

# EUMIND INDO-GERMAN EXCHANGE PROGRAMME Bad Sackingen, June 06-16, 2016 *The German Chapter*



# WELCOME TO DEUTSCHLAND

Day 01



## ⇒ Day 01: Welcome to Deutschland

The arrival at the Zurich Airport shot us back into déjà vu when in February 2016, we were at the Mumbai International Airport to receive the German delegation and our exchange partners. It melted all the tiredness out of us to see the smiling faces of our hosts along with their parents who had driven for over an hour that early in the morning.

We were driven to and greeted at Rudolf Eberle Schule by the Principal, teachers and the German exchange students. We received a hearty breakfast at school, and were then taken to the beautiful Schönaue Castle, famous for its trumpet museum, built in the 1600, where we met the honorable Mayor of Bad Sackingen and were served the German speciality- pretzels and beverages. The Mayor mentioned the recent flooding in Germany and appreciated our courage to come and live in a whole new part of the world. He sounded very supportive of this exchange program and appreciated the way in which it results in a cultural melting pot. It was lovely to see the open cupboard library outside the castle where people generously donated books.

We were then taken for a tour around the city of Bad Sackingen by an old, adorable couple. During this short tour, we were told about the history of the town, mainly the Trumpeter of Bad Sackingen, and were acquainted with the mystery of the Cat and the Saint. Bad Sackingen is known as 'The Trumpeteer's City'. We also saw the Rudolf-Eberle-Platz, the Gallustrum tower, Cathedral Square, the Rhine Promenade and the old wooden bridge over the river Rhine, connecting Switzerland and Germany.

It was a great way to kick start the fun-filled 10-day long trip that lay ahead.

*-Manasi Kanade*



# OF POSTS AND PRINCES

Day 02



## ⇒ Day 02: Of Posts and Princes

On June 7, 2016, we went to the German postal service center where we were oriented about the distribution system by Richard Ketterrer, the Head of Transport and Distribution. He first acquainted us with the number of letters and parcels they receive and how many men and machines are required for each center, to organize these letters and parcels. The center at Villingen-Schwenningen received 1.5 million letters in a single day and there are 82 such postal collection and distribution centers in Germany in all. After an orientation about facts and statistics, our guided tour entered the actual floor where the trucks are loaded and unloaded to receive and ready the letters for distribution. Each letter received is sorted and segregated based on its size and postal address. This segregation is done solely by machines- from stamping to reading addresses to sorting. Despite the dive into the digital age, these centers have only seen a reduction of 2% in the number of letters received. For, Germans still rely on the postal service and the good old letter for season's greetings, personal letters and official documents.

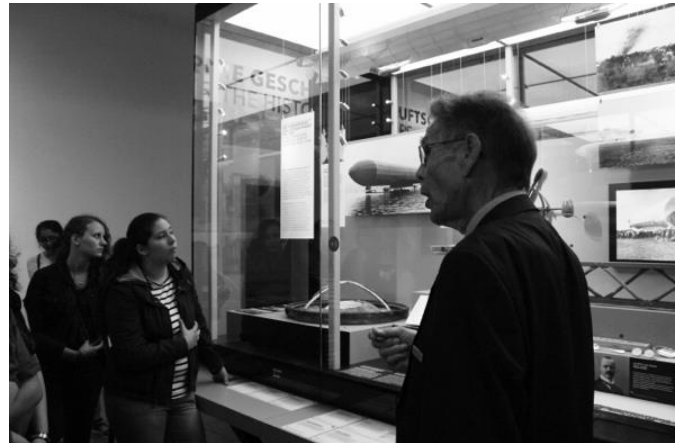
After this, we went to the Hohenzollen castle. This castle was endowed with historical anecdotes rendering each of its room with great significance. Dressed in red princess capes, we entered the parlour room, which had its walls painted with the royal family tree. Next was the library, which was lined with pictures and portraits that narrated different chapters from history. This also contained the pictures of architects who helped rebuilt this magnificent castle three times over. The main hall is still used for concerts and private gatherings. We also visited the treasury and saw the grand display of men's armour and women's apparel. Juxtaposed with this ancient and historical site, was a restaurant, souvenir shop and an open air café, which becomes a beer garden café once every year.

This journey ended at Friedrichshafen at an international youth hostel that became our own special house for the night and gave us unfading memories of fun, games and conversations.

*-Nimisha Mazumdar*

# THE FLIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE

Day 03



### ⇒ Day 03: The Flight of Knowledge

This day was marked for visits to a university and an aeronautical museum thus, embarking on the flight of knowledge.

We visited Zeppelin University in Friedrichshafen in the morning where we were given an hour-long presentation by the Head of Communication. It has 35 professorial chairs and 222 staff members in total. With over 80 worldwide institutional co-operation partners and 500 accredited Talent-Centre partners, this university has won many awards including the “Land of Ideas”. It is one-of-its-kind private university in Germany since most of the education in this country is state-funded. We were informed that there are 1212 students in this university and that the tuition fees are between 15.2 and 36.7 thousand euros. This led to a comparison and discussion regarding the differences of the educational system in India and Germany and to observe the socio-economic conditions that enable and support one system in each context. After the presentation we were given a tour of the university and soaked in a slice of University life while we partook of lunch trays in the cafeteria.

We then visited the Zeppelin Museum at Friedrichshafen, which is a museum located on Lake Constance. This is the very spot where the first Zeppelin airship was created. Being the only German museum that combines technology and art, it holds the world’s largest aviation collection. We went to this museum in the afternoon, where the tour guide, Mr. Chris Conner introduced us to the history of Zeppelin airships and showed us the actual-sized, partial model of the airship LZ 129 Hindenburg, which is the centerpiece of the Museum. We were informed that Hindenburg, which was 245m long, flew very quietly over the air and made 18 trips to North and South America. Unfortunately, on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1937, while landing in Lakehurst, New Jersey, the Hindenburg burst into flames and crashed. We also visited the Media Room, which houses 3D historic photographs of Zeppelin airships. The Zeppelin Cabinet of Curiosities, which presents tiny pieces of Zeppelin history, including coins and toys. In the art collection, we saw paintings by Nazi artists such as Otto Dix, Max Ackermann and Erich Heckel. This visit was extremely educational and informative.

*-Khushi Khatri*



# BACK TO SCHOOL

Day 04





## ⇒ Day 04: Back to School

This was the day to literally step into the shoes and skin of our German partners and experience their school life. The only word with which I can describe or summarize the whole day in school is – intense. The day began with a 90 minute long class of Mathematics- a subject I most dread. It was interesting, however, to see that the language of numbers enabled me to transcend the German language (the mode of instruction in school) and I was able to solve the mathematical problems quite efficiently. I observed the difference in the academic level of the Mathematics course and syllabus in the two countries. I was able to appreciate the challenging rigor and difficulty levels of mathematical problems in my school and classes. It dawned upon me that my German friends are accessing a vocational model of education that is drastically different from the **IBDP** curriculum we study as a preparatory stage for undergraduate courses in universities abroad.

After a Physics class, we Indian students assembled along with our German counterparts for a unique Global Studies class. It is a new and contemporary subject taught at Rudolf-Eberle-Schule. This lecture was indeed very interesting. Besides the Indians and the Germans, there were students from seven other nationalities ranging from Turkey to Sri Lanka. The subject that comes closest to this model in the **IBDP** course is Theory of Knowledge. Seated in a circle, we began to share and express our views about Indian and German cultures and the nuances of each. What this mode of inquiry did was made us think and reflect upon the social, political, religious and economic reasons for the differences between the two countries. From the role of religion to secularism, from individuality to family traditions, from environment and purpose of education to food...it led to an enriching discussion that made me realize the value of being part of the cultural exchange programme like the **IGEP**.

The day ended with a German crash course, which was fun, interactive and engaging since the teacher drew out our existing knowledge of German words and phrases that we had picked up during our stay here. I did find it difficult to access the foreign language and especially its pronunciation but it served as a short glimpse into a new world of sounds and letters.

*-Shubhangi Singh*

# FRAMES FROM FREIBERG

Day 05



### ⇒ Day 05: Frames from Freiberg

On the fifth day of our arrival in Germany, we took a trip to the town of Freiberg. Pumped and excited, we got on the bus after meeting at Bad Sackingen train station. We were unable to sit still on our seats in the bus for we were so curious to see what this city had in store for us! We stepped into the very center of this historic city- right outside the town hall where newly married couples were celebrating their moment after their civil marriage. Walking on cobblestone streets punctuated with open water tunnels and the leisurely pacing trams, we soaked in the kaleidoscope of colors... fruits, vegetables, meat, jewellery, flowers and clothes. We began our guided city tour by watching a dramatic and powerful monologue by the witch of Freiburg, Catharina Stadellmenin. This historic story was brought to life by an extremely talented actress who played her role with subtle emotions and shifting mannerisms. She took us around the area for about an hour and a half and narrated the story in her own beautiful way. In 1599, the desperate Catharina Stadellmenin who was the widow of a highly regarded master of the locksmith's guild and councillor goes on her final journey to bid farewell to the familiar places and alleys of her beloved town. She enraptured everyone with tales of her gruesome fate and tortures she bore after being widowed and a victim of the 16<sup>th</sup> century witch trials. She captured the audience with her fantastic oratory skills and authentic costume. She took us to a beautiful historic church while narrating her story. It displayed alluring architecture in the new Gothic style. She concluded her chronicle by showing the audience pictures of her time and invoked deep sympathy from the group of students. It was as much a tale of woe as much an account of gender discrimination and injustice.

After lunch, we visited the University of Freiburg where an Indian student Dhruv Kattar studying at the university introduced us to the university and his experience there. This was followed by an in-house professor giving a presentation about the university and the advantages of studying in Germany. She elucidated on how the university strives to uphold its quality of education and give its students the best academic experience and learning. After leaving the University of Freiburg, we all parted our ways to do our individual shopping, but not before we took one last group photo as a souvenir! It was an exhilarating experience to learn about the historical background of another city and experience a whole new culture.

*-Hithika Panjabi*



# THE WEEKENDER

Day 06-07



## ⇒ Day 06/07: The Weekender

On Sunday, we went to Europa Park, one of the most popular amusement parks in Europe and the largest in Germany and we sat on all sorts of rides, visited haunted houses and ate a lot of interesting cuisines. The park was themed in such a way that every section represented a different country from Europe, so not only did we have fun but we also experienced a mini-tour of different places in the continent. What was most striking for me was that the different areas of the park had almost authentic foods and artefacts from the respective countries and the rides in that area maintained the cultural identity and history of the country. Each aspect had a unique background to it that appreciated the country's rich past while still keeping it amusing enough to spark interest. The day was spent with lots of laughter, joy and the formation of new friendships with the German hosts.

- Vinay Chandnani

# THE EUMIND INQUIRY AND THE BONDING ALLEY

Day 08



### ⇒ Day 08: The EUMIND Inquiry and the Bonding Alley

During school hours, the Indian and German students worked together in groups in order to launch their study of the distribution channels of the German postal service and the Indian *dabbawala* delivery system. The 10 day exchange programme was an initiative to add and integrate one more Economics and Business topic through field visits as part of the EUMIND (Europe Meets India) project. This year, the aim was to analyse and evaluate the features of these two contrasting distribution channels in today's times and help the students develop an insight and acumen to understand the nuances of each. Students of mixed nationality groups not only collated their observations from the two field visits but also undertook extensive reading and reference on the subject of inquiry in order to form a concise, formal report for the EUMIND project. The topics assigned adopted an inter-disciplinary approach to the distribution scenario in the two industries and thereby generated a lot of academic interest in this field of work among the students. Some of the topics covered were: History of Distribution, Technological View and Perspective of the Postal Distribution System, *Dabbawala* system as a model for Indian economy, Label and Logo Creation and Future Models of Distribution.

After that, the Indian students had the second and last leg of their German crash course. This time the class was particularly engaging and compelling as there were many group learning activities, which helped in the students' learning engagement. In order to reinforce the learning, the class was divided into groups and given the task of translating 20 out of the 24 German phrases on the worksheet. The winning group had a box of chocolate cookies awaiting them and that acted as a huge motivation factor to not only grasp German but also partake of all classroom activities. In the evening, all the students along with their hosts went for bowling at a famous bowling alley known for its American décor and ambience, near Bak Sackingen. We learned that bowling is a common leisure activity that the German students indulge in, during their free time. It was an action-packed evening filled with fun and frolic, as youngsters of the two nationalities bonded over a game as exciting and competitive as bowling. The fact that this time we didn't play India versus Germany but had mixed teams with equal number of Indian and German students, signified how close we had grown to each other and how comfortable we were working in a team.

-Tanvi Nathwani



# CREATIVE CANVAS

Day 09



### ⇒ Day 09: Creative Canvas

The Visual Arts session was conceptualized and conducted especially for the Indian students. It was indeed encouraging to see how an art form has the power to transcend all language and cultural barriers. Ms. Andrea was the facilitator for this class and she exposed us to a mixture of theoretical approaches to Visual Art thereby recreating memories of our Theory of Knowledge class where we studied Arts as an Area of Knowledge. She then taught us few practical tricks and techniques of painting and drawings in order to translate our ideas and thoughts onto the canvas. While the first half of the session focused on using daily objects and infusing them with a perspective, the second half looked at challenging our inner expressions. At the farewell assembly on the last day, we were gifted each of our art works by our respective hosts and they thus became unforgettable frames of memory.

*-Hrushit Divatia*

# THE INDIAN ENSEMBLE

Day 10





### ⇒ Day 10: The Indian Ensemble

The last day of the exchange program was in the true sense, an emotional and sentimental one. In the morning, we received a chance to rehearse for our presentation, which consisted of three parts - a PowerPoint presentation on India, a dance on a Bollywood song, a classical dance and a singing performance coupled with live music and a refreshing beat boxing act.

The presentation gave the Indian students a chance to refresh their knowledge of their country and also proved to be enlightening for our German audience. We first made the presentation for the students of the Rudolf Eberle Schule. The students proved to be a supportive audience who showed interest in everything we put forth to them.

In the afternoon, post school, we got a chance to pack our luggage for the departure the following day and also spend some time with our host partners and their families. In the evening, we had the farewell get together with all the hosts, their families and the teachers. We once again put up the presentation for our host families, following which we ate dinner. Each dish was cooked by a host family and brought to school.

This evening gave each of us an opportunity to interact with the parents of the other exchange program students. It was time to bid farewell to our German friends whom we will never forget for the rest of our lives. We exchanged gifts and framed art works we had created during school hours and that will remind us of the wonderful and unforgettable time we had in Germany.

After the farewell, all the exchange students went for an outing to a restaurant and talked about the awe inspiring days spent in Germany.

*-Sneh Kewalramani*

# REFLECTIONS

## Afterthoughts from Student Participants

⇒ **Pradyot Agrawal**

The Indo German Exchange Program that took place this year was an amazing experience and I was privileged to be a part of it. It was a fantastic inter-cultural experience for me and helped me understand the European method of working in regular households as compared to staying in hotels and other luxuries. The exchange, in my opinion, also helped me to prepare for university life to some extent as I had to be independent and live with a roommate, much like I will at university. I feel like this exchange helped me benefit as a person as it taught me about various aspects of life, which I was not previously familiar with. I feel like the program changed me as a person for the better. This was one of the best experiences of my life and I feel that it was as enriching on an intellectual level as it was enjoyable.

⇒ **Arjun Mehra**

The IGEP was presented to us as a learning opportunity to mingle with other cultures. No one warned us it would be a trip full of indelible memories and valuable lessons. Living with families from different cultures and socio-economic conditions opened my eyes to the different ways people live. It was interesting to live a different life where being independent is expected of you rather than forced upon you.

There is no one but yourself and your family to rely on in such societies, which makes it really different from India, where we have a myriad of helpers at our call. Adjusting to life there prepared us for adult life as we were primed to be responsible for everything we had. It was also great to see the efficiency of the system there and is something I'm sure we can learn from and maybe even incorporate in the future. The schooling system there is more lax than the pressure we endure in India due to the difference in population but I believe it is the that desire to overcome it that makes Indians one of the most hard-working people over the world.

All in all, this was a trip that had the perfect balance of education and enjoyment because it mingled the two in a way that you didn't realise you were learning something, until after you had absorbed it. And that is the true beauty of an exchange program.

⇒ **Tanya Madhok**

The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people and the step to accept the diversity. To live in a different culture is altogether an enlightening experience. The Indo German Exchange Program has in the true sense been a life changing program. Stepping onto a new land and moreover adapting to a whole new culture that we have only seen in books and heard about, is as exciting as it seems. It goes without saying that despite the language barrier and the culture shock, the ten days were the most adventurous, enlightening, exciting and refreshing days in my life.

All the events from the overnight stay at the international youth hostel to the university visits were unique, eventful and fruitful. The visit to the Zeppelin museum and the German castle was an eye opener for me. Reading about the Kaiser Wilhelm II and the two World Wars made me inquisitive to know more about the Germans. This program gave me a platform to practically observe and know about the castle that Kaiser Wilhelm II and his other family members lived. The museum gave me an insight about the zeppelins used during World War I. The tours of the cities Bad Sackingen and Freiburg were very innovative and attractive.

The classes that we attended along with our exchange partners provided the advantage to know how the education system in the Rudolf Eberle Schule is and the way the teachers conduct classes. It goes without saying that learning the German language was a fun experience. To conclude, even though we had a lot of difference, I can proudly say that I have learnt and adapted some of their good qualities like being independent and being responsible for your own life and actions. Punctuality and the value of time was also an important thing that I learnt.



⇒ **Dhairya Shah**

The student exchange program to Bad Säckingen was a completely new experience for me. An exchange program is extremely different from visiting places as tourists. Living in a typical German household rather than a hotel taught me a lot more about German life. Living with a family taught me how their life is so different from ours on so many levels, for example, my host's parents rarely made food; instead they would pick-up or order their meals- something not seen quite often in India. Living in a small town, and attending their school showed me how different their academic lives were. Living away from Mumbai and my family for such a long period of time, showed me how to adapt, yet be independent in a foreign environment. All in all, this experience was fun and taught me many life skills, which I will not forget.

⇒ **Aayush Kedia**

The Indo-German Exchange Program was a learning opportunity to exchange cultures and live a different life. This exchange taught us how different our families are from the German families. It was interesting to live a different life where being independent is expected of you rather than forcefully imposed upon you. We did not get the luxury that we do in India: we had to do all the work by ourselves, which prepared us for the real world. The exchange program prepared us for adult life as we were primed to be responsible for everything we had. It was great to see the lifestyle in a small town of Germany and how the Germans are trained to be good footballers. The schooling system there is easier than in India due to the difference in population composition and competition. That is one of the reasons why Indians are such hard-working people.

Moreover, this was a trip that had the perfect balance of education and enjoyment because we were treated as adults and we got to try different experiences in Germany. My exchange partner, Johannes was the best partner anyone could have had and he made this exchange memorable for my family and me. Memories from this program will be the ones that I will cherish even when I'm older.

⇒ **Muskaan Bhukhanwala**

As a participant of the Indo-German Exchange Program, I went to Germany from 6th June to 16th June, 2016. In those ten days, I have had an incredible experience where I learnt about Germany's culture, beliefs and values.

One of the most interesting sights of the trip was the Holzbrücke Bad Säckingen, a bridge over the Rhine. It connects the German city of Bad Säckingen with the village Stein in Switzerland. It was an honor to meet the Mayor and enjoy a small meal with him. Even though English isn't his primary language of communication, he greeted us in the best possible way. He spoke about how he promotes such exchange programmes and shared a few thoughts regarding Indian and German culture.

I really enjoyed our trip to Freiburg where an actress enacted a skit presenting the story of Katharina the witch, which also said a lot about German culture, history and their beliefs. I enjoy different kinds of art and I got the opportunity to explore art in Germany when we went to the Castle Hohenzollern. The guide gave us a detailed explanation of the paintings. For example, the reason why the aristocrats did not smile in their portraits was because they could afford the expensive sweet food items that spoiled their teeth!

I enjoyed the whole experience and concept of an exchange programme other than a few University visits that I thought were unnecessary. I would've loved to spend that time with my host and her family instead.

⇒ **Ayushi Singh**

It all started back in December with a WhatsApp message- "hi"- which over the time changed into "I Miss You" and "Come Back Soon". The Indo-German Exchange Program 2016 was one of the most astonishing and memorable experiences of my life where I learnt a lot about many different cultures due to the diverse population of Germany-which had people from Turkey and Ireland too. My host family originally hailed from Turkey so by living with them I learnt about their religion, their way of living and communicating, which gave me a global perspective to look at things and situations. This exchange taught me a lot of things but most importantly the true value of punctuality and time management because I used to travel via

train every day in order to go to school as well as other places. I also learnt the importance of cleanliness as the country was so beautiful and neat and everyone were very conscious about the sanitation of the place- they had three different bins for segregation of waste - recycled bin, for plastics and dried waste. We visited many different places with the school like the Hollenzohern Castle, German universities, Zeppelin museum and German postal service office, which gave us a new lens view on their work ethics and their commitment towards their duty. It also taught us a lot about the rich German history and their brilliant mechanical skills. We even got the chance to attend their daily classes along with our exchange partners wherein I attended the English class. I found a difference in their teaching methodologies as compared to my teachers. Instead of taking them through each topic, the teacher explains once and then urges the students to do the rest on their own. Then we had an Art class, which was a great event as we got to experiment with paint and show our artistic skills.

To sum it up, Germany was a very alluring and pleasing country with great, pollution free surrounding and charming houses and really inexpensive food. Overall, it was an amazing experience where I made a lot of new friends outside the Indo-German Exchange Program participants as well. Also I found my new family with whom I will always stay in touch. Indeed...a lot of memories to cherish and I hope to see them soon in the future.

⇒ **Nishika Khubchandani**

In my opinion the Indo-German Exchange Programme was an amazing educational trip on account of the fact that we students were given the opportunity to explore a completely new culture and learn the similarities and differences between our culture and theirs and this was an experience that all of us shall cherish for the rest of our lives.

⇒ **Roshni Aggarwal**

The Indo- German Exchange Program has been, in its true sense, a life changing one. Even before going to Germany, I had many questions in my mind from how I would manage with a new family whom I have never met, to 'will I be able to adapt to the culture and food'? These questions changed into a beautiful and a unique experience. The culture that I had only known by name, had soon become a part of my life in those ten days; from catching a train to enjoying with my German friends in German restaurants. Even though in the beginning I experienced a culture shock, I felt like I was at home. My partner's parents treated me as their daughter. I

even got an opportunity to visit the castles and the streets of Freiburg. The university visits were very enlightening as well. The tours were also very engaging and attractive. The shopping spree at Freiburg was one of the best moments of this trip. These ten days have built in me the qualities of being independent and managing time in the correct manner.

⇒ **Prerona Chatterjee**

The Indo- German Exchange Programme was a great, new experience for me. I was given the opportunity to share my culture and learn another, along with a group of delightful students and their families. Not only did we learn about their ways of living and of their mind set, we also created bonds, and learned how to commit to a friendship from miles away. During our trip in Germany, we learned about the town Bad Sackingen, of the education opportunities available in their country and about their efficiency in postal services and much more. They too learned about Mumbai, and of our *dabbawalas*. We even took part in a group project for our EUMIND project. Overall, it was a splendid journey, where we got to know our exchange partners and also our own classmates and teachers.

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**Student Participants:**

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|------------------------|----------------------|
| ○ Nishika Khubchandani | ○ Prerona Chatterjee |
| ○ Nimisha Mazumdar     | ○ Tanvi Nathwani     |
| ○ Aayush Kedia         | ○ Shubhangi Singh    |
| ○ Ayushi Singh         | ○ Hithika Panjabi    |
| ○ Muskaan Bhukhanwala  | ○ Arjun Mehra        |
| ○ Dhairya Shah         | ○ Khushi Khatri      |
| ○ Vinay Chandnani      | ○ Tanya Madhok       |
| ○ Pradyot Agrawal      |                      |
| ○ Roshni Aggarwal      |                      |
| ○ Manasi Kanade        |                      |
| ○ Sneh Kewalramani     |                      |
| ○ Hrushit Divatia      |                      |

**Teacher Participants:**

- Ms. Deepa Iyer
- Ms. Pooja Sudhir

*Photographs Courtesy: Vinay Chandnani and Manasi Kanade*



# INDO-GERMAN FRIENDSHIPS AND FAMILIES...

