

FIN Interns 2016-2017

1. Shanmugarajan



Hi, I'm Shanmugarajan, a 22 year-old software engineer based in Chennai working for Global Analytics. "Another software engineer in the country!?" you'd think, but wait, read on. I'm much more than just a software engineer! When I'm not a software engineer, I'm a passionate teacher, a recreational runner, an avid football fan and a fitness freak. This article is the missing piece of art that completes the gallery of my life, which my resume will not speak about.

Why do I love teaching? Because teaching isn't a profession, it's an art! During my higher secondary years, I started to genuinely love a few subjects that I'd hated, because of the teachers who 'discussed' it. Yes! I realized that great teachers 'discuss' the subject, making me embrace and fall in love with it and don't just teach them. This made me want to become a good teacher and explain 'how' a phenomenon takes place rather than just asserting 'what' the outcome would be. I wanted to share the fruit I'd received, so that the seeds I sow grow into trees one day. I want my teaching to open gates and make a difference in the lives of students who don't have access to proper guidance. All these thoughts made me determined to teach underprivileged students. I started teaching math in a diploma college that admits only the less privileged and was enthralled by the amount of potential that was untapped in them. Then I started teaching computer science, to help students land in a job they desire. Hunting answers for weird questions that pops up from the sea of inquisitive students made me fall in love with teaching even more! One can never put a price tag on the joy I feel when I see my student's face glow out of pride from discovering an answer to my question through reasoning.

I'd accumulated weight over the first three years of college, thanks to the delicious meals served at my college canteen and the blissful sleep that followed during the class lectures. Stepping on a weighing machine, rang bells in my head! And no points for guessing my next step – I signed myself up for a gym. A low-carb diet coupled with morning jog/walk helped me shed 15 kgs over a period of 6 months. I would be lying, if I told you that it was an easy

routine to follow. But my determination and passion to get fit superseded my laziness. Hard work always pays off. I took the daily jogs to the next level when the running bug bit me. Inspired by my colleagues' Facebook posts, I registered for a 10K running event (a 10km running contest). Running cast a magic spell on me and it's difficult to escape from its seductive clutches! I started running 10K races and now I run half marathons. I realized that mental ability and determination is more important than physical strength. The selflessness, sense of pride and mental strength that this sport promotes has an unparalleled effect on my lifestyle, not to forget the confidence it imparted in me. What started as a fitness routine has now become an integral part of my life!

Football is something that makes the weekends even more interesting. Nothing could be more exciting than watching my favourite striker slam a goal into the net, tearing through the keeper's gloves or watching my favourite defender shielding his goal post in front of his opponent as though his life depended on it. The ups, downs and drama throughout the 90 minutes on the pitch and the transfers & mind games off the pitch provides entertainment and an exciting experience which no other sport could match. I'm a follower of the English Premier League and an ardent supporter of the Arsenal Football Club, for the classic game they play that matches my style. London is always red!

Oh wait! I hear you. "What is this software engineer doing in Friend In Need? What's his role in the organization? How does this stint serve his life's purpose and what are his aspirations?" I'll save these details for the subsequent posts that follow ;)"

Stay tuned for more from Shanmugarajan. Cheers!

3. Chloe Sorel



My name is Chloé, I am 22 years old and French! I love travelling and meeting new people. I just completed the first year of my master's program in Economics and Public Policy at Sciences Po Paris. I am currently in the middle of a gap year, trying to figure out how to have the greatest impact on people's lives. Throughout my studies, I managed to conciliate my interests for

economics and social sciences. I strongly support the idea that economics is a very powerful tool to understand and change the world, but within the framework of a multi-disciplinary perspective. I enjoy my studies but I also strongly need to see their application in the real world.

I first made a research internship at the French Development Agency, under the direction of its Chief Economist, Gaël Giraud, working on money velocity. For my second internship, I wanted to discover an action-research based venture such as Friend In Need, in order to discover another kind of research, more directly linked to the ground.

What are you doing with Friend in Need?

I first heard about Friend in Need's action through my master's friend Lucile, who explained her work to me. I applied for an internship the day after!

I am very interested in the impact assessment of a project or of a policy, from the data collection to the data analysis. I am particularly concerned about health, education and gender issues, which is why I consider sanitation coverage as a priority.

Friend in Need also caught my attention because of its desire to document and question its achievements. I am very interested in experimental economics and find it great to draw lessons from the field! I am involved in various tasks during this internship, such as data collection, data analysis and communication.

What makes you interested in doing all this? Why do you think it is worthwhile?

I am so lucky in my own life: I have everything I need, which is why I can and have to share some of my luck! If some of my competences can improve one's life, then I will be even happier. I have been involved in several solidarity projects during my school years. A few years ago, I was the president of the non-profit association Afric@ction. We organised several solidarity events during the year and a trip to Senegal (one month), to work in a school. I am deeply convinced that volunteering helps to be a better person, being able to confront diversity and to make the best use of it.

To be an intern at FIN is also a wonderful opportunity for me to meet inspiring people with different backgrounds and from different parts of the world, as well as to discover some parts of the Indian culture. In less than two days, I'll be flying to India: I can't wait!!

4. Pauline Krolinski



Hello everyone,

I am Pauline, 23 years old, and originally from Germany. There, I grew up in a protected environment with a supportive family and circle of friends until I stepped out of my "bubble" to explore the world. Since then, I have called different places "home" and every time I decided to take on a challenge and moved to another country, I have been rewarded with an insight into new cultures and welcomed with open arms.

Right now, I have just completed the theoretical part of my Master studies in Public Policy and Human Development at the United Nations University- Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology, where I was specialising in Risk and Vulnerability. After spending the last nine months together with an incredibly inspiring bunch of people

(we call it our MPP family) from all over the world, I only have my master thesis left until I will be graduating and sent out into the real working world.

Initially, I was afraid that I have set my goals too high: I wanted to work on a project which I am passionate about with a mentor who is willing to take on the challenge to support and guide me through this process. For young people like me who have spent their past years in the academic environment, it is crucial to get some hands-on experience and engage in field research. As a result, I am incredibly grateful to have Professor Ramani as the supervisor for my thesis: “What are the drivers of menstruation related health problems in Indian school girls: lack of knowledge or lack of access to sanitary products?”

You might ask yourself—why did this girl decide to get out of her supportive surrounding in the first place to spend most of her past 5 years abroad? Well, this story goes a little back in time to my childhood where I grew up in a family for whom it was most important to care for others. Since I was little, I had the innate idea to enhance the conditions of people who were less fortunate than myself. This empathy would guide me in to always have clear goals in mind. However, I was not able to accomplish them without an appropriate academic background and therefore, I started studying European Public Health for my Bachelor degree at Maastricht University.

Being part of an international cohort with opportunities to study abroad gave me the chance to find my passion in human development, particularly in the health sector. This dedication remained an important part of the joy I have in guiding others to work together to improve themselves and their community. If you get to know me you will recognise me as the girl who is constantly on her feet, looking for new tasks and projects to work on. However, over the years I realised that the people I met on my journeys and our shared moments had the biggest impact on me. Becoming a part of their life, getting to know their story, their pace, their favourite places/cuisine and to exchange ideas kept me curious and opened new paths of interests. It is enriching to keep yourself surrounded by people with different viewpoints that challenge you and broaden your mind’s perception.

Over the past years, I understood how essential it is to stay positive, smile and value the little things in life. When I went to Africa for the first time to work for an NGO in Namibia there was a boy who never laughed. After spending a lot of time with him I managed to take a picture when he was smiling at me. Undoubtedly, never has anything made me happier than seeing how something so small can fill my life with joy. Those moments remind you

what is important and illustrate, from the small victories you have, what can happen in the long run if you are consistent, course-correcting and patient. Especially during my travels, I love to take pictures of these moments that I can share with people I met along the way. Getting out of my comfort zone, having a positive attitude, enjoying laughing out loud, being active, and social contributed significantly to my personal growth. However, there are more puzzle pieces to the picture. As much as I love being surrounded by good friends I love to read books and to meditate. It helps me to structure my thoughts and regain focus. What previous years taught me is that you can never foresee the future. When I visited India for the first time 4 years ago, I never thought that I will come back one day- to be able to implement an educational programme and to make a difference. And here I am – excited to become a part of the FIN community and to do research on menstrual hygiene among young female adults in India.

Warm regards,

Pauline