

Hi,

we're Team "VanAssist Mannheim x Cluj". Starting from February in 2019, we worked in a distributed setup as virtual development team with regular weekly syncs and also two onsite weeks. Those onsite weeks served as focused face-to-face working period, while the primary thought behind were team building activities and a lot of fun together as a team :). Those two weeks really helped us grow together, learn about each team member's strengths & qualifications and ensured efficient & effective cooperation for all those weeks, in which were working as a virtual team separated by some thousands miles and one hour time shift. To give you a better idea about our team we would like to share some experiences from those onsite weeks:

Beginning of March, we flew off to Cluj from Frankfurt (Daily Lufthansa Flights back and forth) as a Delegation of four Germans: Axel and Jasmin from Uni Mannheim supervised by Dr. Bartelt & PhD candidate Nils Wilken.

After we arrived in Cluj, we met the Romanian students for the first time during dinner and a visit to a bar afterwards. In the following days we worked intensively on our project including a project related mini hackathon for kick-off (including burger & fries of course). We were divided into two international teams with the aim to solve important basic tasks for the project as well as to get to know us better.

During this week a room was reserved at NTT, which was not only equipped with sweets and drinks, but we also had access to the recreation & entertainment area, where we had extensive Ping Pong, table soccer and Fifa matches as well as coffee. In our spare time we visited Cluj and the surrounding area. One of the highlights was the salt mine: on the underground lake we had a race with paddle boats. The evenings we spent together in different bars and played "Cards against humanity" which was a lot of fun :) enjoying the local club scene should not be missed for the sake of completeness ;). Btw, food was super delicious and really cheap compared to German prices. All in all, it was an absolutely amazing week!



One month later the Romanian students came to Mannheim. We used this time to integrate the individual developed components and to complete the connection between our app and our server. Thanks to Dr. Bartelt we had the opportunity to get to know “Ciconia”, a startup, which was founded by Uni Mannheim students of an former InES team project. They told us what it is like to work on an idea in a small team and what challenges they face. This exchange boosted not only our motivation but also improved the general team spirit.

In our spare time we visited the Luisenpark and played LaserTag. Furthermore, we were partying together with the guys of Ciconia in the Schneckenhof :)

The last day, we spent in Heidelberg. On the “Königsstuhl” we had not only an outstanding view of Heidelberg but also caught the last snow of the season (well, to be awaited). After we got cold, we ended the evening with good food and playing cards in a student bar.



At the time this report was written, we have finished about 2/3 of the team project, so this is our interim conclusion so far: We have learned a lot during this time, not only technically but also interpersonally. Thanks to the two onsite weeks we had the chance to get to know our great Romanian team colleagues better and improve our team spirit.

We would like to thank InES and our partner company BridgingIT for making these weeks possible.

Best,  
Jasmin & Axel