

## **My Mobility**

Students from Ca' Foscari Recount their Learning Experiences Abroad

## **Foreword**

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Among the many international initiatives that have inaugurated the 150th anniversary of Ca' Foscari University of Venice, *My Mobility* is one of the most important, first of all, because Ca' Foscari University's students are the protagonists. 'Students think afresh', the Nobel Mohammed Yunus said during the lecture he delivered at our University on October 2, 2018.<sup>1</sup> We should value our students as the most important human resources of our institution.

The adventure, headed and coordinated by prof. David Newbold with the assistance of Elisa Gamba, head of our Welcome Office, saw more than a hundred students sending in accounts of their mobility experience in countries all over the world. In this publication you will find the thirty nine accounts which were identified as possible winners.

The personal stories were supposed to be an exercise in writing, in which all participants had to write an account in English and would be judged for their communicative efficiency in English lingua franca (ELF). Prof. Newbold writes 'In fact, the ability of entrants to express themselves fluently and convincingly in English, turned out to exceed our expectations.' And the students applied from all departments of Ca' Foscari University; it was a university-wide competition.

What is amazing and at the same time rewarding is to notice that it was not simply an exercise in writing in English, but much more: the personal anecdotes experienced during 'their mobility' narrated by the students testified to the value and deep significance of their study experience abroad, which turned out to be not only a learning experience abroad but primarily a life experience with a strong emotional impact on their personal life. The students, during their 'mobility', experienced a new cultural and social environment, a new lifestyle, new friends and professors, in what can be described as voyages of self-discovery through experiencing other environments, other people. This is what happens when they depart from what they call the 'comfort zone' of daily life. What they discover and acquire is cultural understanding, sharing and experiencing other cultures and in doing so they learn to be open to the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammed Yunus, 'A World of Three Zeros: The New Economics of Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, and Zero Net Carbon Emission', October 2, 2018

'Open to the world' is the motto of Ca' Foscari's 150th anniversary and we try to make it real and concrete by offering to our students a learning experience abroad. They can choose their destination, from Europe to UK, USA, Middle East, the Caucasus, China, Japan, Korea, Australia etc., in some of the best universities in the world, provided that they have a study project, with a strong motivation, a learning agreement, and the requirements needed. Every year we fund around 1,500 mobility placements for our students, for a wonderful study abroad experience, in which they encounter new cultures and social environments, and consequently learn to be citizens of the world, to value other cultures and at the same time to appreciate their own.

Like all modern universities and research institutions, Ca' Foscari is committed to the process of internationalization, for it is only by becoming more connected to the world that we will be able to completely fulfil our academic mission in research and education and maximize our contribution to the betterment of our society.