



Erasmus+

In Finland

18-24 February 2018



Travel Journal of Jana Süptitz

DAY 1

Sunday, February 18th . Arrival.

Our Finland adventure started at 11am at the airport Stuttgart, from where our first fly to Munich took off. After a short lunch break we got our second plane heading to Finland, Helsinki. There we met the other Erasmus+ students. Together we made the last kilometers to our final location: Sastamala.

Luckily our journey worked quiet well. There were no worth mentioning complications- Finally our Erasmus+ week can really start!!!

Finland, there we
come



DAY 2

Monday, February 19th . Day at school.

My first day at Vammalan lukio high school was really interesting:

- 1) What are the most obvious/striking differences between Finnish and your mother tongue?

What do you consider to be the most peculiar thing about our language?

→ The most peculiar thing about the Finnish language is the way they pronounce the “r” .

That’s perhaps the biggest difference between German and Finish. Some words are spelled the same or at least very similar:

German	Finnish
Auto	auto
Sauna	sauna
Lakritz	lakritsi

2) What about the school lessons, classroom, equipment, staff etc.)?

➔ What I really liked about Finnish school is the motivating opening, which is given by the students or teachers. I also liked the warm and free atmosphere between people, students even call some of their teachers with first name. This is something, which is quite different in Germany: the relationship between teachers and students is very polite and more reserved.

The classrooms themselves don't look too different from ours in Germany, apart from the fact, that everyone is allowed to use a laptop in classes. What I found really interesting is that the Gym hall is located in the first floor. What was a bit strange is that lunch time is so early.

3) What was beneficial/interesting about the survey? What about setting up the teams and instructing them? And the instructions for setting up a panel discussion?

➔ The survey was kind of the starting shot for our project. We started to concentrate about our project and the topic "How to increase political participation of young people". Furthermore the survey is a chance to evaluate our development through the week.

➔ The setting up of the teams went quickly and well, I also liked that care has been taken that every nation is represented in each of the project teams.

➔ The instruction to the panel discussion could have been improved a bit: our team wasn't sure about the structure and the rules to follow. Sadly we hadn't an idea about how a panel discussion could look like. An idea for improvement: giving a model panel discussion or showing a short video of a panel discussion.



DAY 3

Tuesday, February 20th . Trip to Helsinki.

The most interesting facts about the Finnish democracy and the Finnish parliament are that Finland was one of the first countries, which gave women the right to vote and to get voted. What I also found really interesting is that Finland itself is an independent state for only 100 years.

A lot of symbols and roots of Finnish democracy can be found in Helsinki: for instance all the statues (Statue of Mannerheim, Statue of Alexander II.), as well as big buildings like their museums or the Parliament house.

Helsinki is a big and multicultural city in the south of Finland, directly located at the sea. The way of life here is a lot different than at Sastamala. It feels more international. This is why you get a better impress of the traditional Finnish culture in Sastamala. What I also recognized was that the prices (especially for food) are higher than in Germany. I was wondering whether the wages of Finnish people are accordingly higher.



DAY 4

Wednesday, February 21th . Winter fun at Ellivuori.

Time runs over far too fast: Already halftime of our week-where has the time gone?

- 1) How was your day? Which of the activities did you enjoy the most? What was the best/most interesting/exciting thing about a typical Finish winter sports/activity day?

→ I most enjoyed cross country skiing and snow mountain biking. All in all I have the feeling that Finnish people spending quiet a lot of time outside, although the temperatures can be really cold. In the afternoon I went cross country skiing with my host too, which was a lot of fun.



- 2) What about the evening at Levo hunting lodge? How was traditional Finnish sauna?

→ Our evening at Levo hunting lodge was simply great. We had fried sausages the second time this day (but I wouldn't mind even if I had it every day;) and a delicious buffet with lots of homemade desserts. The typical Finnish sauna was my personal highlight of the day. We all grew into the Finnish culture this evening and I must admit that I love this evening tradition of the Finns (with sausages, sauna and singing). We all took the chance to talk to the people from the other nations a lot and to get to know each other better. We also continued with a Erasmus+ tradition to sing country specific songs for the other students, so everybody got an insight to Finnish, Italian, Estonian, Scottish and German music. The atmosphere was very international and open-hearted.



DAY 5

Thursday, February 22th . Working on the panel discussion.

The presentations:

The presentations were really interesting: I didn't know before that Finland declared its independence during the Russian revolution at the 6th of December 1917. I didn't know as well that Finland started a civil war in 1918.

In Finland political participation of young people decreases, so is Germany. Probable reasons for this aren't just a lack of interest and laziness but especially, that they don't have an own opinion about politics and don't get informed enough. Possible solutions are introducing online voting and lowering the voting age to 16.

The team work:

I think it went quite good: First we were searching for answers to all of the questions, afterwards we did some research in the internet to find files and figures about the topic "How to increase political participation of young people" generally (and because I'm going to take part at the panel discussion tomorrow) to the situation in Germany in specific. We also wrote an introduction speech.

Well, I felt well supported by any of them, so I think all contributed equally.

DAY 6

Friday, February 23th . Panel discussion.

Finally the big day has come- goal of all our work

All in all I'm happy with my performance at the panel discussion. I think I brought up some good points and gave my best to comment on what the others said and to engage the audience.

Sadly, the discussion didn't get to role properly. Most of the time, everybody was answering on one of the moderators questions step by step. There was not a lot of reply to somebody else. Maybe because we all weren't too sure about how to give a panel discussion or perhaps just because it was the first panel discussion time for most of us.



Day 7

Saturday, February 24th . Returning home.

Last day, saying goodbye, returning home and I wish I could have stayed longer



- 1) What did you learn of the project countries and Finland during the visit in general?
 - ➔ I learned more about the other countries than I can put into words, I learned that Italians are very warm and open hearted people while Estonians are more reserved. I learned that the Estonian and the Finnish language are similar to each other, so they can understand parts of the other language, I learned that poor Germans are the only one, who grew up without Moomins;) ... well I don't know how to mention everything. But most important: I met magnificent people from five different nations. I met very warm and open hearted people and made friendships across state borders.
- 2) What kind of ideas/thoughts/information did you get concerning
 - a) The political participation and interest in politics among people your age?
 - ➔ Scotland is the only of the participating countries in which the participation of young people increases during the last elections. According to the Scottish girls this can be explained because of the importance of the Brexit election and the

survey to the Scottish referendum. These are topics which concern the youth. While as the participation of young people decrease in the other four countries. Nevertheless most of the participating Erasmus+ students were really interested in politics.

b) The ways and means of becoming a more active citizen?

→ I learned that political participation already starts at school. For instance in the policy lesson or in the student council. Political education is the fundament of understanding the importance of taking part in policy and to vote.

