

INTERNATIONAL BUDDY EXCHANGE Experience report

Hello everyone,

I am an international student studying Mechatronics at the University of Siegen since 2019. I come from Mumbai, India and I am living in Siegen for more than 3 years now. I received a lot of help from senior students during my application phase back in India in 2019. I decided back then that I'll never restrain myself from sharing my knowledge however it may be with new and upcoming students. Also, it is my principle to return the help I received by multiplying it 100 times more. So, this was my motivation to participate in the Buddy program and I wish to keep this cycle going. I am happy to help the new upcoming students and would like to tell them to ask their doubts or questions however silly or difficult they may seem to be. Don't keep them within. I'll try my level best to give you an answer. I am very much satisfied with the experience I had in this program. I got to learn a lot and I would reflect on these learnings in the next buddy program.

My Buddy is Mr. Mohamad Shafiee Jaddini from Syria and he studies Embedded systems. He is one of the most motivated guys about his academics whom I have met in Siegen. He is very curious about his studies and he is ready to explore every possibility and opportunity in his field of expertise. We communicated in English language with each other. I helped him with my knowledge about the city and some of the immediate administrative processes that have to be done by a new student. But, Since my academic background is different from his. I connected him with another friend of mine from Shafiee's study program so that he can get good guidance for his academics too. We met each other at almost every buddy program event and we also communicated with each other through Whatsapp. Most of the time the topic we casually discussed was the geographical climate of Syria and India when compared to the winters of Siegen, Germany.

In my opinion, the education culture between Syria and India has a lot of similarities. The education is more focused on Research and Theory and to gain more practical exposure, the students choose to come to Developed countries like Germany for higher education and research standards.

When I am asked to speak about one activity in the buddy program which had a great impact on me on a personal level will always be the Group event "**Dinner in the Dark**" that we had in **Dunkelcafe**, Siegen. It was an unforgivable experience for me. It was a completely new experience for almost everyone and I am very happy that we did it.

INTERNATIONAL BUDDY EXCHANGE Experience report

In the beginning when we entered the dark room and struggled to find the table. We all worked as one team and finally after a lot of struggle we found our respective places. Nobody will ever know who helped whom because of the theme of the dinner. But, one thing that I learned that day was no matter how divided people are by country, race, or color, one language that can bring everyone together is **Food**. So, food was the language that brought us together that day and the event turned out to be an unforgivable experience for almost everyone. I would genuinely like to thank **Ms. Aha, Stefanie** for organizing such an amazing event and also the other events too in this program.

Finally, I would like to conclude that being a local buddy was a very interesting and fun experience for me. I got to meet a lot of new students and I made new friends from different nations. I would always recommend new students and present students to participate in the buddy exchange program every semester. Because I believe that whatever knowledge we have and we might feel is little might be a lot for someone else. So, the best way to find out is to share this knowledge. By doing this we also get to learn a lot and that's what life is all about "**a continuous learning process**".

Thank You.