



**FIELD STUDIES REPORT**

**Student's name**

**Country for the project**

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Mauritius

**Year and semester for field studies**

2025 Spring

**Degree programme**

Industrial Engineering and Management

## Four Months in Mauritius: An Inspiring Master's Thesis Project and Life by the Ocean





## Before arrival

Travelling and living abroad in different countries, contexts, and cultures has always been a dream for us. After both of us returned from a year abroad during our fourth year at KTH, we knew we wanted to keep exploring and learning about the world. Studying at KTH means incredible opportunities to go abroad, especially when it comes to field studies. After seeing two of our fellow INDEK friends from the grade above go abroad to Mauritius last year to write their master's thesis, we started researching if we could do the same. Both of us love adventures, nature, ocean, and mountains and wanted to go to a warmer place to escape the Swedish winter, and hence, Mauritius seemed like the perfect place to conduct our field study. We went through the same contact as our peers from last year did, Alumnus Australis, which helped us with the VISA process, accommodation, and matching us with a company.

Regarding preparations, we had to apply for a working VISA in Mauritius that lasts for six months. This process was very demanding and required us to receive medical papers, bank papers, papers from KTH, and papers from our company in Mauritius with original signatures and stamps. All of these papers, in its original form, later had to be mailed to Mauritius. In total, this process, to fix all of the papers, took about 3 months and when we posted them to Mauritius the time to process the VISA was about 4–6 weeks. Since this process was very long, we would recommend going to Mauritius only if you can stay for a bit longer. Our contact in Mauritius said it was required to work at least for three months in Mauritius to receive a working VISA, and we decided to stay for four months. The very demanding VISA application was one of the only negative parts of our experience, and many people we met in Mauritius that went through the same VISA issues agreed.

In Mauritius, English is widely used as a language and overall the level of English is very good. However, many local people can only speak French or Créole. We did not take any language course before arriving; however, both of us have taken French throughout our school years. We also decided to get vaccinated before going, where we already had some of the recommended vaccines and had to take some new shots. The ones we decided to take were Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid, Dengue, and Cholera.

We booked the flight tickets just a few days before leaving since we did not know when our VISAs were done. So, in the end of January, we packed our suitcases and left Sweden for Mauritius and one of the greatest adventures of our lives!

## Upon arrival

After having some issues with receiving our VISA due to slow and manual processing in Mauritius, we arrived about a week before our internship started. Our landlord picked us up at the airport and took us to our accommodation, where several other European students also lived who were doing internships in Mauritius. On the first day, our landlord also helped us by providing a SIM card for our stay, and he took us to the grocery store to buy some necessities and food. We had a week to explore the country and get used to the climate and area before our internship at our master's thesis company started.





There was a minimum of three months to do an internship/write your thesis in Mauritius, which was the time we spent at our company. There were other students working at the same company who took us there on the first day. We worked between 9–5 on all weekdays and had all weekends off. There were also multiple public holidays due to Mauritius' multicultural society. Commuting to the company was about a 45-minute drive each way.

## **Financials**

The currency used in Mauritius is Mauritian Rupees (MUR), and when we were there 100 rupees was about 25 SEK. Generally, living expenses in Mauritius were cheaper than in Sweden, but it could easily get more expensive when paying for activities and food from the grocery store. We paid about 300€/month each for a room in a shared apartment, and almost everyone also rented a car to get around since public transport was not that reliable, which was an additional 350€/month excluding gas.

In addition to this, groceries that had to be imported were similar in price or even more expensive than in Sweden. We ate a lot of food at restaurants since it was similar in price or cheaper than buying groceries, and we tried to buy as many local groceries as we could when cooking. Western restaurant food, coffee, brunch spots, etc., was a bit cheaper than at home. Local food, for example, roti or fried rice or noodles from food trucks at the beach, was very cheap (about 20–30 SEK for a large portion). In addition, the flight ticket was expensive. To finance our field study, we applied for and received the KTH FS grant, CSN grant and loan and had saved up some money before the trip.

Another major expense we had was different activities, for example, snorkelling trips, kitesurfing lessons, zip-lining, catamaran tours, and surfboard rentals.

## **Accommodation**

Our contact in Mauritius helped us find accommodation, which was located in Flic-en-Flac on the west coast of Mauritius. We lived in a multi-floor house with different apartments, and paid approx. 3000 SEK/month incl. AC). One apartment was shared by three people with individual bedrooms, and one bathroom, kitchen, and living room. All the other students doing internships in Mauritius from Europe were living here too, which was a lot of fun! We shared an apartment with a few different people during our stay, and everyone was really nice. The apartments were what you can expect, not very high standard but still okay. The bedrooms had AC (which was paid for per usage – often around 100SEK/month), but not the common areas, which resulted in it being hot and humid with a lot of insects present, for example, spiders, cockroaches, and ants. The house had two common pools that were used by people every now and then, but since it was only a 5-minute walk to the beach with the most amazing sunset, we always went swimming in the ocean! The apartments were located about a 20-minute walk from the centre of Flic-en-Flac, where restaurants, bars, and shops were located. Sometimes we walked there if there were plenty of people going, but since roads lacked lights, we usually took the car. Overall, the accommodation was okay, but you quickly adjust to this style of living as well.





## Project

We conducted our research project at a carton manufacturer focusing on SDGs such as decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) and industry, innovation, and infrastructure (SDG 9). When going to Mauritius, the plan was to write our thesis about waste reduction at their production site. However, after some discussions with our supervisor in Sweden and some early observations on the production floor, we decided to focus on what challenges there are to reach perfect production, also known as Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), in manufacturing companies located in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Mauritius. The purpose of the project was to investigate if these companies in SIDS face different challenges than other manufacturing companies located in countries on the mainland to add to the academic literature about SIDS, since it is very limited. We got some support from our supervisor and other people at the company who guided us through the project, but a lot of the work was done independently, planning and conducting interviews, observations, and questionnaires.

We worked from the office every day between 9–5. A normal day often started with an early sunrise alarm followed by a beach run, sunrise surf, or a swim, and a nice breakfast on our balcony. Around 8 o'clock, we took the car to the office and were always stuck in the traffic jam for 45 min–1 hour. At work, we did different things depending on which phase of the project we were in. We did desktop research, had meetings to understand the production, walked around on the floor, conducted interviews, transcribed, synthesised, etc. We usually brought some leftovers from the evening before or took the car and bought some cheap noodles for lunch. After lunch, we continued with the work and around 5 we left the office and at 6 we drove home for sunset and a late evening swim. Thereafter dinner and usually some activity like games night, going to a bar or the local club, workout, or just a chill evening.





## Country

Mauritius is supposedly the happiest country in Africa, and one of the safest. It is a small country, smaller than Gotland when it comes to size, and has approximately 1.4 million inhabitants. Although small, it has many cultures and religions that live close to each other. Like many other island countries, the so-called “island life culture,” meaning a slower pace of living, permeates the country in both work and everyday life. As a European, the slow pace can come as a shock but is a nice switch of pace from the stressful life back home in Sweden.

Mauritius has been independent since 1968, and was before that colonized by first the Dutch, then the French, and most recently by the British. Therefore, even though Mauritius is a developing country, they are pretty developed. For example, there is free education, and the roads have a lot of speed cameras.

The people in Mauritius are very friendly and even though we hung out with Europeans, we also made a lot of Mauritian friends. They are very welcoming and open!

The seasons in Mauritius are opposite from the seasons in Sweden. When we arrived in January, it was in the middle of the summer and around 30 degrees, while when we left in May, days were shorter and it was a bit chillier during mornings and evenings. From January to March is also cyclone season, which is important to be aware of. We experienced one class 3 cyclone, when there were strong winds, heavy rain, everything was closed, and people were advised not to leave their homes. You should also expect some rain every day, especially in the mountains.

Mauritius is a beautiful country when it comes to nature. It is a volcanic island with steep mountains ideal for hiking. It is also surrounded by a lagoon with coral reefs on the inside, making it a perfect spot for any water activities like snorkelling, surfing, kitesurfing, scuba diving, boat tours, etc. Even though Mauritius is known for being a “tourist paradise,” it is a beautiful place with many hidden activities and beaches.



Mauritius is generally safe and clean. However, you should never walk alone, especially not during the dark hours, and there is a lot of catcalling. We never felt really unsafe, however, you should always be aware. There are plenty of cleaning efforts, especially at the beaches, however there is a lot of trash on



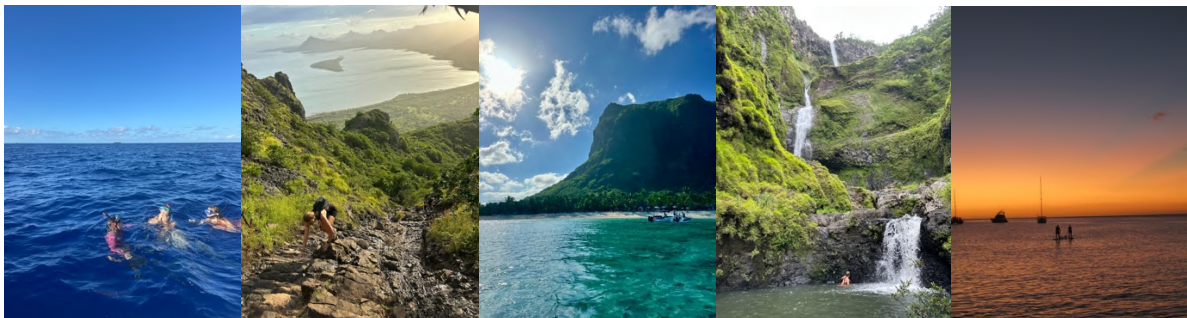
the streets that one might not be used to in Sweden. Stray animals are common, and most of them were very friendly, even though it is important to never approach them. Driving habits are also different from Sweden; they are more aggressive and there are plenty of takeovers and hand signs when showing what you want in the traffic, less following the rules, more going with the flow.

Since there are so many different cultures in Mauritius, there are also plenty of different food cultures. We liked the local food such as noodles, rice, and dumplings, but we also had different European, Thai, and Indian food. But don't be scared to try all kinds of food, the small food trucks by the beach served amazing noodles!

### **Leisure and social activities**

From day one in Mauritius, we became friends with the people we were living with, and it was very easy to come up with activities to do in the evenings/mornings or on the weekends and during public holidays. A daily activity we did was to watch the sunset together and go for a swim or some snorkelling. During the weekends, we explored the island: driving and swimming at different beaches, hiking in the mountains, trying different food spots, going on boat tours, visiting markets and cities, and we did a lot of surfing! Some days we just spent a whole day at the beach playing some beach soccer and volleyball, doing backflips, and snorkelling with turtles. There were also some bars and clubs around the island that we explored during the weekends.

When it comes to sports, we lived next to an outdoor gym and spent hours doing long runs at the beach and around the neighbourhood. If you ever go to Mauritius, you have to explore the nature, both the mountains and the marine life!



### **Sustainability**

It is hard to travel in a sustainable way to and in Mauritius. You have to take multiple flights to get there, and once there, it is almost impossible to live without a fuel car since public transport is very unreliable. We tried to mitigate the car rides by doing car sharing to work whenever possible. There is almost no recycling present, and since you cannot drink the tap water, it's impossible not to throw away dozens of plastic bottles each week.

One thing we did, however, was to eat a lot of vegetarian food and try to buy locally farmed fruits and vegetables from small local entrepreneurs. Eating vegetarian was easy, and most places had several vegetarian options, and in the grocery stores there was also a huge supply. There weren't that many second-hand stores in Mauritius, but the ones that existed we visited multiple times to support the circular economy.

Our project was connected to the SDGs such as good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). In our project, we promoted sustainable production when it comes to social, economic, and environmental sustainability, for example, by looking into the need for a good working climate for factory workers (SDG 3 and 8).



### Other recommendations and observations

Our last recommendation is that if you are curious about going on a KTH Field Study, we just want to say: **JUST DO IT!** We had an amazing time in Mauritius, met incredible people, were able to conduct a very interesting research project, embraced the island life culture, and grew both personally and professionally. No matter where you go, it will become a memory for your whole life! Even though there was a little bit of hassle to receive the VISA, we loved every second of our Mauritius adventure. <3

If you have any questions about KTH Field Study, Mauritius, KTH, or any other international exchange, feel free to reach out to us through email or LinkedIn!

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