

Isabella Patrick PNCC Jaycee Trust Travelling Fellowship Scheme Report

Thanks to the generosity of the Jaycee Trust and the support of PNCC, I was given the opportunity at the beginning of 2023 to spend two months in Panamá City, Panamá, which is located in Central America. I was here for an International Development, Public Health and Humanitarian Aid Communication internship. Throughout these two months, my role was supporting the communications and research activities of the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership (established by WHO, UNICEF and GAVI). This opportunity allowed me to build my portfolio of skills, connections and experiences in the field in which I want to build my career. This internship was invaluable to my Master's in International Development at Massey University in two ways: 1) the learnings from the internship helped solidify the coursework learnings into real-life development practice and 2) it contributed 30 credits to my master's. The internship was 9-5, 5 days a week, but I got to explore Panamá on the weekends.

Here are some of the things that I got up to:

Panamá City is a 4-hour drive to the Caribbean Sea. Then, after a 2-hour boat ride, we got to the Islands of San Blas, which was exactly like what tropical islands look like in the movies! These particular islands are the homeland of the indigenous Kuna people and deliver their small-scale tourism from a community perspective that is from the land.



Panamá City is the capital of Panamá and consists of two areas: the old town, or Casco Viejo, and the new part of the city that was developed as the Panamá Canal was being built from 1904 to 1914. Panamá City also has an abundance of rainforests with sloths everywhere! Here are a few photos from Panamá City itself:



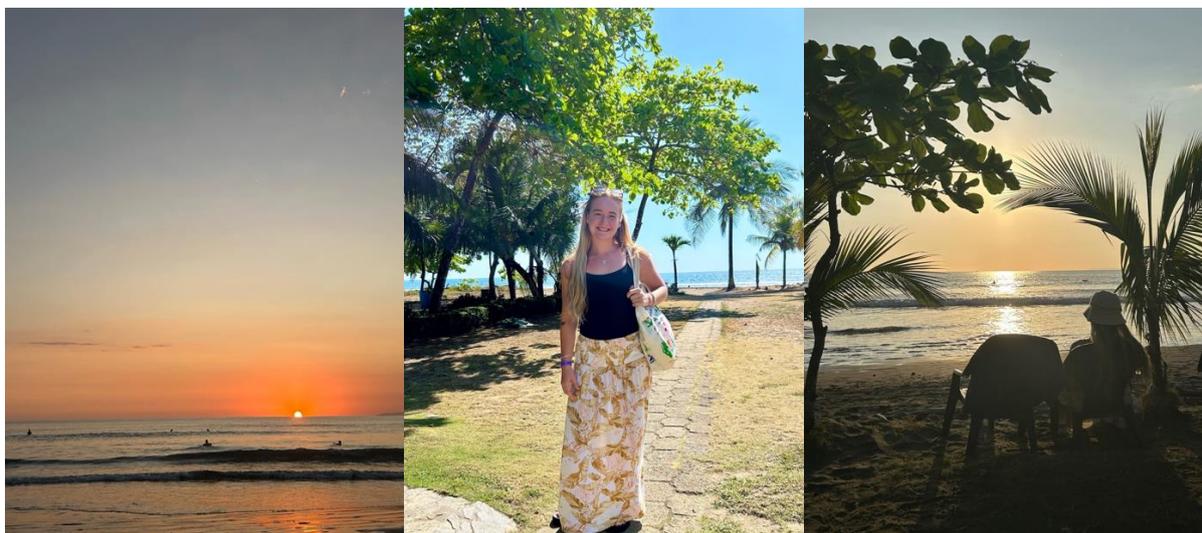
Panamá was put on the world map because of the Panamá Canal, it goes through this bridge and you get to watch the ships go through the canal, it was very exciting!



On the Pacific Ocean side of Panamá City, we took a catamaran to Taboga Island, which was so beautiful:



My master's thesis is researching how a climate financing initiative can be incorporated from the bottom-up, which directly focuses on what is needed in climate change, rather than predictions made from the top-down approach. The initiative I am researching started in Costa Rica, and because of the Jaycee Trust Travelling Fellowship Scheme I had the opportunity to talk to the founder in Costa Rica, which is an hour's plane ride away from where I was staying. While we were there for a week we went to Playa Jaco:



This meeting with the founders of Costa Rica Sustainable Tourism Bonds was incredibly beneficial to my research because it helped curate my explorative path and understand how alternative climate financing is being initiated across the world.

Overall, these two months built my academic and career experience immensely and I have taken these new experiences home with me to Palmerston North. The kindness and generosity of the Jaycee Trust and PNCC is something that I am extremely grateful for as it allowed me to expand my horizons and intern/research in areas that are not readily available in Aotearoa New Zealand, yet still provide knowledge that impacts us.