



Weitblick Münster, W19/20

Student Exchange Report

Okpeicha Omonnikan Michel
michelokpeich@gmail.com

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University and everyday life in Münster

I love Münster for its many bicycles, its bicycle paths all over the city, its many young people and students, its many bars and clubs. Münster is not boring, it is a very diverse city with exciting cultural activities and Aasee is a beautiful lake to take a walk around. My adaptation to the cold and very humid climate of Münster was a real challenge at the very beginning of my stay but the adaptation was quick with the warm clothes and it became comfortable than the warm climate of Benin at the end. At university, I like the way the lessons are run. The courses I had, were:

- Strategic Management Accounting,
- Business Ethics,
- Performance Management and Strategy Execution,
- German and
- Academic English

The teachers are always punctual during class hours with all their attention focused on the course and on us students. The questions and interventions of each and every one were made in a friendly and respectful atmosphere. It was a good experience from this sense of responsibility and dedication of the teachers and their assistants. I felt most comfortable following them in classes. But I didn't notice the best solidarity and friendship among the home students and international peers in my business administration classes as it's customary in Benin.

Furthermore, like any other student, foreign students present a huge opportunity to universities, and to home students, to enhance the global skills of everyone, bring valuable knowledge and skills. I think the challenge for academic departments will be to convince home students that they can benefit and learn from working and socialising with overseas students.

During the revision period for the exams, the libraries are always full; the only chance to get a place is to be early in the morning. And the recommended books for further knowledge in the examination subjects are never available in the library during this period. It's working hard times, when all the students are serious and focused only on studying.

Finally, concerning my sports activities, mastering breathing in the water was a challenge at the beginning of swimming, but with time it became very playful little competitions with the other Erasmus students. As for football with my team, our first successful game familiarized and at

the end of the first match we were talking and laughing just like old friends; it's unforgettable experiences in Münster.

Activities with Weitblick Münster

Amazing Weitblick's members, we have eaten together, sung, danced, drunk, discussed, spoken without looking down on each other. Oh my God, I will miss all these Münster's parties; damn it!

The breakfasts, lunches and dinners' times were very nice and memorable moments of discussions on topics such as our passions, languages, our projects, climate change, the education system of our countries, the histories of our countries, culture and cultural differences, political system, family, religions, youth orientation, youth unemployment and so on. The difficult part was finding the right time for everyone to meet up.

We have participated in sustainable development projects such as "Fridays for future", an international movement of students which main aim is to draw



attention to the inadequacy of climate policy, to demand measures to protect the climate and to demand compliance with the Paris Climate Agreement. Also, the participation in the Countdown 2030, 2063 & Beyond Conference from 02 to 06 December 2019 in Cologne, which brought together young people who are already active in international exchanges. It was announced that if temperatures continue to rise beyond 2030, we will face more frequent droughts and floods, with extreme heat and the poverty of 100 million people. So, the conference allowed us mainly as young people from the 05 continents and 22 countries to explore and question the 2030 and 2063 agendas. I'm particularly committed to education for all because education is a powerful weapon that can be used to change the world. Similarly, I am passionately interested in ecological issues, in the protection of endangered species for a sustainable and peaceful world as I used to do well in Benin in my district.

Some films and documentaries have also brought us together such as "Schooling the World". This film allowed us to examine the failure of institutional education to deliver on its promise to lift people out of poverty - both in the United States and in the so-called developing world.

And ‘White Charity’ documentary from what we have learned different perspectives based on the charity ad posters, and how the representatives of charities and scientists discuss development cooperation, colonial fantasies, racism and power structures.

So nice to hang out with people at Weitblick, we learned from the City Museum of Münster specific topics and aspect of the city’s artistic and cultural history: the peace of Westphalia, contemporary young art, historical rarities, the city’s history or foreign worlds and so on. At the Soul of Africa Museum in Essen, we understood lots about the traditional beliefs and rites of West African vodun culture. We were interested in secret of Africa societies, magic, healing practices, voodoo, zombies, and ancestor spirits.

Christmas’ holidays

Christmas season was the best and funny of my times in Germany with Weitblick. We made many perfect Christmas cookies by rolling out the cookie dough, cutting them in fun shapes and decorating them. And enjoy the Christmas market with the German mulled wine (Gluhwein) that really comforts during the cold winter. This is part of the charm of the holidays that brought us together during the Christmas period, I take the opportunity to say hello to Jana W. for one of these best Gluhwein evenings. So funny "proud woman".

It was amazing Christmas times with Jana’s family in Bonn, I was warm welcomed with many types of Christmas’ cakes and many topics in our small talks at the coffee table. At Christmas eve’s mass celebration, the church was completely full. I was surprised that after texts readings, the young people came on stage to sketch about climate change and sensitize the actions we can take to reduce climate change’s effects. At the end of the mass, it was a pleasure to take some nice pictures with the crib of Christmas. After church, at home, we sang many Christmas songs in Deutsch, English, and French as well. With the Lyrics everyone could sing, Jana’s

Dad was playing Piano, Sarah and Jana were doing pretty good with their flutes and kindly her mum was taking care of everything. Then the whole family joined us, Jana’s grandparents. We had raclette foods, potatoes, mushrooms, cheese, meat, vegetables, beers, wine, and so on. Afterward, it was time for the presents, gifts. I was not expecting gifts honestly because, in Benin, only children and teenagers use to receive Christmas gifts from their parents. then I was



surprised and so excited with many presents, like a wafer machine, head massager, a bottle of water, WWU Münster's t-shirt, cookies, sweets and so on. On Christmas day, after breakfast, we went with Jana's mother to the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, one of the most popular German museums. I have learned a lot about German history from 1945 until the present. It was so interesting with a vivid presentation of historical events, it's a collection of German history and the German division after 1945. The political history of the Federal Republic of Germany and former East Germany is the common thread of the permanent exhibition. And continue the celebration by having deer's meat for dinner. On 26th we went with Jana's father to the Alexander Koenig Research Museum which is a natural history museum and zoological research institution in Bonn. I learned about the diversity of species of Earth". The main exhibition is titled "Our blue planet - living in a network". It shows complex ecological systems through dioramas of the African Savannah, tropical rain forests, the polar regions, deserts, and Central Europe. I left Bonn and very nice Wolff's family at 06 pm after many nice small talks. Lovely of them, I'm so grateful.

So as difference, in Benin, Christmas is very often celebrated with friends and not with parents and is dedicated especially to children. On the evening of December 24th, Christians go to church for the celebration of the nativity of Jesus. The next morning, the children find gifts at the bedside and this announces the beautiful color of the feast from the early morning. The feast is remarkable on the 25th of December with lots of food mainly rice with meats and drinks such as beers and sweets. I noticed that the Christmas celebration is lots of fun and commercial periods in Germany and in Benin as well.

The New Year's Eve was a very nice evening celebration as well with Manh Tin, Tobi, and some Weitblickers, we ate, drank and went to Kreativkai to watch and light fireworks at midnight then we came back to our party for dancing all night long. While in Benin, New Year's Eve is celebrated with family by going to church, go out to watch and light fireworks or go the club or to the bar for drinks. The first day of the year is celebrating with lots of food and drinks as well. I like both ways of new year's celebration.

End of semester trips

During the end of the semester holidays, I was able to make some trips from Germany to France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. It was a great pleasure to visit Paris, the capital of fashion and design for my first time. Visiting tourist sites such as the Eiffel Tower, Musée de l'Ouvre, the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs Elysées in Paris and Manneken Pis, Grand-place, Atomium,

the Galeries Royales Saint Hubert in Brussels in Belgium considered as the political capital of the European Union. And a very nice time in Berlin with Andreas Pletziger, visit of the Brandenburg Gate, Memorial to the Murdered Jews, The Berlin Wall Memorial, The topography of the Terrors, Checkpoint Charlie, Gendarmenmarkt and many cities in Germany such as Cologne, Frankfurt, Paderborn, Bonn, Nordhorn, Meppen, Papenburg, Essen, Dusseldorf, These trips were moments of deep reflection and personal questioning on the dynamism of trade in Europe, the development of the economy, tourism and transport infrastructures.



Personnel reflection

I had two main reasons for applying for the Weitblick scholarship. The first one is the possibility to have my business administration classes in English and to learn German. English is considered the universal language for its flexibility, the first language for research in any field such as business and finance. Today, I feel that my English has really improved and I am preparing myself well for a Ph.D. application thanks to Weitblick. German is important for me too, to communicate easily with my German friends and today this is possible in our basic conversations and for economic reasons, Germany is the second-largest exporter in the world and number one in Europe. I really enjoyed these six months; I learned a lot in my field and improved my language skills.

The second reason is to get to know a culture that is totally different and make new friends. I can say that I have broadened my perspective of the world and believe that a peaceful society needs: freedom, a sense of responsibility and strong institutions. I had a lot of fun in Munster, improved myself personally and made many new friends for life. It's awesome.

As feedbacks, it would be nice for indigenous students at university to get out of the comfort zone and engaging with international peers. And my idea about the best way of doing it is for the academic departments to create a group's tasks and projects where the varied backgrounds and perspectives of students from different origins are working and learning together. And so it will be helpful for the next exchange students to have important books available in libraries or buy them for their studies and that their return to Benin well prepared with the help of Weitblick.