
Nika Pende: Expert in microbiology, cell division and cell growth in non-model prokaryotes

„After my PhD, I received the Pasteur-Roux-Cantarini fellowship from the Institut Pasteur in Paris and joined the group of Prof. Simonetta Gribaldo, whose project focused on cell growth and division in human-associated archaea. The Institut Pasteur is involved in medical sciences, researching infectious diseases and cancer, but is also focusing fundamental research.“



Foto: private

Nika Pende
Institut Pasteur
Non-profit private foundation
Sector: Life Science
Position: Postdoc

A few hundred PhD graduates are employed at the Institut Pasteur. They work in different disciplines ranging from microbiology, infectious disease, cancer, but also basic research and bioinformatics. Originally, my research background was in marine biology, but during my Master and PhD I focused on the cell division of marine nematode-attached symbiotic bacteria. I was mainly involved in laboratory work, this includes microbiological and molecular work, as well as microscopy. My previous research experience made me a perfect fit for the project here at Institut Pasteur where I work on the cell division and cell growth in non-model archaea associated to the human gut.

Originally, I have been interested in another lab in Singapore, but after several great interviews and discussions with Prof. Gribaldo, who actively wanted to recruit me, I joined the Institut Pasteur. The Institut Pasteur combines private-sector and scientific structures: as an internationally renowned research and development institute, it contributes significantly to gaining knowledge in all life science sectors including basic research. Working in such an institute has

the advantage of having access to a big array of research platforms with high-end technologies and interdisciplinary collaborations are facilitated by regular knowledge exchange in form of seminars. Here, Project-based mentoring of students and technicians is just as important as obtaining research funding, this experience comes in handy when applying for other jobs in academia or research grants.

The advantages on the entrepreneurial level are reflected in high work motivation, including the acquisition of subsidies, and a versatile framework program. In addition, the working hours, vacation entitlements, additional insurances can be positively highlighted.

When I started my job at the Pasteur Institute, I first had to develop certain skills. My employer offered opportunities for training in these disciplines, such as bioinformatics. In addition to the collegial support within the department we were also able to access course programs and training programs for employees in various disciplines. Taken together, this enabled me to learn new techniques and I become much more autonomous.