

University Alliance for Sustainability

Research and study stays 2015 in the field of sustainability

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Brief Report

My PhD research project aims at contributing to the investigation of the policy-making processes intended to integrate nature conservation and sustainable use of the natural resources. Therefore, the research is being conducted in selected biosphere reserves, UNESCO designated areas, which promote local participation in the decision-making processes in the effort of improving the relationship between the humans and the nature.

One of the case studies selected for this research is the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve located on the east coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

During most of my research stay at the University of British Columbia I was collecting empirical data for this case study.

The first week of my stay in Canada I spent in Vancouver, visiting the University of British Columbia with the purpose to extend my research network.

During this activity-rich week, I attended the colloquium of Prof. Kurt Huebner, who has acted as a host professor for my research exchange at the UBC and to whom I am particularly grateful. I also managed to have a meeting with Prof. Kathryn Harrison, a Professor of Political Science, who also serves as an Associate Dean, Strategy and Communications, in the Faculty of Arts. Other than discussing my research project, we used the occasion to discuss possibilities in further implementing the University Alliance of Sustainability goals and find various ways of conducting activities within this programme involving students from the University of British Columbia. During this week I also met with two researchers, who have been working on similar research in biosphere reserves for their PhD degree. I found this exchange of experience exceptionally useful since the advice I got helped me in the data collection process especially in establishing contacts with the potential interviewees. The last three weeks I spent in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, based at the

Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve Research Institute [MABRRI], whose research is carried out in relation to the biosphere reserve. The MABRRI Research Director, Prof. Pam Shaw, also a Director of the Master of Community Planning Program, has been strongly supporting me in my field research. During these three weeks I conducted 13 interviews with representatives of the stakeholders taking part in the decision-making processes of the biosphere reserves.

I must say that this research stay has been a rather valuable experience from several aspects. Other than having done a significant part of my field research, the University Alliance for Sustainability Fellowship provided me with an opportunity to significantly extend my research network relevant for my field. Furthermore, for me this experience has been rather personally and culturally enriching.