



cooperation on language education. In 2023, both sides further formulated the Education Initiative Three-year Strategic Plan (2023 to 2025) to expand the cooperation to the state level. Under the U.S.-Taiwan Education Initiative framework, Taiwan encourages more American students to come to Taiwan to study Mandarin language, and jointly promotes several government-supported programs with the U.S., such as NSLI-Y, CLS and Gilman scholarship. On the other hand, the U.S. supports Taiwan's Bilingual 2030 and encourages more Americans to come to Taiwan to study Mandarin and teach English, particularly through the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) and English Teaching Flagship Scholarship Program (ETF). Taiwan has one of the largest Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) programs in the world with up to 150 awards granted each year.

## F International Education Cooperation

The MOE actively participates in international organizations and holds bilateral higher education forums to expand international education cooperation opportunities. Each year the MOE integrates educational resources from higher education institutions in Taiwan to attend the Annual Meeting of Educators including Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE), Association of International Educators (NAFSA) and European Association for International Education (EAIE) to promote the advantages that Taiwan's higher education sector offer for students from around the world and to develop diverse collaboration initiatives. ■



Scholarships

Learn Chinese  
in TaiwanInquiry Service for  
Overseas StudentsTaiwan Experience  
Education  
Programs (TEEP)

## An easy life, accessibility, and quality – what studying in Taiwan is like for Italian student

Interviewee: **Italian student Serena Di Maria**

National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University graduate student



After graduating with a master's degree in Chinese language and culture, Serena Di Maria wanted to find somewhere that would allow her to practice speaking Mandarin and raise her cultural awareness.

Originally, she thought about going to Nanjing but later decided to go to Taiwan. Before arriving, she didn't know much, only that Taiwan was a democracy and that it had semi-tropical weather. Later, she discovered the Taiwan government offered good scholarships for studying Mandarin and pursuing a degree. More importantly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan opened its borders to foreign students before China did, making it more attractive to her. All these reasons made her come to Taiwan for her second master's degree.

Di Maria chose to enroll in the International Master Degree Program in Inter-Asia Cultural Studies at National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU) because it offered classes taught both in English and Chinese in the fields that she was interested in. Furthermore, she

could still choose to take electives at other universities, like National Central University and National Tsing Hua University.

Di Maria's main interest is literature. Thanks to the program, she has had more exposure to Taiwanese writers like Chiu Miao-chin and Li Ang. Additionally, she has been taking courses in virtual culture, like "Literature and Film: An Intermedial Approach."

Before arriving in Taiwan, Di Maria had studied Mandarin for about six years. However, back then, she learned simplified characters. She spent the first eight months taking language classes which gave her more exposure to Taiwanese Mandarin. She said it was difficult to make the switch, but has become more fluent. Di Maria is happy that, despite not taking any language courses, she can still practice her Chinese on a daily basis.

Di Maria added that Taiwan has a high-quality academic environment and is affordable in terms of cost of living. Its universities offer great resources for learning and for study spaces. International students at NYCU get to go on trips, helping students connect with Taiwan on a deeper level.

Di Maria said that after graduation she will apply for a PhD. She hopes to specialize in Taiwanese literature, and Taiwan is the best place to do so. Also, she found Taiwan to be a convenient place to live in. She has fallen in love with Taipei's YouBikes.

After her PhD, Serena is unsure whether she will remain in Taiwan, as she would also love to share what she has learned in Taiwan with people in her home country. ■