

Youngmo Jung, Postgraduate study visit to Almaty, Kazakhstan

Youngmo Jung (South Korea)/ MSc in CREES/2012 reflects on his studies with CREES and particular on a trip to Almaty, Kazakhstan as part of his Masters course.

I decided to study with CREES, as I became especially interested in Russia's energy diplomacy during my undergraduate degree in Russian Language and Literature. A multi-disciplinary approach is required in order to analyse Russia's energy politics, which is what CREES offers, and one of the major reasons why I decided to study with CREES.

I was also attracted to studying with CREES, because of the opportunity to study the Russian language as part of my course; to become specialised in Russian issues, knowledge of the Russian language is essential.

During the three weeks in Kazakhstan, we all took part in different activities. One of my colleagues interviewed politicians for his dissertation and another colleague attended a Russian language class and the others went to a Kazakh language class. I attended lectures in 'Natural Resources', 'Constructing Gas Pipelines' and 'Geophysics'. Following the trip I am now helping one of the professors that I met in Kazakhstan to publish his article in UK and South Korea.

I think that taking part in this trip will help not only my studies but also my future career. By visiting Kazakhstan I was able to see how local people think and live. It was much easier to conduct this kind of anthropologic observation on this trip than through any other type of study or visit.

The trip complimented my studies in the UK a great deal. Before visiting Kazakhstan, it was hard to imagine what Kazakhstan is really like; through the visit, I was able to learn that Kazakhstan is multiethnic and a mixed cultural society. It is clear to me from this visit, that Kazakhstan is not only a mixed society but also combined and harmonised.

I learned a great deal from this trip, but the most valuable aspect of the trip was being able to mix with the Kazakhstani students and seeing Kazakh youth culture at first hand. When I took part in the students' events, I realised that Kazakhstan has absorbed many different types of culture; Kazakhstan is like a sponge. I saw events where students performed (singing and dancing) on stage. I saw Spanish dance, American hip-hop, various performances from the West and even Korean pop cultural influences. It was impressive that students attempt to combine Kazakhstani national instruments with Western music.

To anyone considering studying with CREES, I would say to them that it is definitely worth studying this area; it is such a massive subject and region. If you study with CREES, you can become a specialist on the region and you could also have the opportunity to learn some of the languages that are spoken in these regions.



Course information

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