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DAAD Prize 2022 goes to Matías Nicolás Turra Turra

On 11 October 2022, Matías Nicolás Turra Turra from Chile was awarded the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) prize for outstanding achievements by foreign students.

13.10.2022

The prize, which is endowed with 1,000 euros, was awarded for the 16th time at the HWR Berlin. It is intended to make foreign students visible as an enrichment for our university and recognises personalities who stand out due to their achievements and social commitment.

Matías Nicolás Turra Turra very successfully completed his Bachelor's degree in International Business Management and began further studies at the University of St. Gallen. Due to his outstanding achievements, Matías Nicolás Turra Turra was awarded an HWR Talent during his studies and has received a BMBF Deutschlandstipendium twice in recognition of outstanding academic achievements and social commitment.

In the following interview, he talks about his path to the HWR Berlin, his voluntary commitment and his plans for the future.

What does it mean to you to be honoured with the DAAD Award?

I feel very pleased to have received the 2022 DAAD Award. It is a recognition of all my efforts during the last four years. Especially, because this was a very difficult time for all of us and with many challenges to face. During my studies at HWR Berlin, I studied in three different countries apart from Germany such as Brazil, the UK and China, all of them in several languages. Moreover, I had to deal with the new online and hybrid class methodologies due to the pandemic situation. In between, I also had a severe bus accident which led me to a position where I had to adjust my entire life and fight even stronger for my professional and academic goals. Taking all of these factors into consideration, being recognized with the DAAD Award means a lot to me. Honestly, I think I deserved this prize. I believe that I could manage it very well and overcome any obstacle on my way. I thank any person that was part of this beautiful journey during my bachelor, especially Prof. Haller for her tremendous and unconditional support. I've learnt a bit from all of them, professors, workers, colleagues and friends.

Why did you choose to study at the HWR Berlin?

In 2018, I made one of the most difficult decisions in my life. I decided to leave my country, university, friends and family behind to pursue an international career. I had always dreamed of going abroad, learn new languages and prepare for a global professional development. This wouldn't have been possible in Chile. Therefore, I took the risk and moved to Germany. When looking at the different possibilities I had at that time, HWR Berlin was the most suitable for my future aspirations. I was delighted by the curriculum of the International Business Management programme. I saw the wide range of courses, its partner universities,

the possibility to do an internship at a recognized company and I went for it. When I look back, I think it was the best decision I could ever have taken and I would recommend any student to join HWR Berlin if they dream of becoming great professionals with an international focus.

You volunteered for Misiones Solidarias in your home country ...

During my time in Chile, I committed myself to different social projects to help improving life's quality in our community. One of them was Misiones Solidarias, which was a programme organized by the catholic church at my high school. Although I do not belong to any religion, I participated of this great cause due to its social commitment. We traveled to the very South of Chile, built houses for poor families and supported them in their daily activities. Moreover, we took care of children, helped them with their knowledge gaps in different subjects and also provided important emotional and psychological support. This was definitely one of the experiences with the biggest impact in my life. It contributed to the development of crucial soft skills such as teamwork, leadership and empathy. I advise other students to get involved in social activities, I am convinced that the only way to change things is to take action. We have the power and responsibility to change the world and make it a better place to live not only for us but also for others.

What are you planning for your professional future?

During my bachelor's degree, I had several courses connected to management and I understood early on that this is the field in which I am most interested and talented in. These academic experiences as well as my time as a working student at internationally operating companies like Zalando and Pricewaterhouse Coopers gave me deeper insights into the possibilities and facets of this area. Therefore, in September I started the bilingual German-English Master's programme in General Management at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. Besides, I'm strongly working on building my own company here in Germany, which should be launched very soon. Finally, after achieving all my professional aspirations, I dream of coming back to my home country Chile and dedicating myself to politics in the field of management to improve the life quality of poor people. Ever since I decided to move abroad, I had this vision and worked towards fulfilling it in the future.

HWR Berlin has been awarding the DAAD Prize since 2006

With the DAAD Prize, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) has been offering the HWR Berlin the opportunity to honour exceptional achievements of its international students since 2006. The stated aim of the prize is to put faces to the international students at German universities. The HWR Berlin is proud of its approximately 1500 foreign students who enrich our university.