

**Evaluation of ENSA-initiative journey to build a school partnership between St. Germain School in Agona Swedu and BBS 1 in Gifhorn -
Auswertung ENSA-Anbahnungsreise der Schulpartnerschaft zwischen St. Germain School in Agona Swedru und der BBS 1 in Gifhorn**

Team Ghana	Team Germany
What was your highlight?	
<p>improvement of language skills; a good leadership – learning to change lives in a positive way for our next generation or for a better tomorrow; to build a good team; My highlight on this program is that it has helped both teams to develop a cordial, strong and intellectual partnership; the meeting with the minister and the member of the Parliament - visiting BBS 1 and 2 – and the tour at the German Bundestag – VW Autostadt; The people: more specifically, the Germany partners were welcoming and the host families were wonderful people to live with. It was so amazing so lovely and the most memorable day for me to stay with my host family. It was also my first time in life I felt at home most especially eating with my host family one the first day; The climate: it was so amazing seeing the sun unblemished but yet the weather was cooled; Political system: one incredible thing: the taxes the citizens pay to the government is rightly and proportionally used in developing the country to the advantage of its citizen not like in the part of our world, where by most of the taxes paid are not used by the government;</p>	<p>the Outgoing to Ghana as well as the Incoming and welcoming of our partners in Germany, have been highlights for us; during the Outgoing we experienced a great variety of people, places and situations due to our hosts great planning and willingness to show us their world in a timely nutshell; the Incoming was a highlight because we recognized how strange our German world felt to our partners (regarding weather conditions, food, sociability, time-consciousness, etc.); the special engagement of Evin, who was not part of the Outgoing but put a lot of work and effort in the accompanying projects (Fair of Trades, bottle recycling project) and the great support by Malin’s parents, who were with us as often as possible, it felt as if they had been part of the team from the beginning; the evening at Malin’s house with great food, cosy atmosphere and dancing; the engagement of both groups to create a successful first step of partnership; family evening(s) and long talks till midnight with Gloria; finally understanding the impact of cultural differences in a direct-contact-situation and how to deal with it</p>
What was your funniest moment?	
<p>I couldn’t stand the cold weather in Germany – every time I think about it I have to love about it; I thought my culture and my understanding was the best but later I realized that I need to change a lot of things in my thoughts (e.g. weather conditions, nature, food, people and places, differences in the educational system, the</p>	<p>the trip to Berlin: first the shared experience in the Parliament, lunchtime and the possibility to divide into groups and experience Berlin from different directions; when the group was playing games together – it was a great intercultural experience to see that winning and losing is dealt with similarly in both groups – and there is always someone who does not want to accept the rules!!;</p>

What was disappointing?

my inability to cope with the weather and my poor language skills;
my inability or willingness to accept others' inabilities and their cultural differences (e.g. the barriers between our communications and misconceptions);
the stay in Germany was too short;
What was disappointing was that we were not able to learn each other's language;
the weather conditions we were not prepared for and the time constraint;
I was very disappointed about how people are not sociable. More precisely, I felt very bad at the later part how things went with my group (Ghanaian group), which I am still asking myself so many question and trying to figure it out and so as such things does not happened again.

Unfortunately, the German team was in unison disappointed by the ENSA seminars. We had the feeling that the input was low while the seminars stretching like bubble gum and were filled with games and brainstorming sessions about many different topics. However, the games did not help us to start with a deep understanding of our different cultures, our communicational abilities and above all about our future project work.
We would have profited much more from focussing on project ideas and working together in the future – now there is no current project running.

What was especially positive?

the opportunity I have been given by ENSA to experience Germany and widen my horizon
ENSA giving opportunity to experience all these new exposures in my life, by meeting nice people and places with different backgrounds and systems of ruling;
personal commitment of team members;
The positive aspect was that there was no discrimination among ourselves;
the whole visit: planning and execution by the German team;

planning and execution during the Incoming journey were excellently managed;
no team member went seriously sick during the journeys;
both groups were very disciplined when it came to the fulfilment of journey plans, periods of waiting, periods of adjusting to new situations and focussing on the big idea rather than on minor problems – very impressive;
intense personal conversations with single team members;
the developing relationship between both teams;
my view onto the world changed considerably during the process of partnership building – change is development – that is good!;
the perception how important it is for me to be alone from time to time

For what did you need a lot of strength?

communicating with different people (although that is necessary for a strong team-building);
the team-work of understanding and the ability to correct, share and accept our challenge to save the future of this partnership;
building ourselves individually;
I need a lot of strength on how I can interact with the Germans, which is learning your likes and dislikes and also your language;
strength to execute the whole programme;
I do remember how hard and stressful I said it has been trying to deal with culture shock and adjust to living in Germany. I have come to realize that a lot of my stress stemmed from expectations that just were not met when I got there. I thought things would go one way, and when they didn't, I freaked out

both teams had a good planning but it was sometimes necessary to postpone or change plans so that you had to adjust all the time to a new plan;
the first days with my guest were hard because we did not have a deep understanding about each other from the first day on;
the VISA application process was unnerving and very complicated, we always feared that we could not get the right documents to support the Ghanaian group in getting the VISAs (here, we missed strong ENSA support);
time-schedule which was always tight and did not leave enough time for relaxation, discussion and chatting;
the double workload during the Incoming journey in Germany – working at the school and supporting the project, staying up late until midnight, that was really hard – I felt like nuts after the 10 days of incoming

Mishaps or what went wrong in the first place, but you learned from it?

I wasn't able to cope with the weather and my difficulties to speak and communicate;
the misunderstandings in my communication skills, my understanding of team-work to build a long lasting partnership;
misunderstandings;
What went wrong was that at a point in time we felt like some of the Germans did not want to walk with us. But I learnt that they wanted us to feel free and explore on our own and it was great;
some public occasions of misunderstanding between the German and the Ghanaian team – I learned from it that we should always try to set differences amicably and behind closed doors

Stefan forgot about his vaccination passport when coming to the Hannover airport because he thought having the VISA-document would be sufficient as proof of vaccination – he learned that all documents are necessary and that he can totally rely on his son who raced to the airport to hand over the passport shortly before the flight;
renting the rural district bus turned out to be most unnerving since it was unreliable and expensive – next time we will find another solution;
rice is not the first-choice meal for Germans – it is the potatoe (respectively in Ghana we very much enjoyed eating yams!);
there have been some situations of misunderstanding between group members according to language barriers, personal likes and dislikes – however it was possible to clear up these situations and find a final and positive solution and understanding for each other