinion “polish journalists lack the background of economics”. She is thinking about whether to stay in Poland or even in Vienna where she absolved an Erasmus Socrates exchange for six month, but she will surely stay in Europe. Although she loves Århus, she has to become customised to all the bike cycling. “I am not sportive at all” does she confess laughing. But in the same, easy way that she learned German during her stay in Vienna, she will probably learn to ride a bike while she is in Arhus.

If Magda is not writing, playing with her three dogs in Krakow or with some cards, she is likely to read - in a very organised manner - first Milan Kundera (who makes her cry deeply) and after this Erich Emmanuel Schmidt (to see things through rose-colored glasses). She furthermore loves watching European movies and dreams of playing - at least once - a petit role in the theatre herself. Seeing Magda you would never believe, that her favourite dish is meat “I can stop smoking or eating chocolate but I can’t ever quit eating meat”.

I am sure that Madga has a bunch of covert talents and curiosities that I would like to get to know in the next year! If her dream of a house in Barcelona/ Costa Brava will not become true or if she won’t ever get the chance to emerge in the theatre scene, I am sure that she will become a great writer, because that’s her real passion and as she claims “her greatest and most complicate love ever”.

JOÃO MARQUES (by Rabea Ottenhues) “Between Fashion and the Frontline.”

For the last seven years, João’s way seemed to be predetermined. He felt certain that he wanted to work as a foreign correspondent. ‘It’s my vocation somehow to travel around



and tell people what is going on in the world’, he says, a deep conviction in his voice. Nonetheless, his way does not seem to be that straightforward anymore. Let’s see why.

In the first place, João is a true European. Growing up and studying in Lisbon, he decided to spend an Erasmus year in a small city in Belgium. He is really into European culture and languages, because he feels ‘this is something I can really relate to’. That is why he thinks, Europe for him would be the perfect place to live and work as a foreign correspondent, trying to give people insight in the

interesting field of politics and giving him the opportunity to travel.

Having lived in Portugal, Spain and Belgium, João is fluent in Portuguese (of course!), Spanish, French and English. Learning new languages is one of his main interests in life. Next on the list is Russian, because he hopes to learn different Eastern European languages. ‘People there have something in their culture I am not able to grasp so far’, he says. By learning the languages and spending time in Eastern Europe, the Portuguese hopes to being able to better adapt to the culture.

Another important part in João’s life, maybe the most important one, plays photography. Last year, João went to Madrid to study photojournalism and fashion photography and that finally is the point where he got caught. Looking back, smiling he says: ‘In Madrid, I was able to do the thing I like most in my life, which is taking pictures of beautiful women’. What he also loves about the work, as a fashion photographer is the freedom that is attached to this job and the unique opportunities and situations that come across.

Since his time in Madrid, João is having a hard time trying to find a way to combine journalism and photography, especially fashion photography. ‘Maybe all this going to war and risking your life is not as cool as it seems in the first place’, he thinks, comparing war reporting to a job in the fashion industry. Asking him about his plans for the future, the answer at this point of his life is easy: ‘Finding a common ground between journalism and fashion photography would just be too perfect’.

One possibility to get closer to achieving his aim might be to work as a correspondent for a big news agency. Doing this, he would be able to travel (‘I don’t think about living at one place for my whole life’), learn new languages (‘This is the way to relate to people’) and getting deeper into the heart of European culture. To get to the point: ‘If they send me they have both – a writing journalist and a photographer.’

ANA SOFIA DUQUE FRANCISCO CERQUEIRA (by Ida Zidore) “Curious and courageous Portuguese heiress “

The spirited little Portuguese Sofia Cerqueira is manically obsessive with cleaning and tidying, loves social food sessions and used to be the captain of a handball team in



Portugal for several years. Besides all this, she is embracing her future as a cosmopolitan with enviable courage.

Sofia grew up as a real “city” girl in Lisbon with her father being a nationally famous journalist and anchorman. As a kid she used to firmly neglect the idea of becoming a journalist herself, however, as she grew older she realized that understanding the world and trying to explain it in to others wasn’t such a bad idea after all.

And so she did a BA degree in communication studies in her home city. In the third year of her studies, however, she felt an urge to get away from home. But since there is no place in Portugal better than Lisbon for a city girl like Sofia she would have to cross borders. So, consequently she spent one year of studying in Barcelona before turning back home again.

But the sweet life abroad was beginning to take its toll: it was impossible for Sofia to adapt to the old habits of living at home again. She had to get away and experience the world again, which is partly the reason why she applied for the Erasmus Mundus program. However, during her last year in Lisbon exciting things did happen for Sofia too. She spent three months working at the international desk of a national newspaper, which she enjoyed very much. After this she spent half a year working with TV, which was also a great experience.

Generally, her enthusiasm for both fields of media seems to have her split - she loves writing but prefers the action and dynamics of TV journalism while she’s still young. The compromise, she suggests, is at first to build up a career as a TV journalist and then after several years of experience to probably retire to print. If print is not extinct by that time, that is. As long as she’s allowed to go flying with the military, interview Lisa Ekdahl and travel a lot that’s way more interesting than a desk job!

In terms of where Sofia will be in 10 years from now, she answers: in a foreign country, maybe London. (Or some place with sun, definitely not Scandinavia!) Generally, she expects herself to be flexible and less attached to Portugal after these two Mundus years, which she is very excited about. Journalism and economics are two fields of passion melting together for Sofia so it is really a perfect program.

MARINA PENEVA (by Guia Baggi)

“A serial mover.”

“How do you say ‘I am a drunken squirrel’ in your language?” No worries. It is just a new method to approach new languages Marina has adopted in her eventful life.



Marina was born in Serbia, Belgrade. But if you don't know that and you hear her speaking English, you'll probably think she is American. In fact, she has been watching American films since she was 5 years old and at the age of 18, she followed her older sister to the United States to a place called Poughkeepsie, near New York City.

While there, she attended the Vassar liberal arts College, famous for its pop culture reference in a Simpsons episode'. Her main subject was English Literature where she found the fun in literature through learning about fictional characters that actually do not exist. During college she spent a semester in Canberra, Australia and after her return she interned a local newspaper, The Poughkeepsie Journal.

The decision to become journalist arrived at the end of 2006, after an intense brainstorming about what job she could do. And journalism sounded good. Marina appreciates a lot the critical approach and the capacity of analysis that you can use in writing. Consequently, her favourite medium is print journalism and her ideal workplace is a newsroom.

After concluding her studies in 2007, she wanted to “try some of the real world” and she moved to Chicago for a year. There she did an internship at the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists while she worked at an International Bookstore practicing her French and Spanish. “A serial mover” is how Marina describes her-self. Always struggling with new visas. So, after a year in Chicago she decided to go to Europe.

She was sorting out what and where doing and going, maybe Scandinavia, or the Netherlands, or Germany, when she found Googeling the Erasmus Mundus Journalism program. All the countries she thought in one Master course. “And they give you money to do it”! But there were still more than six months waiting for the application deadline. So, Marina went back to Serbia, to Belgrade, where she worked for a multimedia news agency, FoNet, and worked for the first time as a journalist in her home country.

And here we are, in Aarhus, at the beginning of this new Erasmus Mundus experience. There are more transitions to make and then we will see where Marina decides to live. She would ideally like to settle down somewhere in Europe. “A place where there's an awareness of the world out of there”, “more International traffic”, “that is connected to other countries.” Will she find her place?

In these two years Marina's challenge will be to find out where and what she wants to write about. Marina's future successes will undoubtedly come from her personal idea that “when you meet as many people as you meet here, you can realize a lot of new things about yourself.”

“All nations are hallucinations!” says Katica, but her wordplay is deceptively clever. For someone who has seen her country broken up – Balkanised – into seven nations through bitter violence, and whose own



nation kept contracting – from Yugoslavia to Serbia & Montenegro to Montenegro – Katica Djurovic can recognize an illusion when she sees one. Like she can see through the “humanitarian” facade of NATO intervention in Serbia: “NATO's bombing was an American attempt to colonise part of the Balkan,” she says. Or the way she can sense the void at the heart of western/ northern European society: “People in the EU have cars, money, big houses, but they are part of the machine, they are not enjoying their lives at all, they vegetate all the time.”

Katica was 6 when she saw images of famine in Africa on television. She couldn't understand why people were unable to eat. “So I decided to help them: each day for a month and a half I collected one slice of bread and put it in the sack in my dad's garage. I wanted to fill that sack and send it to Africa. I didn't know that I couldn't send them that food. One day, I went to the garage and there was no sack. My family had found the sack and taken it away to my grandmother's house to feed pigs with that bread! That was my first disappointment in life. From then on I really liked people of Africa and I wanted to work there.”

Katica wants to be a war correspondent, or work in conflict regions. She applied for the Erasmus Mundus course because it offered a specialization in war and conflict reporting. She has worked in the UN Commissariat for Refugees in Belgrade, helping refugees from Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan and many other places, and made a documentary series called “Peers” on young people in Serbia, Kosovo, and Montenegro. She wants to be a journalist because she wants to show the “truth” and she is inspired by war correspondents who have been killed “because they didn't want to give up the truth”. She has travelled widely, across most of Europe, and in Turkey, United Arab Emirates and India. She loved India, especially for its tea, but recommends the whole world for travelling: “each part of it is worth seeing”. Katica is also passionate about her politics. She has been part of alter-globalisation, no-border, immigrant rights and LGBT movements. She is “against economic and capitalist globalisation but for networking and connection between people”. Adventurer, traveler, humanist; if there is someone with a truly global sensibility in the 2009 Erasmus Mundus Globalisation and Media class, it is Katica.

“Like a Bird”, that's what her name means in “peasant Montenegrin dialect”, she says. Probably that's why she used to climb the highest tree in her neighbourhood as a child and, from that perch, “report” on the situation in the area. This was part of war games she played with her friends. Growing up in a country torn by war, where she would learn and “declaim” war songs in school, did that shape her ambition to be a war correspondent, I ask. “I guess yes”, she says. “But let's make this clear: I had the best childhood ever.”

In those years of war and international economic sanctions, Yugoslavia had collapsed into an absurd hyperinflation. “We were all billionaires,” she remembers. “The biggest note ever recorded in history was the Yugoslavian dinar; during one period we had a note of 500 000 000 000 (500 billion) and for that money you could buy bread, milk and oil (although most of the time there was no milk, or oil, in the stores).” Yet, she says, “We were all happy being Yugoslavian and that was our identity. I think a lot of people now are quite lost with their identities.” She thinks that after Josip Broz Tito there was no strong leadership to hold the country together, and petty political interests led to war. “It's all stupid hegemony”, is how she describes the national rivalries.

These days, Katica is “inefficaciously” learning to play the flute. She is also a juggler and a writer of absurd stories. If you come across a more multi-dimensional, spirited and cheering Mundusian, you might be hallucinating!

Have you ever heard of Mikoland? No? Well, if I tell you now, you'd definitely want to go there. In our postmodern world full of fragmented friendships and passing acquaintances, Mikoland is the place where relationships between people persist, disregarding any differences in time or distances in space. It's about establishing connections, not only physically or electronically, but mentally.



Forget about Facebook, Twitter and the rest of the Global-bla bla. This is real.

So, Miko is on a mission. She is inviting more people to join her world while constantly exploring further regions in search of soul mates who feel the same wish to connect, share their life-stories and become part of a very unique social network. Right now, the Erasmus Group is having the opportunity to accompany Miko on her journey and thus become a part of it. Being a global Microcosm in itself, the Mundus program offers

the rare possibility to make friends with at least 50 people from all parts of the world – a perfect starting point for continuing her quest.

But where is this ambitious project rooted in? To describe her personal life story, which is already shaped by a fair amount of multicultural diversity, is the best way to explain: Miko Schneider (not Japanese and not German, though, as the names might indicate) has Eastern European forefathers, is of Jewish descent, and was born and raised in the multiethnic melting pot/salad of South Africa.

Her interest in people naturally lead her to the profession of journalism, where she could profit from her strengths in writing and communicating plus release her creative energy. Thus, she contributed her skills to the student newspaper and -radio and as a freelancer for an underground music magazine, all while she was doing her undergraduate in Media and Journalism at the University of Cape Town. Since media is not all about creativity, she also took close look at the corporate side of the media industry: after graduating, she spent two and a half years at a sports media company, where she eventually took on the challenge and became head of Business Development.

With her specialization being Business and Finance Journalism in metropolitan London, she is willing to take on the challenge one more time. Besides, her strong interest in psychology will definitely help her to decipher the important world of "freak-o-nomics" in no time. What is surely supporting her on this mission is her welcoming and warm-hearted smile, an open-mindedness and a talent in terms of listening and understanding people.

So, in order to get your ticket to Mikoland, just join her on one of the numerous and manifold occasions you could meet her - ranging from cultural activities such as theatre, cinema or artistic shows, over design and architecture to food and fine arts or finally just going out and dancing. Log-out of facebook, get back on your bike, and enter a real world. Mikoland.

PATRICIA LÓPEZ VILLALÓN (by May Belle Guillergan)
in the flesh.”

“Free-spirited Spain

Along came a lady who not only wears trendy eyeglasses (she may actually have hundreds of ‘em) that fit her mood, but also engaging smiles to go with a pleasant greeting for everyone.



Well, we can call her Patricia. This warm young woman sees her decision to take on an Erasmus Mundus Masters Degree as a career move. She knew that it was time to open herself up to new ideas and multi-national experiences, enabling her to become a more mature journalist.

She started her media career as a conductor and speaker of “Bohème”, a weekly radio program about cinema, music and literature in Onda Verde Valladolid. Eventually she finished her degree in Journalism at the Universidad Europea Miguel de Cervantes and became a fulfilled

Editor in Nuevo Cuño, a collaborator company of El Norte de Castilla in Valladolid.

At the top of the list of the things she loves to do is dancing. She can dance to almost every kind of music. It comes naturally to her, probably because she’s Spanish! She also loves reading and writing, but she’s choosy when it comes to films. She doesn’t go for thriller movies, neither romantic comedies. She expects films to be intellectually stimulating, which for her may involve feelings. She would prefer that the messages of the film remain subdued and not obvious.

This allows her to think and analyze. As she said, “If the message is too clear, then it can control your mind.” True enough, such films could be manipulative, making media created realities that don’t exist in the real world.

She is a middle child between two male siblings. At least being the only girl didn’t give her the middle-child complex. Instead, this allowed her to become independent and creative. As a little girl she used to be shy, and writing became her outlet. But she also excelled in drawing and playing the piano.

As a teenager, she became more confident in expressing herself and as inspired by a close friend, her focus shifted to writing. Now she figures that she could achieve more things by being a journalist. Her experience in covering immigration has broadened her perspective. She sees the media profession as a means to reach out to people and improve their perception, and hopefully their lives. She may not have become a renowned artist, but she’s now a contented journalist, and is still willing to grow further.

LÍDIA PEDRO (by Belinda Lopez)

“Covering the Cultures the World Forgot.”

Sure, Lída Pedro has the Spanish flag next to her name. So she’s Spanish, right? If you’re just scrolling past this entry in the Blue Book, that’s all you’ll ever know.



But just like the kind of reporting Lída one day wants to pursue in Africa, she’s got a deeper story to tell. She didn’t learn Spanish until she was eight years old, schooled in the language after a childhood in Calafell, a town in Spain’s autonomous community of Catalonia.

Her mother tongue is Catalan, and she writes it better than her parents, who grew up during the Franco dictatorship when the language was heavily repressed. Catalan was kept alive, simmering quietly in conversations over family dinners, as speaking it on a public bus could result in arrest. “We have a different way, a different culture, a different language. I really think a person is constructed by their culture,” she says. “If people ask me, I’ll explain- actually, I’m Catalan. But I’m not going to get angry because someone calls me Spanish.”

It’s with this same kind of levelheadedness that Lída explains her plans and philosophies for her future journalism endeavors. With a family history soaked in the suppression of culture, she can give on-the-spot analysis about the importance of other conflicts and independence struggles the world over. (“You have to understand the politics and interactions between countries,” she adds).

The Spanish government and media were not supportive of Kosovo’s independence struggle, Lída says, because of its own political agenda concerning the Basque and Catalan regions. “It showed that any of its nations could be independent.”

No prizes then for guessing which specialization Lída has selected: She’ll be heading straight to Swansea in her second year, to learn about war, conflict and underreported regions.

While her talent for studying (and partying) with people from all over the world was honed in an earlier Erasmus exchange program in the Netherlands, for the first time Lída will be traveling outside of Europe during the holidays of the Erasmus Mundus’ journalism masters. “This summer, this summer I hope,” she says.

And, she’s already got some big ideas about where to go the end of her masters: “Africa is one of the most forgotten continents,” she says. And if Africa is the destination, then TV is the medium. But there will be no one-size-fits-all, shallow TV reports filed on her behalf.

“I want to spend one year traveling around Africa, discovering what my society doesn’t know about it.”

There’s every reason to believe she’ll do it. The 23-year-old, who was already working as a TV journalist before taking up the Erasmus Mundus masters, gets things done.

“Being a war correspondent would be perfect,” Lída says. “I would love to work for national Catalan TV.”

Not Spanish TV? “Well, my Spanish accent is quite funny.”

ROMAN HORBYK (by Rashmi Vasudeva)

“Jazzing up life with a little swig!”

On the first day of the class, when we were asked to introduce ourselves, some came up with witty descriptions of themselves, others were self-effacing or hardly audible and some took



themselves very seriously. But it was Roman Horbyk that stole the show by declaring that he was from Ukraine and that this very day happened to be Ukrainian Independence Day wherein he will hold a party soon to celebrate the grand occasion!

He followed through with the party the very next day where he actually attempted a traditional Ukrainian dish (which he learnt from his mother and granny four days before moving to Denmark) and ensured that everybody praised his dish by being very generous with his supply of the very strong and hard-hitting Ukrainian vodka!

That's Roman for you -- ever smiling (and you have to admit, he has an angelic smile), generous and always ready for a good party!

Born in Kyiv, the capital city of Ukraine, to a schoolteacher mother and architect father, Roman veered towards music early in his life, thanks to his genes. His granddad, he tells me, was possibly one of the first jazz artists in Ukraine. A trumpeter and a conductor of a brass orchestra in the provincial town of Ivanytsia, his grandfather apparently used to do jazz arrangements of Ukrainian folk and communist songs back in the 1950s.

Roman plays the piano and from childhood, developed a great love for the arts, especially music, theatre and writing. Interestingly, he has never been formally trained in music but has managed to compose some pieces thanks to the many music handbooks left behind by his grandfather. In school he won several national competitions, which gave him an opportunity to enter the prestigious Institute of Journalism of the Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, without having to take an entrance exam! He completed his BA in Journalism in 2006 and graduated in 2008 with a Masters (both with Honours).

Roman has dabbled in every kind of journalism -- from weekly magazines to daily newspapers to website, radio and finally television, which he says suited him the best. Initially, he covered culture and the arts but later switched to foreign news. Before coming to Denmark, Roman was working as a foreign news observer at the First National Channel of Ukraine, a state-run TV company with the highest viewership in the country.

Roman is thrilled to have bagged the scholarship after trying persistently for three years and hopes to immerse himself in European culture and experience the beauty of the region's artistic and musical traditions. He also believes that the European method of higher education, which encourages lively debates and discussions, will help him understand and articulate his ideas and thoughts better.

And what else is he looking forward to in the next two years? Here comes a typical Roman-esque answer: "Two years of vibrant night life!"

Three cheers to that!

JEANNETTE JORDAN (by Jennifer Piñero Roig)
wanted to know about Jeannette, but were too shy to ask.”

“Things you always

She is tall, short hair, big eyes and with this touch of nerve and distinction that Afro American women often have. I could recognize Jeannette from the distance, after reading a few months ago all that she wrote about herself. At the beginning, when we only knew each other through Email, I was intimidated by her experience and maturity. But after actually met her, I could feel her warmth and open mind.



Jeannette Jordan is her full name. According to her own self-introducing email, she is the same age as President Barack Obama; and like him, she is willing to accept challenges. After 20 years of working as a journalist for important broadcasting corporations such as CNN or CBS – where she was associate producer in Atlanta, Georgia – she decided that it was a good moment for being back to the classroom, as any other regular student.

«Slowing down, slowing down», it sounds like the perfect mantra for Jeannette, after all the dynamism and urgency that television news needs. «I worked on five stories in one hour, and I had to worry not only for the content but for the image as well». Although all the stress that television involves, Jeannette confesses that she loves to feel that adrenaline.

Two years ago, in 2007, she was part of the RIAS Germany Summer Program. There, she found out that German coverage for television was very different from her homeland. «They focused on issues that concern everyone, issues that are making an impact on the world». In those days she heard for the first time about a European master program, which offers not only an academic course of excellence but also an interchange with students from all over the planet. But she did not take it seriously at the moment, because at her ‘age’, most of her colleagues were retiring. How would she start all again?

However, the application was sent and later accepted. As part of the Erasmus Mundus Journalist group 2009, sharing experiences like anyone else. Undoubtedly, she is proof that there is no age if it is a matter of learning and being a better professional and person. For the future, after finishing the Program, Jeannette hopes to join to one of the US Diplomatic Corp, and working in the Communication Area. «People who make the decisions don’t always understand society because they haven’t lived there». Being in contact with people from many cultures will provide her with a wider perspective of the world’s issues.

And how could a so experienced professional manage to deal with much younger people? Actually, Jeannette thinks that being among the younger is inspiring and energetic, «in my twenties, which is the standard age of the group, I only thought of having fun, that’s why I admire how so many are focused». There are still a few things that we might want to know, but... Jeannette has a previous Master Degree in... Divinity; she is volunteer for the international church; she likes meet know people every day and what she cannot stand at all is... having free time.

STEPHEN ROBERT MORSE (by Sarka Halas)
Respatialization of Stephen Robert Morse.”

“The Globalization and

When not eyeing beautiful Danish women or rented Portuguese bicycles, Stephen Robert Morse is on his best behavior as American representative to the Mundus program.



Born and raised in Oceanside, New York; Stephen has lead an incredibly busy existence as writer, blogger, producer, director, screenwriter and journalist. How did this guy get so smart? Well for starters, he has a B.A. with Honors in English and History from the University of Pennsylvania (2007) and if that wasn't enough, he received an international scholarship to attend the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England (2008). That little stint earned him a M.A., with Honours in Creative Writing: Scriptwriting.

Morsels, as he likes to be called, has pursued a variety of journalistic and writing projects, one of which was authoring a memoir called *The Bootleg Guide To Europe: Chivalry Is Dead But I'm Still Here* (2009). He created a political sitcom called *Capitol Punishment* (2008-09) and the project was optioned by the Fox Broadcasting Company. Stephen also directed and produced a feature length documentary about the Green Party titled, *Ain't Easy Being Green* (2007), and was a contributor to *Frommer's MTV Travel Guides* to Europe, Ireland and Italy (2005). Stephen is currently a journalism fellow at The Phillips Foundation, which supports his web site MyTwoCensus.com, the non-partisan watchdog of the 2010 U.S. Census.

Prior to starting the Mundus program, he was in the Ben Bagdikian Fellowship Program at *Mother Jones* magazine, arguably the best investigative journalism magazine in America. Although well accomplished in journalism, Stephen is also contemplating becoming a philosopher, so perhaps in the near future, knowledge hungry students will be arguing Morse *contre* Derrida in a smoke-filled Left Bank cafe.

Favorite food: Calamari, sushi, lox.
Favorite Color: I don't do favorite colors.
Favorite Movie: Forrest Gump
Favorite Book: The Fountainhead
Favorite Number: 18
Favorite City: San Francisco
Favorite Vehicle: The Alfa Romeo Spider in The Graduate
Favorite Athlete: Joe DiMaggio
Favorite Word: Diavittle (I invented this word in 9th grade).
Favorite TV Show: The Wonder Years
Favorite American President: James K. Polk
Favorite Canadian Prime Minister's Wife: Margaret Trudeau
Favorite Holiday: Thanksgiving
Favorite Dessert: Sarka's Tira Misu
Biggest Fear: Death by plane crash, drowning or terrorist attack.
Favorite Alcoholic Drink: Single Malt Scotch on the rocks.
Favorite Video Game: Twisted Metal 2
North Dakota or South Dakota: Canada



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