

LUFTSCHLOSS

AN UNREAL DREAM



A REPORT ON THE INDO-GERMAN
EXCHANGE PROGRAMME 2019

OUR JOURNEY

St Michael 's Gymnasium

On 29th April, 2019, the entire group of 22 students and 2 teachers got into the bus from the Munich airport, wishing only to sleep off the jet lag as soon as possible. Little did we know that our very first stop of the journey was as beautiful as any other palace or lake we would visit. St. Michael's Gymnasium, a monastery school in Metten, were our gracious hosts for our two week exchange program. Abundant with greenery and boasting a large central courtyard, the school houses a modest number of students. The next day, we were formally greeted by the school with the heavenly symphonies of their school choir, instilling a much needed vigour in some of us and taken as a calming lullaby by the rest. We were also allowed entry into the famous Baroque library of the Benedictine Abbey of Metten. Surviving several centuries and housing a vast selection of old books and sacred texts, it is especially known for its ceiling art, mirroring the essence of the books beneath it. The chance to sit in their classes and listen to their lectures helped us see some stark contrasts with the Indian education system. Despite the language barrier, the amicable teachers tried their best to include us in the lessons. In my opinion, what distinguishes the character of St. Michael's Gymnasium is that the monks, teachers, pupils and their parents see themselves as one big happy family.

VISHNU NAMBIAR

II CAMS K



Metten

Metten is a municipality in the district of Deggendorf in Bavaria. The quiet and beautiful town of Metten with a population of a mere 4000 is an impeccable example of a perfect combination of exquisite people, food and nature. The beauty of this town is breathtaking. This town, though very small has all the amenities of a city which includes various cafeterias, restaurants, supermarkets and a school. Outside this beautiful school was our all time favourite ice cream parlour, Fontanella. While in Germany we got an opportunity to meet the mayor of Metten as well as visit the Town Hall. He was so welcoming and he also treated us to icecreams from the Fontanella parlour. We learnt a lot about the political system as well as the administration of Metten.

Metten is also famous for its tasty delight known as Düna. It tasted so yummy that we had it most of the times for maybe lunch or dinner. In short, this place has my heart and I wouldn't miss any chance to go back and relive the time spent there.

VIDHI MEHTA

II CAMS K



Passau

Passau is a German city on the Austrian border with a population of 50,000 people. This city is known as the 'City of Three Rivers' as it lies at the confluence of the Danube, Inn and Ilz rivers. The Old Town of Passau was rebuilt in the 17th century after a devastating fire burnt down the town. Walking through the narrow lanes of this city we get a rich sense of their gothic and baroque style of architecture and the St. Stephens Cathedral is one of the many popular tourist sites located in the heart of the city and is home to the world's largest cathedral organ with 17,974 pipes.



Visiting Passau was such a nice experience as it gave us some time to know more about our counter-parts as it had just been a few days since we met them. Strolling through the city we were charmed by the cobbled paths; many three and four storey houses brightly painted with rose, yellow and pastel colours and loads of small shops with artisanal crafts that we felt like we were transported back in time. Though Passau is known for its culinary flavours we had our lunch at an Indian restaurant named 'Maharaja'. Even though walking around and seeing many picturesque sites made us happy, it was nothing compared to the time we spent with our exchange partners, joking around, trying to learn German words that we cannot even pronounce and teaching them a little Hindi.

RUTH ANN ALEX
II CAME L



Deggendorf

Deggendorf is a small, yet a scenic town in Bavaria and is perfectly located between the two cities of Regensburg and Passau. Having a population of about 32,000 people it is the cultural and economic centre of this region. This town is also remarkable for its numerous impressive historical monuments and places of interest.

Visiting Deggendorf was very eventful as we got to spend some quality time with our exchange partners. We walked around the town and explored the different shops and experienced the culture of this town. Strolling around the town was quite interesting as every alley had something new to offer.

However, the best part was spending time with our German counterparts and getting to know them and just joking around and having a great time trying to learn a new language that was almost impossible for us to speak.

SAHAJA PRABHAKAR
II CAME L



Salzburg



Accompanied by the view of the Eastern Alps, Salzburg is an Austrian city on the border of Germany. Somehow in the midst of the chaos of the twenty first century, Salzburg has preserved many remnants of its past while still keeping up with the modern times in many other ways. We started the tour by visiting the famous Mozart's birthplace in Salzburg. Overlooking the Austrian market is the beautiful Hohenwerfen Castle. This city depicts a mixture of both German and Italian cultures. The love lock bridge in Salzburg is a beautiful sight along the river, which gives us a panoramic view of Salzburg and the Old Town. The local painters visit the garden to paint the mesmerising view from the garden. It is an amazing city with world-class Salzburg festival, and a series of opera, concerts and theatre performances.

PRATHIKSHA K R
II CAMS J

Frühlingsfest

The Frühlingsfest is a little springtime beer festival held in the months of April and May for about 2 weeks in many Bavarian cities. The Frühlingsfest is often also known as "Oktoberfest's little sister". In the festival visitors enjoy a bunch of rides, roller coasters and also indulge in many delicious Bavarian snacks and sweets such as pretzels, fruits covered in chocolate, Bavarian sausages and many other delicacies items.

The Bavarian city welcomes thousands of people from across the continent to celebrate the spring festival with food, music, and fireworks. In the this festival you can notice the men wearing 'lederhosen' and the women wearing 'dirndl' which is a ruffled apron dress. All in all, the Frühlingsfest was a festival filled with fun and excitement and a wonderful experience.

KASHISH KOTHARI
II CAME L



Zugspitze

The first official place we visited after arriving at Germany was the Zugspitze. On the way there, we visited the Neuschwanstein Castle. The castle looked pretty magnificent on top of a hill. After trekking up the hill, a feat that left most of us panting in the cold weather, we got to see the castle in all its glory, looking like it got pulled right out of a fairytale book. We then continued our journey to Zugspitze. It was a three hour drive from Metten. The Zugspitze is the highest mountain in Germany. A train took us to the top of the mountain where some of us witnessed snow for the first time in our lives. We didn't realise how fast time flew by as we were busy playing in the snow, taking pictures and having snow-fights. After lunch, some of us went to the peak by cable car. The sight on top was breath-taking. All in all, Zugspitze was a fun experience and one that we would remember for a lifetime.

DEVIKA DEEVASAN
II HEPP N



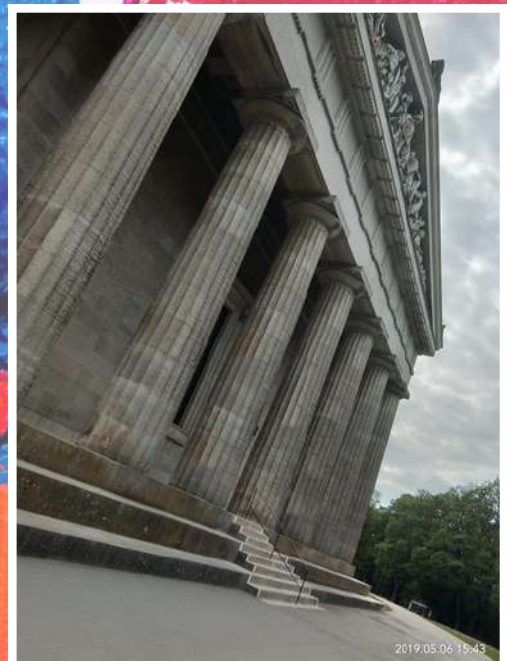
Regensburg and Walhalla

The Bavarian city of Regensburg is situated on the Danube River. It was earlier a trading centre which fell under the rule of the Roman Empire. This Old Town resembles Italy and is popular among the youth. It has about 400 cathedrals and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. We visited the St. Peter's cathedral, Old Stone Bridge, Altes Rathaus and Haidplatz. The temperature on the day of our visit was about zero degrees celsius.

Post lunch we drove to Walhalla which is a Hall of Fame of distinguished people in the German history. The drive was pleasant with plenty of scenic views of various foothills. This neo-classical building is in the form of a temple and the climb till the top to the memorial Hall included 300+ steep steps but it was definitely worth it.

SANSKRITI CHANDER

II PPES O



BMW Factory

BMW, meaning Bavarian Motor Works, is one of the largest production sites in Europe. It all started with buying a few souvenirs from the BMW plant at Dingolfing. We were given a guided tour inside the press shop, the body shop and the assembly. We first walked by the press shop where huge steel and aluminium sheet rolls are converted to 1.6 million body parts for the Dingolfing plant and the production network. The Dingolfing press shop is one of the largest facilities of its kind within the BMW Group. We also got to see a few bodies of the Rolls Royce motor cars.

The body shop at Dingolfing is a high tech light weight construction facility. Here there were approximately 2000 robots that turn the metal sheets into parts which are produced at the press shop into paintable bodies in white. We were then guided to the Assembling area where, over 6,000 workers fit the painted car bodies with the customised features selected by the customers. About 1,600 BMW cars are assembled on the two assembly lines every day. This experience provided a lot of learning and enhancement along with a visual and practical approach.

DEEPESH LUNIA
II CAMS K



Munich

Munich, the capital of Bavaria and the second most populous German Federal State, is home to century old buildings and countless museums. Some world-class museums such as the Deutsches Museum and the BMW Museum can be found here. Built centuries ago, the city has a renowned style of architecture. The Nymphenburg Palace, Frauenkirche and Munich Residenz are some of the historical attractions of the city. This city is not only a global centre of arts, science and culture but also business and education. It harbours many multinational companies, high tech, creative industries, automobiles as well as IT and engineering. It is one of the leading cities in the field of science and research, and has many elite universities such as The Ludwig Maximilian University and the Technische Universität München.

The cobblestone streets of Munich housed many famous brands like Versace, Louis Vuitton and Dolce Gabbana and many more. If you look very carefully you may come across a K-pop store or two. Munich is a perfect blend of the old and new. We were privileged to visit this wonderful city and enjoy its rich history, culture and beauty. The experience was unforgettable.

NIYATHI JOSEPH
II CAMS K



Organic Farm

Our next visit was an organic farm in Hutthurm. An employee working at the farm gave us an overview about how the organic farm works and what is done there. Some interested in organic farming had the opportunity to study it close by. We were shown the process of making fresh juices from the fruits grown in the farm. Later we were led out to the fields where the cows were grazing. We got the opportunity to pet the cows and calves who also seemed to really enjoy the attention. We moved on towards the home of piglets. A few of them came out to meet us.

We then met the gardener and resident chef. She took us through the garden where varieties of plants are grown and which are used for cooking daily. We later visited the kitchen where cooking classes are conducted for students studying near the farm. At noon we finished our visit to the farm by having some delicious food with the ingredients from the farm's garden.

RACHANA
II CAMS K



Concentration Camp

On March 22, 1933, just a few weeks after Adolf Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor, a concentration camp for political prisoners was set up in Dachau. In the twelve years of its existence, over 200,00 persons from throughout Europe were imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp and its 140 subcamps, persecuted for political, racist and biological 'reasons'.

Years later, after all the horrors, the camp lays untouched and stands in pure silence. The main building of the camp, which is turned into a museum, held the documentary of each prisoner of the three phases of the camp, 1933-1939, 1939-1942, 1942-1945 and the history after 1945. There are several religious memorials within the memorial site. The memorial includes four chapels for the various religions followed by the prisoners. The camp prison consisted of long hallways of bunkers. The grounds were used for various purposes: between 1945 and 1948 the US military imprisoned National socialist officials and members of the SS here, where until 1963/1964 the former camp served as accommodation for refugees.

The Dachau concentration camp was found in the year 1964, the Memorial site is part of the Bavarian Memorial Foundation. It is a place of remembrance for the strong and pure souls; it's a cemetery and at the same time a museum and a place of learning.

P S VARUNIKA RAJAN
II HESP M



Nymphenburg Castle

On the 10th of May, 2019, we visited one of the most exciting tourist attractions of Munich, - The Nymphenburg Palace. The palace, also known as the Castle Of Nymph, served as a summer residence for the former Bavarian rulers. The long garden with the fountains, flowers and beautiful ducks were the first to catch our attention.

Further ahead, the castle gave us a thorough fairytale feel by greeting us a large and grand hall whose ceiling depicted pictures of Helios and his chariot. Further we were taken to either sides of the hall- both of which had galleries, rooms for the Princes and the Princesses which were well designed and decorated in an intricate way, famously called the Baroque Decorations.

Technology through its perks gave us information through an automated audio tour and conveyed the importance of certain places inside the castle through which we learnt about it's early history and culture.

Our time in the Nymphenburg Palace not only proved to be fun and enjoyable, but also educative and insightful.

SHRIYA JAIN



Toboggan Ride

Out of the many sites of attractions one of the most exciting was the Toboggan ride through the black forest. It can best be described as a one person miniature roller-coaster that travels through a forest and let's you experience an exhilarating rush. As a group we would have to conclude by saying that it was an unforgettable moment which will always remind us of the entertaining time we spent in Germany.

RAJEEV RAO

II PCMB D



OUR EXPERIENCE



The Buchners

I still remember the anxiety and uneasiness I felt when I left India for the Student Exchange to Germany. The twelve days spent with my partner/brother, Julian Buchner, and his family was beautiful. The unconditional love and care provided was heart-warming.

Julian's family reminded me of my family with the way they spent time at the dinner table having discussions mixed with humour and watching television together. I still miss those dinner conversations and the drives we had. The colourful streets of Passau, the street-art of Linz, the energetic Spring Festival, the calm town of Metten and the vibe of Zugspitze were unique in their own ways. Towards the end, it was hard for all of us to say goodbye to our family though we were meeting them in matter of few months.

These twelve days were more about knowing their daily routines, adjusting to their lifestyle and environment, respecting the opinions and culture. This Exchange made me an more independent and a bolder human being.

With the beginning of a new day, a new challenge was ready to face. At the same time, there was excitement and enthusiasm. Facing the challenges together brought the Indian Team close and made our bond stronger. The time spent cannot be put into better words while our memories are still alive and running in our hearts.

NAYAN L BADOLLA

II PCMB G

My Experience

The fourteen days I spent in Germany were the best days of my life. Germany as a country is diverse, rich and beautiful. Germans embrace the values of thriftiness, punctuality and hard work, and they are extremely kind, generous and welcoming. My partner and her family were extremely good to me and treated me like family.

I loved spending time with my partner and her friends. Eating Bavarian food in Germany with my partner and her family was one of the memories I would cherish for life. I personally enjoyed the spring fest the most as we got to wear one of their traditional outfits. We loved their music and we sing it every now and then.



Salzburg was one of the most beautiful cities I have ever visited in my life . Germans love rich hearty cuisine though each area of Germany has its own definition of what a traditional meal looks like . I still miss their ice creams.All good things have to come to an end. I bonded well with my partner and her family because they were all so welcoming and good to me . All of us got emotional and tears stung our eyes when we were leaving. We did want to return to India but we also wanted to stay back with them forever.

ISHITHA NANDYAL
II CAMS K

Eternal Memories

To start off with, from the time we stepped out of the bus to meet our host families, until the last day when we climbed back the bus to come to India, they've made us feel at home! Rightly assumed by us, they've become our second family. Just in the 14 days we spent there, we're all so attached to Germany and the people, the places we've been to, the memories we made are impossible to forget.



Every place we visited, including the Chiemsee lake, Zugspitze Mountains, Regensburg, Deggendorf, Munich was so delightful, it would stay in our hearts forever. Europe being so beautiful in itself, was made even more pleasing with our family's love and affection.

The quite long bus rides from one city to another were made seldom tiring because of all the music dancing and snacking.Learning a few words in their language and teaching them a few in ours was so much fun and now I can rightly say, Ich spreche etwas Deutsch(I speak some German). In the end, all I can say, or rather wish is for me to get back those 14 days of my life, which I lived and loved to the maximum.

DHITI BAFNA
II CAMS K

Cherished Forever



I will always remember the days from 29th April to 12th May like an unreal dream. I still cannot believe it happened, but I can remember every single detail. It was one of those times where everything was exciting, and you enthusiastically waited for what the next moment had to offer. From the moment we stepped off the bus to embrace our partners for the first time ever, to the moment we were giving out tearful last hugs before boarding the same bus to leave for the departure flight, the Indo-German Exchange Programme was an experience of a lifetime.

Being a person that has barely been to any sleepovers, I was very apprehensive as I stepped into my partner's house. However, that flew out of the window the moment my host family, the Yildiz's, embraced me with the warmest of welcomes. My partner and I bonded on a whole new level, going as far as having deep conversations and intellectual debates that I learnt a lot from. I also fell in love with the dog, Charlie, in the first few days of staying there. It didn't take me long to get accustomed to the family routine and culture.

The places I visited with my partner, be it a neighbouring city or just around the town we stayed at, gave me new experience and deeper insight into the differences of culture and demographic in India and Germany. I also got an experience in handling matters of money and passports on my own, thereby giving me confidence that I can take care of myself in any place in the world.

Just like waking from a beautiful dream, leaving was tough. But we held on to the thought that in a few months we will be meeting our partners again, but this time, in India. Thus being said, the Indo-German exchange programme taught me things and gave me experiences that I can use throughout my life.

DEVIKA DEEVASAN

II HEPP N

The Big Fat Indian Wedding

One of the most fun parts of the Exchange Programme in general was the Cultural Performance that the Indian students had to organise. Preparations for this performance was underway months before the trip and the students had worked hard in order for it to be a success. The final day didn't disappoint, and the presentation turned out to be as fun and colourful as expected. The students had put together a medley of bollywood songs, dances and Indian traditions together in order to showcase what is considered to be a huge celebration in a person's life- a wedding. Indian weddings are generally considered a colourful, grand and loud affair and the students had a lot of fun depicting the same.

They weren't the only ones who enjoyed the performance though, the German students too, seemed to enjoy tapping their feet along to the Bollywood beats. The students also put together a video summarising their entire time spent in Germany as a final tribute before they leave in a few days. The video brought many to tears because of its finality, but we continue to hold on to the thought that this is not a goodbye, but more of a see you later.

DEVIKA DEEVASAN

II HEPP N





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



We would like to start off by thanking Father Sebastian Mathai for giving us the opportunity of our lives in the form of the exchange programme. We would also like to thank Ms. Philu Jose, Ms Renimol Thomas and Mr Jerin John for coordinating and acting as our guardians through the duration of the programme. We would also like to thank our German Coordinators from St Michael's Gymnasium, Metten, for being our mentors. Lastly, we would like to thank our German partners and families for being our gracious hosts during the short but sweet two weeks of our programme. the memories we made in every place we went to will be cherished by us for the rest of our lives. Once again, we would like to thank everyone involved in making the Indo-German Exchange Programme 2019, a grand success.

Editors:

DEVIKA DEEVASAN, II HEPP N

P S VARUNIKA RAJAN, II HESP M

**UNTIL NEXT
TIME**