

A global internship bringing students together from across the world

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PUNE: Amira Lessigue (24) from Tunisia is agog with what she has learnt from her time at the Extentia Information Technology company. Salma Hammad (24), a software engineer from Ainshams University, Egypt, is just beginning her internship and is eager to learn from Lessigue.

Together, the two are prime examples of the success of a global internship programme in operation in Pune.

“Connect” is what the programme is called and it has been operational, albeit under the media radar, since 2003.

So far, 150 students from 40 countries, including Singapore,

US, Germany, by France, Mauritius, Kenya, Uganda, Holland, Slovakia, Hungary, Japan, Nairobi, Russia, Serbia, Tunisia, Morocco, Slovakia, Lithuania, Egypt and Indonesia have become “Connect ambassadors”, spreading the word on the Pune opportunity.

Extentia, a global technology and services firm that offers enterprise mobility solutions, cloud computing solutions, and user experience services, is the heart of the Connect operation—a paid internship.

We received 256 applications this year and students go through an interview after submitting their application,” said Bhupesh Choudhary, HR manager, who screens international applicants.



■ **Emira (second from right) and Salma (extreme right), talk about their internship experience at Extentia.** SHANKAR NARAYAN/HT PHOTO

Extentia runs a separate intern programme for India, with Connect focused solely on international students.

Lessigue hails from a city called Montsir in Tunisia and is a

fourth year student of Industrial computing and automation. “I wanted to apply for this internship as it also offers me a work experience, besides learning the technicals. I was also interested

in the culture and lifestyle of India. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here,” says Lessigue.

There are many roles for interns across six different departments at Extentia, from business development and marketing to corporate communications and software development.

“I actually managed to even dance on a Bollywood number, enjoy eating and tasting variety of Indian cuisine. I was placed in the technology group where new technologies were tested and got to be part of the presentations and pitches which were interesting,” she added.

At Extentia, every employee is divided into houses like Unicorn, Parikrama, Constant Variable, Spartans, Infinites and Royal Bri-

gade. The minimum internship period is three months and can go up to six months. During the internship, every intern is allocated a mentor.

Umeed Kothavala, CEO, Extentia, is a big believer in cross border cultural exchange. “One of the reasons to create this global internship is to know people from other countries, thus having less apprehensions while working with foreign clients. It offers exposure to the global community. These students come to India with no notion and have outdated ideas. Hence, through this internship we want to create and promote positive impression of India and have a better understanding on the table,” said Kothavala.