

## **Nish (BA Economics & French)**

The ERASMUS programme has provided me with the perfect opportunity to develop on both a personal and social level. By working in a foreign educational institution in French Guiana, South America; I have encountered a vast variety of challenges and situations which studies at a university simply cannot prepare you for. I got my job as a English Language Assistant through the British Council and have managed to meet a range of people from all over the world with assistants coming from Brazil, Spain and Holland to name a few. The job itself as a language assistant has been a lot of fun and I have fully enjoyed the liberty I have been given; teaching the primary school students anything from Bob Marley songs to Notting Hill Carnival culture. Travelling, is my main supporting reason for stepping further afield and having the ability to step into Suriname and Brazil within a few hours provides gateway entry to the most magnificent continent in the world. Hammocks, beach, forest, wildlife and sheer natural beauty become the typical weekend/holiday activities and I feel this lifestyle is ideal. With just 12hrs a week and a determined mind to manipulate a 3 day week, the potential to discover and absorb a rich culture has been made fully possible.

The lack of academic progression in French has been an issue as I have been surrounded by big chillers with whom I tend to chat in a colloquial manner without ever really maintaining any sort of written or intellectual development in my language of study, beyond reading some French texts. Therefore, I do feel that the return to university will be a struggle in terms of my grammatical flaws. On the other hand, learning languages for me is all about speaking, and connecting with the most people possible and having also been able to improve my Spanish and pick up bits of Dutch and Sranan Tongo has been great. Teaching has been a real insight; something very interesting and a joyous break from university. The financial benefits offered in both the Erasmus grant and the high wage rate remain enticing and have given me the ability to thoroughly enjoy a year of debt-free living and dream-like travelling. It has been a fantastic experience, and I would highly recommend others to venture further than simply across the Channel for a real cultural shock!

**Brownsberg Natural Park, Suriname.**



**Ecole Maximilien Saba-Kourou, French Guiana.**

