



Dear ISOS Alumni,

In the spring edition of the ISOS Alumni Newsletter we have put together data on the different career choices within our community. Learn about news in our network and meet two very different and yet both very successful peers:

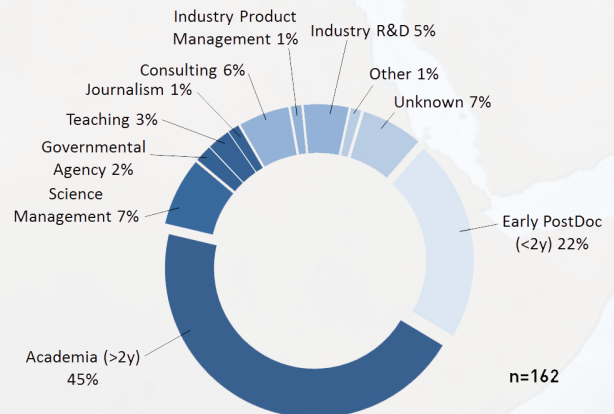
Joana Barcelos e Ramos and Robert Tillner.

With very warm greetings
Nina, Wiebke, Enno and Avan

Alumni Stats and Facts

To date we are 188 ISOS alumni and 162 of us have completed the PhD (another 150 ISOS members are currently working on their PhD projects). From those who left without finishing, we know that half directly followed career tracks outside of academia and a third started a second PhD thesis.

From those that finished their PhD longer than two years ago, a little over a half are still on the classical track of a scientist in academia. The other half has ventured into diverse paths outside academia – from Science Management to Research and Development in Industry. We do not see that there is a special field outside of academia that attracts most of us.



ONE PLANET – ONE OCEAN

From Science to Solutions: We are all excited about this open online course from the Kiel marine science community and the International Ocean Institute, Malta - it starts TODAY (25th April)! Don't forget to register and get involved - choose the extent of your involvement and learn at your own pace. Feel free to pass the information on through your networks - anybody is welcome to join!



„Our oceans are a barometer of planetary health. Pollution, acidification, and overfishing are constantly threatening our oceans and seas. Without sustainable ocean management we risk our planet, the future of our people and their prosperity. We need action and solutions now.“

Mr. Nikhil Seth
UN Assistant Secretary-General
Executive Director UNITAR



Enroll now: www.oceanmooc.org

Joana Barcelos e Ramos - A stubborn one, without a doubt



Joana grew up on the Azores, in the middle of the vast ocean. This special environment shaped her and she was positive from early on that she would become a scientist performing research on the endless water surrounding her. At the same time, she knew that she would be happiest living on her home island Terceira with her family and friends,

and that did not make things easier for her. Being aware that the probability to reach such a defined aim is low, she considers herself being "one of the stubborn ones: I have to fight for what I want, there is no other option." Joana succeeded: After finishing her PhD in Biological Oceanography in 2010 she applied for several grants. A few rejections later she now works on global change and phytoplankton at the CCMMG - Centro de Estudos do Clima, Meteorologia e Mudanças Globais - of the University of the Azores. She knows that she is entering the hard part: "After the second or third postdoc project, funding agencies start closing their doors." Additionally, chances to find a permanent employment in Portugal after the financial crisis are low. But she is prepared: Her strategy is to "count on her own work" and apply for third party research funding instead of looking for a permanent position.

During her stay in Kiel she appreciated the exposure to the diversity of disciplines and people that make the marine sciences community in Kiel so special. "This was nurturing for me as a growing scientist", she says. "Through these exchanges, I grew into a more experienced investigator, but also as a person."

Did you know that?

You can use our communication channels for recruitment:

Some of you have identified interesting candidates for open positions by using our network.

Early career support for careers in and outside academia is important in national decision making:

We bring the ISOS Alumni experiences into working groups like "The employer's perspective: Doctoral holders outside academia and conditions of employment" of the German University Association of Advanced Graduate Training - your contributions help shaping good support practice!

The "Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz" has changed, considerably improving the contract situation for early career scientists.

Taking this experience to the research community on the Azores was important for her. Being asked from where she draws motivation dealing with the uncertainty that comes with a career in academia - especially on the Azores - she is very brief and clear: "It's the Ocean! There is no doubt."

Robert Tillner - A winding road to success



After acquiring a PhD in Marine Ecology in 2013, Robert Tillner gave PostDoc life a try. He soon realized that he strived to work in a more applied field and also yearned for more stable career opportunities. "...but: Not wanting one thing does not mean you already know what exactly is the thing you want..."

he says. Searching for his dream job, he tried out a lot - a winding road of decisions he remembers with mixed feelings: he felt free and inspired by all the possibilities, at the same time uncertainty and dealing with rejections caused stress and doubt. Then he ran into lab planning and after one year of work experience he thinks that this could be it.

Robert works for a company that designs and plans lab facilities for research institutions, but also for private companies. He enjoys diving deep into the specifics: In order to come up with ideal solutions for his clients he analyzes working processes in detail. "What exactly are people doing in a stem cell research facility? What do they need for efficient and safe work flows?" At the same time he likes to be exposed to a broad range of scientific work, with a diverse set of clients ranging from Criminal Investigation Offices to highly specialized science working groups.

Although many aspects in his daily work differ considerably from the work in academia - "I had to get accustomed to getting the balance right between sound results and economic decisions in time restricted projects" - he thinks that a PhD in natural sciences prepares ideally for jobs in and outside academia: Tolerance to frustration, fast decision making with a lot at stake, multitasking and flexibility are essential for both environments. Also, his ability to adjust to different environments and personalities helps to create a good rapport with colleagues and clients of different backgrounds.

"I am not sure if this it forever - maybe I am a person made for winding roads", but he draws a positive interim result: "I really enjoy what I am doing. The team is great, I have a permanent position, the money is good - an aspect I underestimated during my years in academia - plus I get to stay close to my family and friends."

