

Tubingen South African Program 2018

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A picturesque town with medieval facades crossed within student life in the heart of Baden-Wurttemberg, Tubingen, has hosted foreign internationals for an immersive learning and exposure with experience of German culture and lifestyle. Nineteen students from six universities (University of Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, University of Kwazulu-Natal, and University of Botswana) were hosted between the 6th to 31st Jan 2018. Four students represented the University of Johannesburg in person, Ms. Reneilwe Mnisi, Mr. Willford Gwabeni, Ms. Carla Westraad, and Mr. Victor I, Aladesanmi. The team was led by Mr. Donovan Louw from Stellenbosch University with first orientation on the Winter School

before the flight. The 2018 edition was spectacular with diverse multi-cultural representative from Namibia, Botswana, Nigeria, and the main pilot country, South Africa. We landed in extreme cold winter weather at Frankfurt Airport and met with the German exchange coordinator Mrs. Barbara Owen and her team. A letter was provided to participants which provided information regarding the German host families for accommodation and German family care.



Living in German homes was one of the many beautiful moments, Germans have a lovely culture of orderliness and 'no wearing shoes indoors'. The love and care we received was great and exceptional. The environment is entirely safe and crime-free and there is a great trust level among citizens. Germans are extremely time conscious. The social economic system is excellent, dependable, reliable and working. The teaching techniques are very proactive, engaging with participatory apparatus and techniques.

The program schedule was arranged with lectures on German Geography, History, Film, Music, Politics, Literature, Folk dance, Study in Germany, Virology, Intercultural Communication and Philosophy combined with excursions and factory tours to Daimler Ag, Mercedes Benz Museum, Ritter Sport Chocolate, CHT Beilisch GmbH Dulingen (chemical industry), Hohenzollern Castle, G. Rosch GmbH (cloth making and design industry), Stuttgart Staargalerie (Stuttgart art gallery) and Haus der Geschichte (Germany history museum). I was privileged to make trips to Strasbourg, France, Glaspalast Sindelfingen for an athletics race and Zurich Switzerland on the free weekends.

Human rights has been jealously protected in Germany after denazification of German government. Martin Niemoller is a German anti-Nazi theologian often remembered for his quote which says *"first they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out, because I was a socialist, they later came for me and there was no one left to speak for me"*. Germans regret the occurrence of the holocaust and they are doing everything possible to make right the wrongs of the past. Germany is a democratic and a pluralist country today with freedom of speech.

The African dinner night was a spectacular event with fifteen different African dishes made in a kitchen at Bonhoeffer Gemeindehaus. I made the Nigerian Pounded Yam with Mellon soup. The Mellon soup was with chilly and was the favorite of the Italians present at the occasion who asked for more. Most Germans don't like chilly. Different wines were available from Germany, South Africa, and Italy. The Italian wine Piccini - Memoro - from the region Tuscany, was most people's favorite with a lovely taste. The first welcoming German dish for us was kabspatzle. This is noodle-like with green vegetables on the side.

The dignitaries reception night was graced with different African elegant attire from diverse African cultures. I wore the Nigerian traditional Agbada, Buba, Sokoto with Fila. Some of the dignitaries in attendance were the South African Consulate General, Mr. George Monyemangene from Munich Germany, the Vice Consul; Political, Mrs. Lehlogonolo Sibisi from Munich Germany, the Director of Internationalisation from the University of Tübingen and other special guests from the Ministry of German Art and Culture. We sang African songs, national anthems and some display performance.

Germany's biggest export are automobiles. Automotive transportation is the most used means of movements globally. Distinguished among the automobile is Daimler; the producer of Mercedes Benz, Maybach, AMG, etc. with offers of global mobility services. Our factory tour to Daimler was an ecstatic and memorable experience. Mrs. Joann Dittrich welcomed us into the company with information on career opportunities in Daimler. Her ambassadorial information of Daimler was adequate and eloquent.

The Daimler factory tour was outstandingly led by Mr. Bijon Steinbrink. The manufacturing plant environment was beautiful and well structured. The architectural designs were excellent and standard to the last shock absorber sound-check on the coarse rough ground path. Each car brand type of Mercedes have independent production houses. They have three sections of the production line which is the body-shop, the paint-shop and assembly-shop. The body-shop with the use of robotics, maximizes daily production, increases efficiency, and minimizes errors. The laser cladding welding was intriguing with a neat and firm welding mechanism. The paint shop undergoes five layers of painting which is super-efficient for an almost luminous glowing paint quality of Daimler car products.

The assembly sections was the big show with the fittings of the body part to the engines in a unique computerised mechanism and some hand fittings. The wind screen and mirrors were made for high focus and quality. Each Mercedes brand shape was designed with a sense of uniqueness, individuality and standard in its presentation. The internal engines are factory fitted. The seats were designed with excellent seating for comfort and internal massage tendency material from the head, neck and back rest. Daimler has been reputable with their constant adherence to the Manufacturing Production standard. Daimler does not fast forward production line as this aids their high quality assurance testing with excellent production. They have super speed range, excellent hydraulic break systems and a balanced shock absorber system.

I was also privileged to run an indoor athletic race in Sindelfingen, Germany. Running is a dynamic coordinated motion process on foot. It has been the best aid for cardiac control and improvement. Body exercise is a medically proven necessity for mental and body fitness. For ages, running has become competitive with medals and rewards. Its highest

hype with global recognition is at the Olympics. Running is in dimensions of either long distance or short distance. The climatic conditions of a geographical location determines which types of running will be prominent among runners there. Athletes in cold temperate regions have slow twitch muscles with more endurance to go longer. They also have higher hemoglobin red blood cells for longer respiratory endurance. While on the other hand, athletes in hot temperate regions have fast twitch muscles which is more bulky and full of power for speed but less endurance.

Germany is a cold temperate region that has produced more long distance runners and world champions than sprint athletes. One of them is Mr. Dieter Baumann which I met at the Stadtwerke Sindelfingen Hallen-meeting at Glaspalast Sindelfingen on the 27th January, 2018. He is based in Tübingen, in Baden-Württemberg. He was a 5000m world champion. He is presently a long distance coach and his wife a sprint coach. He has a house of athletes with his sons and daughters all running. One of them is Jackie Baumann, a 200m sprint specialist. I had my first European race and indoor track experience in Germany in 200m placing third. I also ran a 400m race an hour later and placed third again being a sprint athlete. It was a fabulous complete experience running in an indoor hall in a slightly bended short curve and straight track path but warm indoor.

For none competitive athletes is the fun run in Germany. Morning runs are a regular practice for fun runners in the cold with their body all covered up. The sprinters use the indoor sports hall for a warm environment conducive for sprint body mode. Athletics in Germany is beautiful as it has attracted many international athletes to their competitions and sports managers.

I was also able to visit Strasbourg. Strasbourg in France is a beautiful city with special tourist attractions at the Cathedrale Notre-Dame, the Grand Ile, is where the Rhine river splits up into a number of canals and cascades through a small area of half-timbered houses; the pontons convert, towers and footbridges situated at the end of petite France; the quartier allemande, the place for the showcase of German neoclassical architecture in Strasbourg, at the heart of the district lies the Place de la Republique, a vast square on a small wooden park; and the Quarter European. Strasbourg is considered the legislative

democratic capital of the European Union. The European district hosts the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the European Council of Human Rights.

Zurich Switzerland is an expensive place with high living standards. Some of the tourist attractions there are the Grossmuster; with its unmistakable double impress with its beautiful windows and enormous organ; Lindenhof, is where Zurich started off, it is the historic site of the roman castle and the later Carolingian imperial palace; Zurichsee, is a lovely lake of Zurich with refreshing breeze; the Uetliberg peak, it is the highest hill with 813 meters and offers great views over the city.

We visited the Hohenzollern castle on the day it snowed. It is the old monarch empire of the German kingdom. Some part of the room lines was made of gold. The architecture was classic and magnificent. The interior was full of indigenous royal apparel and designs. The museum included an old roman war sword, breastplate, knee-guide, garments, and golden crowns.

Germans are lovely people to live with. It is a highly developed and technology rich environment with numerous opportunities for work and studies. The system is open to innovation and development. They still preserve their heritage, foundation and old structures which forms most of their tourist attractions today. There is a lot to be learnt from Germany and they are open to collaboration with other parts of the world. This trip has helped me to re-think, re-imagine and re-invest in Africa.

Regards,

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