



## IET Travel Award for International Travel - Report

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The GREEN Program, Cusco, Peru – Water Resource Management & Sustainable Practices  
Study Abroad Programme

Participating in The GREEN Program to Peru was a once-in-a-life opportunity! And without the support of the IET Travel Award this would have never become possible.

Overall, The GREEN Program is a study abroad programme aimed at university students studying degrees related to sustainability. Its premise: to curate tailored programmes which collaborate with local universities, whilst broadening students' knowledge of the UN SDGs. In addition, each programme is designed with a plethora of activities for the students to experience the local country. My programme to Cusco, Peru specifically focussed on water resource management and sustainable practices, an issue of particular pertinence to the community living in this city.

After first travelling to Lima, my arrival in Cusco was quickly followed with introductions at our local partner university: the Universidad of San Ignacio de Loyola. Here we were introduced to Peruvian history, the aim for our capstone projects, and our lecturer for the week. Simultaneously, ice breakers were also conducted for me to get to know my fellow students from the likes of Virginia Tech, San Diego State and the University of Central Florida. The evening culminated with a meal at a local restaurant where I tried a local dish of curried chicken. Each following day held a similar pattern with 3 hours of lectures each morning on wide-ranging topics including the varying regions of climate in Peru and how pressing issues of climate change are affecting local communities. This was supplemented with educational activities including visiting a water treatment plant, compost production site, hydroelectric power facility, and to the site of ruins in which we used surveying equipment to determine the optimal inclination of a natural canal.

Aside from the academic element of this trip, our incredible tour guide Fernando took us to a diverse range of locations in the region in which we experienced an in-depth insight into Peruvian culture. Such activities included a tour of the local market where we learnt about native fruits and vegetables, a quad biking trip, a visit to a handmade textiles factory, white water rafting and a ceviche cooking class.

Despite the incredible moments experienced so far, mid-week, the best two days of the trip arrived. Our excursion to Machu Picchu! Visiting one of the Wonders of the World cannot tangibly be put into words. It was simply breath taking. The commencement of the day started with the group embarking on an old train run by Inca Rail halfway to the base of Machu Picchu.

Here we disembarked and walked alongside the train track to the base village of the site. After walking up for a few more minutes, we had all made it to the site of pure wonder. The picturesque view was standing before us. Going around the site we learnt of the intricate detail in every construction, changes that had taken place over the years, and the reasoning behind each design.

Lastly, before leaving each team had a chance to present their capstone projects. The brief encompassed proposing a climate solution which would improve water resource management and water cleanliness within the Cusco region. We were additionally tasked with integrating all of the knowledge gained during the week into its presentation. My group worked on the integration of native plants into road dividers throughout the city, as a means of reducing storm water run-off.

Conclusively, this trip held tremendous value in the subsequent acceleration of my career. The insights gained, germane to sustainability, will help me to understand my own personal role in protecting the environment but also how I want to prevent climate change through the curation of sustainable systems which serve future generations. Furthermore, being able to understand ecological issues in the context of local demographics holds a powerful stance me being able to obtain my desired job role, post-graduation. The trip further allowed for me to determine my interest in studying abroad in the US as I was able to first-hand experience what my life may consist of during a 2-year postgraduate degree. Hence, I will be pursuing a further masters combining transportation engineering and policy. Lastly, the incredible network I have gained through this program will serve me for life. With future alumni having gained jobs at the likes of Tesla, SpaceX, and Amazon, I look forward to seeing what my cohort will achieve in the future.

