

# Brazil, More Than Just The Amazon

Eric Jong Bum Kim

Department of Economics, College of LAS, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

## Background

During the Spring Break of 2018, I joined the LAS Faculty-led study aboard trip to Brazil with Professor Joe Petry and Melissa Newell. I joined 20 other students on the trip. Wanting to do more than just “relax” during Spring Break, I signed up. I hoped to incorporate the experience in Brazil with my previous knowledge and skills.

### Here are the trip logistics:

Dates: 03/16/2018 ~ 03/25/2018  
Places: São Paulo & Rio De Janeiro  
Group: 23 including professor Joe Petry and Melissa Newell  
Companies visited: Nubank, Amcham, Natura Cosmetic, B3 - São Paulo Stock Exchange, and Cubo Itaú

Prior to the trip, I didn't expect a life-changing experience. However, during the trip, I learned more about myself, my future academic plans, career path, and how unprepared I was for the “real world”.

## Growth

### Personal Growth

personally, I met tremendously great students with similar academic interests as me. I learned the importance of being culturally diverse. I realized I must keep my mind open to all cultures and opinions.

My passport issue exposed my weak side: how easily, I broke down in a critical situation. Rather than thinking about solutions, I backtracked. Without the help of all the staff, I would have never found my way back to the United States.

### Professional Growth

I decided to work in the field of the international affair. I loved meeting new people with different thoughts and opinions using different languages in a totally different environment.

While meeting various groups of professionals, I lacked in professional and business conversational skills. I had no idea how to approach others professionally. I decided to focus on the business-professional communication skill as much as my traditional class learning.

### Non-traditional Learnings

During the trip, I stepped out my comfort zone. As much as I wanted to meet new people, I had no confidence to do so on the campus. I approached other students, talked with the locals (without knowledge in Portuguese). The trip boosted my confidence.

I faced many eye-opening moments during the trip. The atmospheres of the companies, how people dined, how locals rode the subways, how locals interacted on the street and on the road, and more. Everything in Brazil was new to me. “No man's knowledge can go beyond his experience,” said John Locke. I agree. Experience in Brazil expanded my knowledge in a direction no classroom teaching would have.

## Highlight of The Trip



During my visit to Natura Cosmetic, I learned the mutual relationship between the Natura Cosmetic, a multi-million dollar company in Brazil, and the Amazon, the biggest rainforest on the Earth.

- Natura's efforts to maintain the sustainability of the Amazon amazed me
- A true organic cosmetic company (minimum of 95% raw materials used met Brazil's standard of percepts of organic agriculture)
- Natura mainly uses raw materials produced in local communities of the Amazon
- Natura awards the local communities for their traditional knowledge in harvesting
- Natura supports local communities to build factories to earn a greater profit in the future
- Natura promotes the organic and local raw materials as the main strength of the company
- Natura's website demonstrates an eco-friendly side of the firm



Some of the locally produced raw materials used by Natura  
Acai, Cacao, and Catechu(from left to right,)



Natura's mission statement

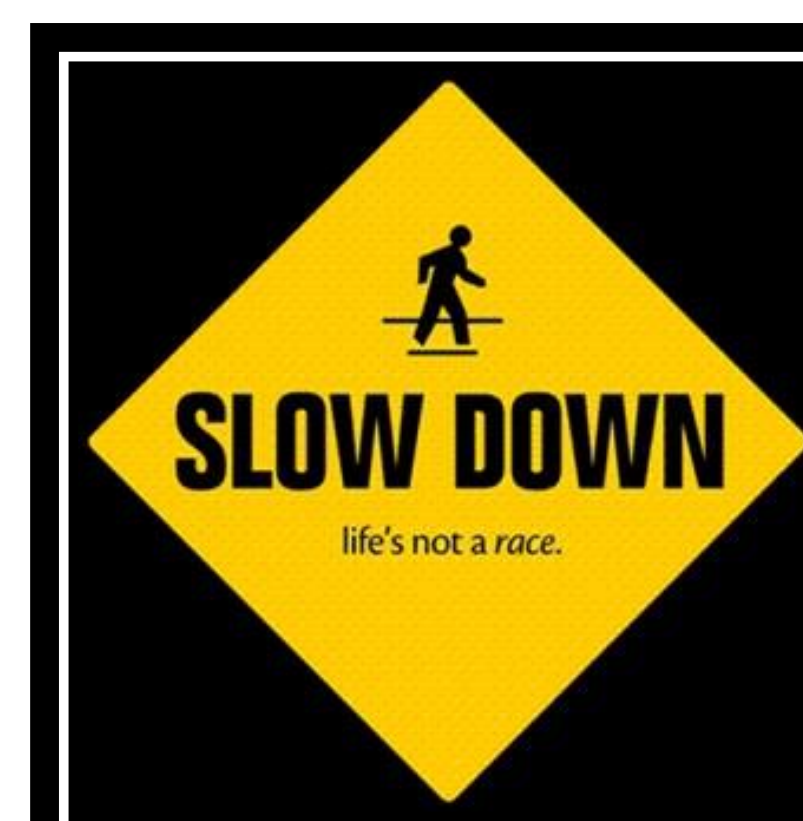
## What did I learn?

During the trip, I realized how boxed I am by the college environments. My tunnel vision blocked me from seeing my surrounding. I had to widen my vision and minds to see more than just my local school surroundings or friends. Other students amazed me with their past experiences and their passions toward their goals.

“That's enough,” I said whenever I faced great challenges. However, I realize I can't be content with my current situation. I will broaden my knowledge in different fields of study. I want to learn more about the world. Like a child, I want to poke at various topics in college. I will explore more academic topics and opportunities.

From my passport issue, I realized I must mature personally and professionally. Without everyone who helped me come back to the United States, I would have given up. I would have let the fear and worry overconsume me. However, I learned I have to be stronger in critical situations. Instead of listing out what went wrong, I must search for what I can do.

I learned I don't have to worry and fear about my future all the time. I always kept myself busy, and I believed doing so, made me content. I thought I must be busy to be prepare for the future. However, I missed great opportunities, entertainments, and pleasures in my life. During the trip, I explored about my future and enjoyed the beautiful sites and met great people.



New emergency passport I had to obtain during the trip



One of the most eye-opening visit during the trip: Natura

## Dear my employers

- I will be open to everything. Everything includes different perspectives, opinions, cultures, foods, and lifestyles. I learned to accept others rather than be ignorant.
- I was always taught to be culturally diverse, but I never knew how. In Brazil, everything was new for me. From going to a supermarket to ordering at Brazilian McDonald. I can't be taught to be culturally diverse. I just had to go and face it. Instead of thinking of how, I will do my tasks.
- I will carry my open-to-all mindset to my job environment. I will take constructive criticisms and think about the motives behind other ideas. I will be able to tie all ideas together with my previous knowledge and experiences.
- Through my passport issue, I learned the need for step-by-step problem-solving skills. Too often, I skip steps due to my impenitent, but I doing so only complicated the task. I will operate in step-by-step procedures.
- I will be a leader who can see further than just what is written on the paper and to think about what experience has led to the conclusion of the person.

## Related Readings

- <https://www.naturabrasil.com/brazilian-biodiversity>
- <https://www.naturabrasil.com/From-The-Forest-To-Your-Skin>
- <https://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21603409-how-brazil-became-world-leader-reducing-environmental-degradation-cutting>
- <https://www.economist.com/node/3996152>

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