

limes international



The semester magazine for international partners, students, and parents No. 21, October 2018

- Themes:
 - The entrepreneurial spirit is omnipresent
 - A fan club for the university
 - When robots become actors



Dear Readers,

if a region and its economy want to continue flourishing, it needs many innovations as well as start-ups and a high level of entrepreneurial spirit. As founder University Aalen, along with our Innovation Center and the founding initiative start-UP!de, we are well on our way to becoming a lighthouse in East Württemberg and abroad for entrepreneurial thinking and start-up techniques. Developing business models, solving customer problems, building or expanding companies – we can thoroughly approach these important topics both in teaching, as well as in the way of an effective practice transfer. Thus, I would like to encourage and inspire you to participate in our founders' scene.

Numerous start-up teams are excited about your experiences, competences and active cooperation. Working together with our excellent teaching, good infrastructure and methodical expertise, we can confidently help shape digitalisation. Aalen University, with its fields of competences in both engineering and business has the best opportunity to establish itself as a significant founders' university.

Enjoy reading

Yours



Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schneider
President of Aalen University





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Theme

What's going on at the entrepreneurial Aalen University?

“Welcome to Aalen University”, announces the projector in big letters across the wall. Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schneider, president of Aalen University looks out at over six hundred excited faces at the welcome event for first semester students.



There were over 100 submissions for the Ideas Contest 2017 – the stAArt-UP!de-Team hung up 60 of these in the foyer for voting

“During the course of your studies, you will pick up a great deal of knowledge. But beyond that, we want to encourage you to let your creativity run free and be hungry for innovation”, is his appeal. “At the end of your studies, you should leave Aalen University with the feeling that you’re not only the manager of your tasks, but also an active designer of them as well”, he emphasises.

Despite ideal environments with customised support systems, public funding programmes as well as a broad net of contacts and know-how, the number of students who want to found their own company is declining, says Prof. Dr. Holger Held, professor for start-up at Aalen University. There, start-ups in Baden-Württemberg – the land of tinkerers and inventors – are not only a long held tradition. No other state invests more venture capital, according to the ministry of economics. In addition, resident global market leaders are often partners, customers and investors in these start-ups. This manifests in start-ups from Baden-Württemberg having the highest survival rate in Germany. These are good conditions for getting started with a new company. Aalen University is taking measures to convey this idea to young adults. “Entrepreneurial thinking has only recently been included as a fixed component in the curriculum”, explains President Schneider.

If you were to ask him, it should become anchored as a required part of studies in the future: “One of our most important goals is building up engaging teaching formats and tailor-made course offerings”. He also makes it clear, that start-ups are not the right option for everyone: “Many people feel more comfortable in a structured and secure environment, and that is alright too”: But for some, the time period during studies is the exact right time to pursue their own business ideas.

In order to get their hands on the right tools, every semester around forty master’s students choose the degree programme, “Business Development / Product Management & Start-up Management” (MBD). Here, they learn how to process an idea professionally, in order to increase their chances of success as high as possible. About twenty young women as well as several young men start right away the day after the welcome reception at the Burren part of campus, with MBD-introductory seminars. “The support in the INNO-Z and the promotion for start-ups at the university with the initiative, start-UP!de and the corresponding degree MBD are perfect for any student who wants to found a company”, explains master student Christina Schwarz. Without this collaboration, she might not have come to Aalen, she explains: “In choosing my place of study, that was a deciding factor”.

Academic Dean Prof. Dr. Harry Bauer offers participants in his lectures the possibility to work together on assigned business projects as well as develop their own business ideas. On this morning, Prof. Dr. Holger Held also lectures on the conceptual fundamentals about business models and “Customer Development”, before students break off into groups and design their own plans.

The MBD degree programme connects theory and practice. Many of the master’s students already have a background in business, and some have already started on the path towards founding their own start-up. “The challenge is reaching students outside of business fields and encouraging them to at least engage with start-up methods”, emphasizes Held. For this, the students’ thinking needs to change in a positive way. “That happens automatically when we try to get people interested in the topic playfully”, explains Professor Held. The living environment of the future will have more and more to do with entrepreneurial thinking. The university wants its graduates to leave with a greater sense of this. Above all, the field of digitalisation lives through openness for new things and fresh expertise of graduates.

Appetizer and Bootcamp

The project “Spinovation” started in 2016 to inspire students, grant them positive experiences and, fundamentally, to encourage them. Aalen University, Reutlingen University as well as the Hochschule der Medien in Stuttgart. All three partners have since then developed new offerings, integrate new course objectives in the curricula and create “protected” spaces, where students can test themselves as businesspeople without risk. This new format has been offered at Aalen University since 2017 through the founders’ initiative start-UP!de. Project manager Christian Kling now visits all first-semester students and shows them methods for creative problem solving in a so-called “Appetizer Workshop”. “Free yourself from rigid ways of thinking. Then you will find new approaches quickly”, is the key message that Christian Kling communicates with the attending business informatics students.

13 start-ups and 40 founding teams are Currently working at the INNO-Z Aalen, and Exchange ideas over Billiards or at Barbecues in more Comfortable settings



After being warmed up by solving tricky riddles, the students are soon ready to develop their own ideas. To the question, “How could Aalen University become more attractive for students”, 25 students in different teams gave very different answers: from relaxation and retreat rooms for commuters to a unified online communication platform for students and professors, the ideas are quite varied. Some students are interested in working on their ideas further. Everyone is then invited to the “Bootcamp” in the afternoon with Christian Kling and Prof. Dr. Rene Niethammer. “An idea for a business is already a good start – but a sustainable business model makes a company successful”, emphasizes Professor Niethammer. In this seminar format – offered through extracurricular studies – students are supported in bringing their ideas for businesses and developing a detailed business model. The teams, made up of bachelor’s and master’s students from different departments, meet together on the afternoon of the “Bootcamp”. At the beginning, they show their ideas in short presentations, which can cover very different areas of life, from new furniture designs to online offers. Professor Niethammer shows the methods of “Business Model Canvas”, which helps teams develop a business plan from their ideas and then formulate a plan of action. Students can then leave the workshop in the evening with a business model and new contacts in the bag.

Ideas Contest and the “Den of Lions”

On their way through the foyer, students notice the numerous posters that the start-UP!de-Team put up during the afternoon. Over 100 ideas were submitted for the university-wide competition – the 60 most promising were then chosen and offered up for voting. Then, all members of the university have time to select winners in four categories. The best concept in the year 2017 was initiated by the founders’ initiative start-UP!de. A project that rents unused rooftops for photovoltaics facilities, an IT-service on four wheels or a singles-community app: Niethammer seems most impressed by the breadth of the ideas. The Innovation Center (INNO-Z) in Aalen shows what the future can hold for the winners. In the evening, an event with Aalen University, the founders’ initiative stAartUP!de and the INNO-Z with the Lions Club takes place for the first time: “the Den of Lions”.



stAartUP!de Project Manager Christian Kling (pictured middle) shows how to develop a business model and build the first prototypes in his workshops

Start-ups from the INNO-Z present themselves to the potential investors, in an attempt to campaign for strategic or financial support. “We are part of a comprehensive strategy at Aalen University”, explains CEO Dr. Andreas Erhardt. The project, inaugurated as a lighthouse project by the EU, accommodates thirteen start-ups and and over forty student start-up teams. They find themselves at different stages of founding a business: “Some are still grasping for ideas, and some are already making over a million Euros in revenue per year”, summarises Erhardt. Around three years after opening, all the offices and laboratories are rented out, but in the student community office, there is still room. The INNO-Z functions somewhat like a water heater for the start-ups: they can stay for three years, but afterwards they need to stand on their own two legs. More start-ups can then settle into the region and develop further. “Mission accomplished”, says Erhardt.

The INNO-Z in Campus Buren was opened in the year 2015. Today, all offices and laboratories are rented out.

In the evening after the pitches, another long-held wish is fulfilled: the founders of “feasy”, a delivery service for healthy food was looking for a professional kitchen. They found much more in the “Den of Lions”: a team of investors founded a gastronomy company with the young business. They set up a canteen kitchen at Ostertag-Areal in Aalen, and will start their delivery service for healthy food at the end of the year. And that is what it is all about for all the efforts at the founder university: “No one should be forced into independence”, emphasises Professor Held. But for some, being their own boss is exactly what they need.

■ Andrea Heidel



Research

Artificial Intelligence at the Aalen Institute of Materials Research

Research Master Programme

The three-year research master programme “Advanced Materials and Manufacturing” (AMM) is also a driver for projects in the field of machine-learning at the IMFAA. The AMM-Master grants students from different fields access to practical and interdisciplinary work on current research topics and creates an optimal framework for the interplay between computer and material sciences.

The software team of the IMFAA: Amit Choudhary, Andreas Jansche, Alexander Bayer and Olatomiwa Badmos



Buzzwords like machine or deep learning (ML), artificial intelligence, neural networks and large or big data represent important aspects of digitalisation. What does that have to do with materials research and materials microscopy? Microscopic automation and the quantification of raw materials and components have been key topics for many years at the Institute for Materials Research of Aalen (IMFAA). Increasing complexity in microstructures and pictures, larger datasets as well as the intensive need for automated, microscopic evaluation methods demands increased applications of intelligent and self-learning software tools.

Lithium-ion-batteries are an important part of electric vehicles and stationary energy storage systems. The performance and lifecycle of these batteries is based on the structural constitution, from very fine geometric features and from production techniques. These fine structures can only be recorded when the cells are materialographically prepared and analysed with a microscope. In order to assess these batteries with software, Andreas Jansche is developing fitting image-processing solutions. The size of the batteries is a challenge, as well as the resulting quantity of data in the range of three-digit gigabytes.

In search of efficiently finding defects and faults in production, methods from ML (a subfield of artificial intelligence) come into play. Andreas Jansche from the IMFAA sees great potential: “For computer scientists and software developers, ML has grown into an interesting playing field through the development of hardware and software in the past years. What used to be done either with conventional image processing or even manually for structural analysis can now be done through ML easier and automatically”. The developed algorithms should serve developers as analytical tools, in order to better control and optimise their products. Through this technology, both the quality and lifecycle of the batteries increased. The software team at IMFAA under the direction of Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schneider and Dr. Timo Bernthaler have been working on this subject since 2003. The team has thus grown with Andreas Jansche and Florian Trier, and completed with Amit Choudhary, Olatomiwa Badmos and Alexander Bayer. External experts from the IMFAA were also consulted, for example at the PopUp Laboratory in Schwäbisch Gmünd or at the Zeiss initiative “Bildung Neu Denken” with specialists on site.

■ **Andreas Jansche, Dr. Timo Bernthaler**
Institut für Materials Research IMFAA

Three Questions For...

Dr. Kristina Lakomek, SmartPro Management

Industry, politics and science came together once again in May at the Industry Camp at Aalen University. The focus was made up of the uncomplicated interactions and the joint development of innovative ideas. Dr. Kristina Lakomek from the organisational team was happy with the number of active participants.

**Ms. Lakomek, for everyone that could not be there:
How does such a camp work?**

The Industry Camp has a very innovative activity format. It follows the principles of a bar-camp, a “participation conference”. This makes it possible to have simple discussions about knowledge transfer and networking in East Württemberg. This method initiates new cooperation between industries and promotes research projects in an easily accessible way. Through personal dialogue in small groups and the flexible organisation of the participants, everyone can bring something to the table and be an important factor in adding value. Or, as one of the sixty participants mentioned, the Industry Camp is an event with impulse effect.



What were the focus points of the Industry Camp?

This year had eleven exciting sessions. The emphases were the digitalisation of the professional world, Industry 4.0 and the following increased need for new concepts of knowledge transfer and know-how development – keyword being “lifelong learning”. Besides that, there were also segments on technical topics and application-oriented research like the SmartPro partnership, for example 3D printing. Of particular relevance of SmartPro is the integration of additional functions, made possible through new materials and intelligent production processes, making the components attractive for Industry 4.0. The new offering of the start-UP! Team of the university was also well attended, as they presented Design Thinking, a method of idea-engineering. I especially enjoyed the mixture of participants from companies, research projects, administration and politics, like Roderich Kiesewetter, a member of German Parliament.

The university is closely connected with the industry, so that cooperations are further strengthened. Is that a recipe for success?

Exactly. Today, products always need to be developed quicker and brought to market. In order to further promote our distinct competitiveness and strength in innovation of our region, close cooperation between science and business is the alpha and omega. We also have to continually foster new research projects. In terms of this knowledge and technology transfer, Aalen University has been successful for several years. As innovation driver of the region, we input important impulses, also the goal of SmartPro: here, projects are aimed towards problems of the middle class, and small and medium-sized enterprises can apply for funds. The thematic or methodical supplements through new industry partners, systematic transfer structures and processes play an important role.

Thank you very much!

- **Monika Theiss**
Director of External Communications

People

The Young Self-Starters

Some of them are still beginning by filing a business model and developing a prototype or beta version of their product. Some already belong to established companies in their fields and can look back at a long list of successful projects.

One thing unites the start-ups presented in the next few pages: they all have their seat in the “water heater” of Aalen University.



Whoever buys themselves a conventional tea to-go or regularly brews a tea bag at home should inevitably feel bad about the tons of trash being produced that's harmful to the environment. In Germany, to-go drinks accrue approximately 50 tons of aluminium and around 7.5 billion plastic spoons that will not be recycled or reused. „Greenspoon“, the ecological spoon and fair-trade-tea in one, is putting an end to this: finally, enjoying different flavours of tea with a pure conscience! This is one of the many reasons why Jochen Gabler, founder of the start-up *Geschmacksentfaltung* and alumni of Aalen University, made it onto the stage of the ‚inventor show‘ „Das Ding des Jahres“ under the direction of Stefan Raab.

#designwithaKISS – the agency Understood stands for modern digital branding strategies, a simple, attractive design and a professional programmatic development. The basis is the KISS principle: “keep it simple & stupid.” For over seven years, Andreas Kolb and Axel Woisetschläger, graduates of Aalen University, successfully lead their agency for information design. In doing so, they design and implement individual design concepts in web, app and print for predominantly technical companies.



Christina Schwarz chose Aalen University for her master program very deliberately, in order to realize her start-up projects. “Almost every day for the past year, I’ve tried new recipes for healthy breakfasts from fruits, cereals, seeds and proteins,” she explains. Her superfood for on the go should be vegan, lactose-free and without preservatives or added sugar. As an enthusiastic fitness athlete, she knows what demands a diet needs to meet, in order to supply the body with all the necessary nutrients. “FitOaty” is the 50th start-up project in the Aalener INNO-Z.

“Kennzeichen King” and “ClipCase” are two projects from Schmid Digital - an agency for individual software solutions. Kennzeichen King markets cheap and certified license plates and accessories over a self-programmed online shop. “ClipCase” is a job market for students with an innovative video profile and matching concept, which should revolutionize the application market. Through the platform, applicants as well as companies can upload application videos and spare themselves unnecessary interviews. The start-up was founded by a five-person team of Alexander Bender, Khoi Doan, Florian Möhle, Michael Schmid and Roman Pisarew – all graduates from different fields at Aalen University.





Dominik Maier und Pascal Stropek are the founders of the start-up “Landario”. “Landario” buys used designer glasses with high-quality materials like wood, horn or paper, then polishes, cleans and disinfects them before selling the frames. Through this model, “Landario” can offer designer glasses in top condition for up to 70% off the original price. That not only preserves the environment, but also the wallet. Dominik Maier completed his Master’s in Optometry and Psychophysics at Aalen University.

Consistently living healthily can be exhausting. But thanks to the start-up “CellGarden”, it doesn’t have to be so hard. The founding team of Marina Zeisler, Josef Teips (graduate of Aalen University) and Alexander Lier have developed a complete system for a healthy diet with so-called superfoods. Their patented, fully automated sprout growing equipment, “Cell One”, supplies customers with fresh foods full of vitamins and minerals that grow automatically at their homes. The machine doesn’t just look stylish – it is even connected to Smartphones via an app. For that, there are also sprout-pads, which are shipped to customers’ homes by subscription for various nutritional themes like weight loss, detox, sports or anti-aging.



The founders of “Feasy”, Sven Jooss and Alexander Abele will begin a cooperation with the restaurant Ostertag in Aalen. Both founders and EXIST-scholarship holders from the INNO-Z are close to launching their business idea with Peter Stützel, Markus Ehinger and Joachim Klutz as partners after two years of hard work. In the initial phase of their shipping service with a to-go concept, they will cater corporate customers with healthy, high-quality meals, ordered through an app.



Sebastian Schürle, student at Aalen University (Computer science with a focus on software engineering), is currently working on his bachelor's degree – business partner Nikola Vetter, business economy graduate (FH) and freelance journalist studied at Aalen University as well. The offer of their lifestyle company, “Connected Life”, is aimed towards the so-called smart homes – technically-connected houses. The new entrepreneurs want a “Smart Series” with intuitive touch, voice and movement functionality that is easy to operate and has a high security standard.



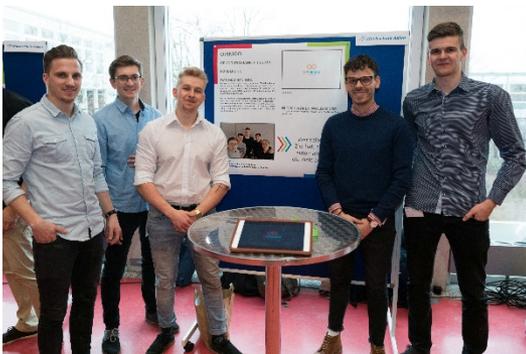
“We have broken the Google code”, exclaim Alexander Flach and Markus Weber confidently. Both computer science graduates from Aalen University founded the start-up “Rocket Backlinks” in 2017. “With the right backlinks, one can show up first with Google”. These backlinks lead from website A to website B, and are important to rise in Google’s ranking. Google recognizes that links lead from different websites to a single one, which is very important in the eyes of a search-machine. This leads to a rise in the rankings and with that, more sales. “As one of the biggest backlink-agencies, we can spread important topics far across the internet, thanks to professional link building”.



“SBO – slim business organizations” is a start-up, which specialises in optimizing workplace systems, as well as operation procedures. University graduate Lukas Borst developed the flexible module KommMon and Chamäleon, which can put together and modify workplace systems to meet new business demands.



“Opinioo” focuses on digital, data-driven market research. The founding team of the start-up “Opinioo” helps their customers characterise and understand their target groups, define their markets and quickly recognise trends. Smart data, machine & deep learning are part of their big data analysis. “Our marketing research software grants access to customers and their opinions, and the databank gives information about data interfaces. Our software makes it possible for everyday people to evaluate data quickly and smartly”, promise the founders.



Three Questions For...

Dr. Andreas Erhardt

Dr. Andreas Erhardt is the innovation manager and manager of the Innovation Center at Aalen University. The INNO-Z is located at Burren Campus, and is run by Aalen University and the city Aalen through partnership. Currently, all offices and laboratories are rented out, though student entrepreneurs at the “Shared Desk” in the community office are always welcome.

What is the INNO-Z and what does it have to do with Aalen University?

The Innovation Center is one of the flagship projects sponsored by the EU, which began in June 2015. Our primary goal is to support start-ups from the university and from the region. We want to offer students interested in starting their own company the opportunity to work on their business plan – without costs and without risks, rather with comprehensive consultation and networking. Everyone who has an idea is welcome to test it at the Shared Desk. In the end, though, it does not have to end in creating a start-up. When the idea works, it is definitely fantastic. When it does not work, it is not too bad, because the students have then learned a lot during this time, and definitely had fun. Perhaps this knowledge and experience will help with their next business idea or when entering a company, in the event they choose to do something else. With the INNO-Z, we want to establish a “culture of attempting” on campus.



What would I have to do as a student, in order to be accepted?

The hurdles are low: you just contact me and make an appointment. Ideally, students bring a description of their idea with them. These can be downloaded at our website: www.innovationszentrum-aalen.de. The discussion is completely noncommittal and confidential. We talk through the idea, and I give out some feedback. And please no shyness: every idea for a start-up is welcome. Students should be encouraged to try out establishment and learning. I then pass the description along to a small committee of the representatives of the university and the business development sector of the city Aalen with an assessment. The individuals interested in starting their company receive a response from us within a few days, and can get started with their own key card.

Why is it smart to start thinking about the topic, founding a company, during their studies?

People are young during their time as a student, and usually have few obligations and a lot of freedom. That is why it is an ideal time to test themselves. The experiences they collect are certainly an advantage later in their career. In the INNO-Z, there's a very familiar atmosphere, entrepreneurs chat with each other and benefit from cooperation and synergy with one another. We help with any questions and share contacts in our large network. A good opportunity to try out the INNO-Z would be the monthly founder-evening. The dates are always listed on our homepage. Anyone who comes here as an entrepreneur can only stand to gain.

Thank you!

■ Andreas Heidel

International

Welcome: International Students in East Wuerttemberg



Aalen University established a Welcome Center for International Students in East Wuerttemberg. Its goal is among others to gain international graduates for the regional job market.



With around 200,000 euros, the Ministry of Economics, Labour and Housing of the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg is funding the two-year project: “Welcome Center for International Students East Wuerttemberg” (WISO). The goal is to attract foreign graduates from the four public universities of East Wuerttemberg to the regional job market, and retain them as specialists in the region. The “Welcome Center” was established at Aalen University. It serves as a place for project coordination and contact point for companies in East Wuerttemberg. The funding for the Welcome Center for International Students in East Wuerttemberg is an integral part of an initiative started several years ago by the Ministry of Economics, Labour and Housing, designed to retain international students with degrees from Baden-Wuerttemberg universities as professionals in the country. Until now, the majority of international students leave Germany after completing their degree program. “Keeping international graduates post-graduation is a very effective and focused way to gain international specialists, because the graduates already live in Baden-Wuerttemberg, have a recognized domestic degree and are familiar with the demands of both the life and the language here”, says Economics Minister Dr. Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut.

Long-Term Connection

The initiative should establish a long-term connection between the international students and the small and medium-sized companies in the region. As part of the initiative, we are planning focused information for international students over social media, the establishment of regional application platforms and informational meetings for small and medium-sized companies.

In Baden-Wuerttemberg, ten Welcome Centers have already been established, which serve as contact points for international professionals and small and medium-sized companies, and help with immigrating specialists and their families with integration. They offer initial consultations and send those interested to relevant places for information. For example, topics are searching for employment, right of residence, labour laws, language acquisition, professional recognition, applications, residence, qualifications and childcare. In this way, the Welcome Center supports the small and medium-sized companies with focused recruitment and occupational integration of international professionals.

The establishment of the “Welcome Center East Wuerttemberg for International Students” (WISO) began at the start of Summer Semester 2018 in the International Center of Aalen University. The founders of the project are the Business Development Agency of East Wuerttemberg (WiRO) and the international offices of Aalen University, the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University of Heidenheim, HfG Schwäbisch Gmünd as well as the University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd. In executing the project, the regional economy is closely connected through WiRO and the Partners for Professionals of East Wuerttemberg, as well as chambers and organisations, employment agencies and cities. The project is embedded in the strategy of the Alliance of Professionals of Baden-Wuerttemberg, also focused on earning international professionals.

During the 26-month advancement of the project, sustainable structures should develop for the partners to introduce international students to the processes and potential in the regional job market and support companies in gaining foreign specialists. “International students are an important means of ensuring professionals in our corporations”, emphasizes Dr. Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut.

Numerous Steps planned

In the framework of the WISO-Project, we are introducing international students, as well as graduates to the regional job market. With intensive contact with corporations, through company excursions as well as support measures, consultation and training, students should already get to know and experience occupational perspectives early on in their education. Intercultural training can sensitize them to the German job market and work culture. Furthermore, the universities in Aalen, Heidenheim and Schwäbisch Gmünd offer job application training and work-related German courses. There are special informational meetings and seminars for both students and interested companies about residence and labour rights, among other topics. The corporations in East Württemberg can also learn about the chances of gaining professionals through recruiting international graduates, and be directly brought into contact with them.



WISO Activities for International Students and Companies

Successful Collaboration

The WISO-Project displays a smooth continuation of the long-lasting cooperation between the international offices of the four public universities in East Württemberg and WiRO. The TIE Consortium (TIE: Talents International East Wuerttemberg) and WiRO can now present various shared projects towards the integration of international students. After focusing on integration into the universities and society, the WISO-Project can also include integration into the professional world. “In order to attract international students and recruit them as future co-workers for the regional economy, regions like East Wuerttemberg need to work around the advantages offered by bigger cities by finding new opportunities with exceptional offers and emphasizing the region’s economic success and high quality of life”, explains WiRO-director Dr. Ursula Bilger. All partners in the WISO-Project are looking forward to furthering the portfolio of current offers around this important building block.

■ **Pascal Cromm**
Director International Relations



Through intensive contact with companies via business excursions as well as counseling and training, students should already start getting to know professional perspectives during their studies.



Experiencing Israeli Start-Up Culture

Students in the master degree programme “Business Development / Product & Start-up Management” travelled to Tel Aviv in Israel, part of “Silicon Wadi”. The trip gave the students, who are either working on start-up ideas or intend to work as product managers in the future, a glimpse of the start-up mentality of the country. The students visited the firm, Ecomotion, an informational meeting at the German-Israeli Chamber of Industry and Commerce as well as a workshop with Maor Cohen, co-founder and CEO of Pickspace. The visit to BEYOND VERBAL, which works with voice recognition and diagnostics, impressed all participants. The CEO of ClearCut, a company in medical technology, reported about his experiences with start-ups. Participating in a pitch event at the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange was also a highlight for the group.

Here, start-ups attempted to win over investors over several rounds. These inside views into practical applications are an important part of the courses at Aalen University. “The degree programme supports the students with a number of methodically fitting offered course modules, ideally to qualify their start-up ideas and to create a solid basis for the foundation”, explains Prof.Dr. Harry Bauer, academic dean of the degree programme for theoretical development. The trip to Tel Aviv complemented the programme quite well. “Some students have actually founded their own companies during their studies”, says Professor Bauer. For that reason, an intercultural comparison with other start-ups is definitely an advantage.



The Israeli start-up culture is based on a combination of three factors. Israel takes in a large amount of immigrants. In the 90's, over a million immigrants came into Israel. Among them were many well-educated academics. Alongside that, the government implemented a programme to develop start-up infrastructure. These special establishments were called "incubators." In technical jargon, companies in the process of being founded through federally funded capital. The strong education in technological branches of young Israelis during their military service also plays a role for this start-up culture. In Israel, a special attitude towards start-ups reigns: the failure and relaunch of companies is seen as part of start-up culture, and counts towards the learning curve of young companies.

At the end of the trip, Academic Dean Prof. Dr. Harry Bauer and Professor Frank Motte were pleased that all participants came back with positive impressions. "The economy lives off of innovation", explains Bauer about why the degree programme is so important, and continues, "and for that, you need highly-educated experts and, above all, people who can work across disciplines and lead those corresponding teams". Excursions like the one to Tel Aviv also prepare students for these interdisciplinary and sometimes intercultural teams. The trip was organized by university employee Christian Saß and Jana Grözing, a student in the master degree programme, Business Development.

■ **Bianca Kühnle**
Communications

We are blown away... from Columbia to Aalen

¡Hola!

I have a special connection to Germany, because my great-grandfather was German. That is why it was important to my mother that my two brothers and I also learn the German language. We grew up in Bogotá and went to a German school there. In the tenth grade, we had the chance to live with a guest family in Germany for three months. I actually stayed for a whole year, since you can learn the language a lot better that way. My time in Frankfurt was really, really great, and I still keep in touch with my guest-sister from back then. That's really a friendship for life. After those great experiences, I was 100% sure that I also wanted to study in Germany, especially through the visit of my German school, as well as through my Colombian and German high school graduations.

It's just great that people have so many opportunities to further develop themselves here. That still amazes me. It's unfortunate, but in Columbia, people need to have a lot of money for a good education. In the meantime, I'm in my third semester studying International Business at Aalen University and work at the International Office as well. I take care of the incoming students, organise excursions and give tours of the campus. That way I can improve my English, gain experience and, of course, earn a little money, because Europe is quite expensive for us Columbians.



Daniela Archila

Columbia

Language: Spanish

Capital: Bogotá

State Form: Republic

Area: 1.18 million km²

Number of inhabitants:
49.1 Million

Sights: Tayrona National Park, Ciudad Perdida, Barichara, Carnaval de Barranquilla, San Agustín, Caño Cristales

Aalen was a good decision, as I'm enjoying my studies and I like the city. Here, you can do anything if you have a bike, or just by walking, and then you're already in the forest. Bogotá has nine-million inhabitants. The city is simply huge and life there is pretty stressful. There are always traffic jams. You always have to take time to plan ahead, you can't really be spontaneous. But even so, Bogotá is gorgeous. The Columbians are very open and outgoing, which I miss sometimes with the Germans. We approach strangers a lot more, in order to get to know them.

If you're new here, no one comes to you. You have to be active in order to find friends. But when you do that, most people look very surprised. It's so fascinating how different the mentalities are. After my Bachelor Degree, I definitely want to work in Germany for a few years, and maybe get my Master Degree. I'm really thankful that I had these opportunities, and I believe my great-grandfather would also be pleased that the connection between our family and Germany hasn't been broken.

¡Adiós!

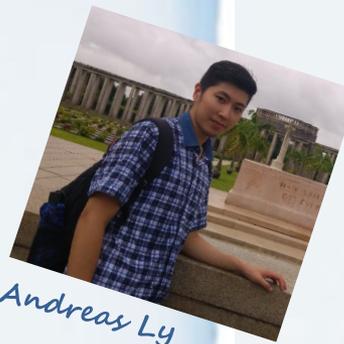
Daniela Archila

We are blown away... from Aalen to Myanmar

Mingalaba,

When I returned from my first exchange semester in England in Winter Semester 2016/17, wanderlust came over me again – I wanted to go back out into the wide world. I'm studying mechanical engineering with a focus in product development and simulations, and during a lecture, Professor Gärtner and Pietzsch talked about their trip to Myanmar in the framework of a new university cooperation funded by the Baden-Wuerttemberg scholarship. It was clear to me right away: to the adventure! I decided to write my bachelor's thesis in Myanmar at Yangon Technical University (YTU). Next came a few organizational matters, for example the Visa and applying for the Baden-Wuerttemberg scholarship. Luckily, everything worked out and the journey could begin!

When I arrived, I was heartily welcomed and quickly invited to dinner. The traditional dishes taste fantastic, and I haven't missed German food at all. The national dish is called "Mohin-ga" and is a fish soup with rice noodles. Typically, several small dishes are served, so it never gets boring through variety.



Andreas Ly

*Myanmar (or
Burma)*

Language: Burmese

Capital: Naypidaw

State form: Republic

Area: 676.577 km²

Number of inhabitants:
53.9 million (2017)

Attractions:

Shedwagon Pagoda,
Bagan, Kyauktiyo Pagoda,
Inle Lake, Mingun Bell

The topic of my bachelor thesis was electric mobility in Myanmar. I had the job of developing and building a prototype for a solar charging station in order to cover the energy needs in rural areas that are still without energy. There, E-mobility as well as the preservation of the environment played a huge role. The cooperation with the different departments at YTU, as well as with a steel working company was an interesting challenge, and thanks to the financial support of the sponsors "International Society Aalen e.v." and "Triangle Links Co. Ltd.", I was able to realize the project.

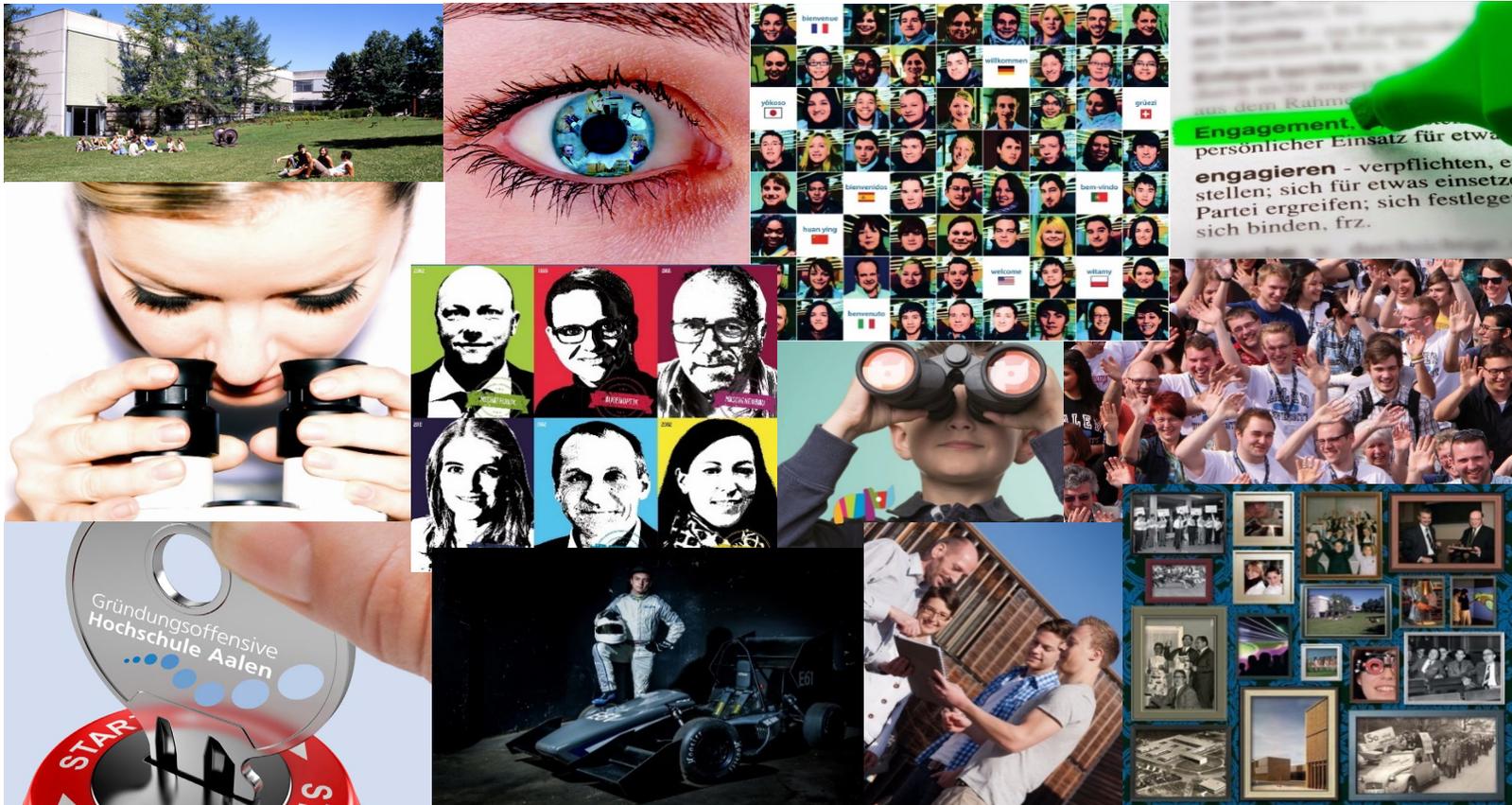
During my stay, I made some good friends who I am going to miss, and I'm thankful for all the supervisors, lecturers and students who supported me and made it all possible. I had a wonderful time in Myanmar and was able to get to know the different traditions and fantastic landscapes. The people here are very nice and helpful. Even in stressful situations, they stay very calm and composed. This time really influenced me – I can only recommend an exchange semester! Because when else do you have the opportunity to go abroad for a long time and immerse yourself in a foreign culture?

Thwa-mae-naw!
Andreas Ly

A New Look for limes International starting 2019

In keeping with the theme of starting something new, we will begin publishing limes International in a new format starting 2019. We are very grateful to all of our faithful readers from the last 10 years, and hope you will continue to enjoy reading the latest international news from Aalen University.

To get an impression of how large exactly our readership is, we would like to do a little experiment. You have read the magazine until this point? This is great! Please send a short Email to aaa@hs-aalen.de including "limes International" as subject. That's it. Should you wish in addition to become a part of the first limes International 2019, then add a little greeting message (e.g. for the New Year 2019) together with a picture of you (with a good resolution). It would be fantastic to gather greetings from all over the World, which we could publish in the next issue. Don't you think so?





limes international

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**Thank you
for
reading!**

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