

## **Lycée Denis-de-Rougemont, Neuchâtel at Bal Bharati Public School, Rohini – New Delhi**

28th October to 6th November 2019

At 6000 km from home, an incredible adventure was waiting for us, a unique encounter with our Indian friends, the discovery of a colorful world, rich in flavors and smells, a universe of contrasts.

The trip started on a Monday in October 2019, a rainy day in Neuchâtel. Arriving in Delhi after a long journey, we are warmly welcomed by our Indian partners. As we arrived in the middle of the night at a busy airport, students and teachers quickly left with their host family to begin an unforgettable experience. It was at school, during visits and in our families that we all experienced intense moments as described on the following pages (3-10) by the Swiss students



Back to Switzerland, head and heart full of great memories, we continue our research work on sustainability. The results of our respective carbon footprint done, we are continuing our reflection with our Indian partners on the topic in order to find pragmatic ways to reduce our impact on the environment. The next steps for the carbon footprint discussion are summarized in the document “Indian exchange – carbon footprint”.

We would like to thank our Indian friends Mridu Marwah and Sarita Chauhan for the organization of this great experience. Our thanks also go to all the other teachers who made us feel at home in India and to all exchange partners and their families who took great care of our students. A particular thank goes to Bal Bharati Public School (<https://bbpsrohini.balbharati.org/>) and the principal Geeta Gangwani who opened up her school to our Swiss group.

**We are looking forward to having you in Neuchâtel from 21<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**Stephan Bucher and France Combépine**

The Swiss Indian exchange program is coordinated by *Movetia* and sponsored by *Mercator Foundation!*

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RÉPUBLIQUE ET CANTON DE NEUCHÂTEL

Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2019



Wednesday was our first day at school after spending one day on our own in our host families. We were all very happy to see each other again. We had a welcome ceremony with music, yoga and dance performances. We all received a floral necklace. During the day, we did many activities such as a basketball match, yoga, Hindi and Indian history classes. It was very interesting, we learnt a few words in Hindi and talked about the castes. Finally, we did a carbon-footprint activity where we compared our way of consuming to the Indian's one. We talked about how we could improve our carbon-footprint. In the late afternoon and evening, most of us did a little excursion or activity with their host. Some of us went to Sri Bangla Sahib Gurudwara, a Sikh temple in New Delhi and saw the Indian gate. There, most of us started wearing protection masks to protect our lungs from heavy smog.



Roxanne and Céline



## Thursday the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2019

Today, we had a very busy day. In the morning, we first went to school with our exchange partners. There, we started the day with a short sport session during which we discovered a traditional Indian game called “Khokho”. It’s was fun, and we were very happy because we won.



After that, we went back inside and had an art class. The goal was for us to create as much volume as possible with a sheet of A2 paper. Then we had a music class where we played some sort of Tam-Tam. It was a wonderful time of sharing and the teacher was very nice. The day continued with a lesson of Hindi. We learned some words and short phrases that are useful on a daily basis. It was very interesting. A traditional dance class then followed the Hindi lesson. I think this class was the most enjoyed one. The music was great, the dancing was fun, but the teacher was

just a little fast at times. We all were a bit nervous because we had to present this dance on the last day and we were all looking a bit silly doing it, but it still was a nice moment.

In the afternoon, after classes, we all took a bus to go visit a temple called Akshardham. The bus was very different from what we are used to travel with and on our way we passed by what’s called the waste mountain. As its name indicates, it is a 65m mountain made out of trash.



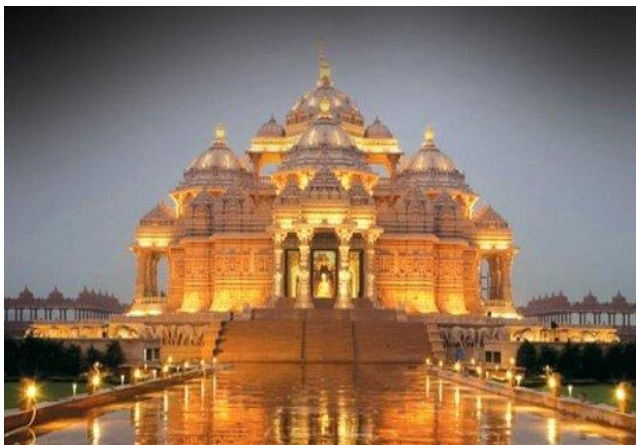
Our stay took place during a pollution peak so during the whole journey, we were surrounded by a kind of a brown fog so that we could not see very far.

When we almost reached the temple, we were told that we could only take a transparent bottle of water with us, a packet of tissue, a scarf to cover up our heads and everything else had to stay in the coach. Therefore, we were not allowed to take our phones or bags. Everything made out of leather as wallets or belts were not allowed in the temple because in India, cows are sacred. We all were a bit nervous because everything was supposed to stay with the driver in the bus and as we said before, that bus was a bit different. The windows weren’t safely closed, and the door was completely opened. To our great relief, nothing happened because the driver stayed in the bus during the whole visit.

We then entered the temple and started our visit. Actually, it was not just a simple temple; it was kind of a big complex with several buildings, the temple and a water fountain. The visit was supposed to last three hours but actually lasted six hours, so we were all tired at the end of the day. We all were a bit surprised because we thought it was going to be a simple temple visit but it was more of a museum/sightseeing tour. It started with a film in which the temple’s religion was explained and the visit continued with succession of rooms in which sorts of little robotic characters explained us the

history of the creator of the temple and the values that the religion represented. Afterwards, we went on a boat ride, which showed us what the Indians had invented, discovered...

Towards mid-afternoon, we took a break to eat and settle down, because we had already been walking for a few hours. The pollution was very bad. In fact, the more time passed, the thicker and darker the cloud became, and the sun was like a big red circle. It was hot, and we were all exhausted. We were a bit disappointed not to have our phones to take pictures because the place was magnificent. In the evening, we went to sit around the enormous fountain to admire a spectacular music-water-light show. The show was about several gods and it was just incredible. I think we all will keep amazing memories of this moment.



After this long day, we all went back to our host families, ate and enjoyed the beautiful moments of sharing.

**Maëlle et Zoé**

## Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2019

In the morning, we went to the school named BAL BHARATI where we played a football match. We played against the girl football team of the school but sadly, we lost.

Later, we gave a presentation about Switzerland to an Indian class. Then we had many lessons before going eating at home at 2 PM.



In the afternoon, all the Swiss went by car, metro or train with our partner to a big market in the center of New Delhi. It was very colorful, and it smelt very nice because there were many spices. Our Indian partners wanted us to buy every single thing in the little shops.

Then we were hungry and some of us went back home, but a group of 3 Swiss students, their partner and I went with Gautham's parent (Gautham is an Indian partner) to a Restaurant where we could eat meat. (As our families were vegetarians, there was no meat allowed in the house.) It was delicious. Then we went to the dance floor and danced until 1pm.



**Kayci and Eva**



## Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2019

We had to meet at 5:00 am at school to leave by bus. It was a 5-hour-ride until Agra.

The bus driver dropped us near Taj Mahal, and we had to take some kind of shuttle car to go to the entry where we waited for 20 minutes to enter. A guide was with us all day to give important information about the places we saw. In the Taj Mahal complex, our teacher payed a photographer to take good pictures. We then went through Taj Mahal's park and visited the main palace, which was very impressive.



Afterwards, we went back to the exit and had to walk a little while being followed by poor people who tried to sell us some cheap souvenirs. We took Touktouks through Agra and went to a shop, which tried to sell us mini Taj-Mahals and souvenirs. We then left for the Red Fort and visited it still guided by our tour guide.

After this last visit, the guide left us, and we went back to the bus happily to have seen such beautiful places but tired by this adventure.

The way back to Delhi also took us about 5 hours. Most of us were sleeping and we arrived at about 20:30.

I think everybody was happy to get a shower and go to bed.

**Taïs and Jacob**



## Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2019

### “Lunch party”

In the morning of that day, we were allowed to sleep much longer than the other days because it was a day off.

One of our hosts kindly invited us to a lunch party which took place in a very nice garden.



For this occasion, we were asked to put on traditional colorful Indian clothes.

All the girls looked like princesses!

Before lunch, we danced on music that our hosts listen to as well as on our own music.

We had the opportunity to eat various Indian vegetarian dishes, such as dal (lentil preparation), naan (flat bread), and paneer (dish with Indian cheese). As desert, we ate barfi (sweet made out of almonds).

Then, after a pleasant day and various games such as musical chairs, we left the party one after another.

Everyone returned home with their host and made other activities with their host family.



**Bastien and Selma**



## Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2019



This week the pollution was so high that school had been cancelled for all the students in New Delhi.

We met at school as usual. This morning we were going to Teri Gram, a big research institute, in Gurugram next to New Delhi.

The journey was in a bus. From there we were able to discover some new faces of Delhi and the surroundings of the city. We were welcomed and then we saw a short presentation talking about the activities and goals of Teri Gram. The presentation was interesting and impressive.

The visit, which talked about how to economize electricity, was interesting. However, the experiments that they showed us were logical and in addition, we already knew some of them. The subject we enjoyed the most was an invention, which helps the farmers to reduce the amount of pesticide they use for agriculture.



In the afternoon, we enjoyed the time with our families and a lot of us did henna drawing on the hands. It is called Mehendi.

Around 8 pm we all (except 3 of us) went to the house of one host to have dinner. We played games, listened to music, talked a lot and ate delicious Indian food.

**Alizée & Alice**

## Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2019



For the last day, the Indians organized a farewell ceremony at school. We all had to wear traditional clothes and they gave us a gift from the school. Then we had to make a parade with our partner and we had to do an Indian choreography that we learned in the school the week before. This was very funny, and the ceremony was warmly arranged. Every person went on stage with her host family and they spoke about the great time we had together and how

they loved welcoming us in India. It was very touching. Afterwards, we had lunch at school and then we went back to our partner's house.

In the afternoon, we were all in our families and we enjoyed the last moment with our family.

In the evening, we all met at the airport. We were sad to leave this beautiful country and the goodbyes to our host families were very emotional. Before leaving around midnight, we just had time to eat a cake for Céline's birthday her hosts organized for her. We took the plane to go back home and landed in Switzerland early in the morning, all very tired but happy about

our  
experience  
in India.



Claire and Aurélie