

Rijnlands Lyceum Oegstgeest gives a whole new level to EUMIND student exchanges

JUNE 2015, OEGSTGEEST, THE NETHERLANDS It was the fourth EUMIND delegation in a row that Jamnabai Narsee School from Mumbai, India had sent to their partner school in the Netherlands, Rijnlands Lyceum in Oegstgeest. Since 2012, these two schools have developed strong connections, warmly working together on the field of student exchanges.

This year's exchange proved to be the most successful one thus far, in terms of educational value and level of understanding each other's way of life. The combination of education, culture and entertainment was considered highly satisfactory to both students and teachers. For the educational part, the Rijnlands Lyceum had invited the company called 'Consulting Kids' (www.consultingkids.nl) to organize an in-house workshop on brainstorming and problem-solving.



Usually, Consulting Kids operates on corporate demand, with companies or institutions acting as business managers asking the consultants to tackle their issues. What makes Consulting Kids special, is that instead of sending over men and women in gray suits to write a solution after weeks of costly investigation, they visit children, from primary schools and up, to ask for their insights. Therefore, the kids are the consultants: the company only trains them to facilitate the process. And in the end they report back to the business manager.



For the exchange, Rijnlands Lyceum together with Consulting Kids developed a slightly altered version to fit the program: Dutch students were to be challenged to tackle Indian societal problems, and vice versa. This proved to be a very meaningful enterprise.

After a series of exercises on the fields of brainstorming, problem analysis, problem solving and so on, the students were divided into groups of four. Each group was tasked to solve one specific

issue from the country of their fellow students. For example, one Dutch group was challenged to deal with tensions in Indian society sparked by caste system. And an Indian group was supposed to solve

the problems in the Netherlands connected to Dutch people of Moroccan descent. Other topics were the position of women in India, the decline of voters at national elections in the Netherlands, terrorist threats in India, the transition to renewable energy in the Netherlands, illiteracy in India and Islamic extremism in the Netherlands.



After researching and writing, Dutch students were asked to advise their fellow Indian students on the process, and vice versa. To help each other solve your country's problems, means to truly open up, expose your culture's vulnerability and accept each other's guidance. That specifically was very meaningful.



The next day, all groups presented their analysis and solutions, using the techniques that Consulting Kids had taught them. Through this project, the students (both Dutch and Indian) were enabled to truly and thoroughly look in to each other's culture. To understand their mentality, their way of life. and yet to use their own perspective to try and help their fellow's country move forward.

Results were splendid, a delight to see for Indian and Dutch teachers alike. The project, as part of all other important features of the week's program, has truly made this year's exchange the best so far. Therefore, the Rijnlands Lyceum will strive to incorporate the Consulting Kids project into all future EUMIND exchanges.

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