

Sept. 13, 2018  
SIP/OIN Program

Program Response:

It was a really special experience and I would highly, highly recommend it. India is one of the most beautiful places on earth – the colours, the people, the art, the beaches, the rural farming areas and the history all play such an integral part to making such an incredible country. I would highly recommend visiting with the SIP/OIN Program. Please do not let preconceived notions about India keep you from experiencing such a wonderful opportunity.

The program, although sometimes unorganized, was put together by some of the most dedicated people I have ever met. They welcomed us with kind hearts and open minds. Mrunal took very good care of us and ensured we were having the best time possible. Ashkay had spent many hours with us at hospitals and registration offices – giving up his spare time to make sure everything ran smoothly. Anjali took care of us and connected with us as a mother would. This wonderful program would not have been possible without these wonderful people – I would recommend you fly to India just to meet these fantastic people.

The program is very similar to how it is described – workshops and classes. Although, we only spent 4 days integrated with Indian students. We spent a lot of time at workshops such as cricket, Bollywood dance and painting instead of truly immersing ourselves in an Indian educational environment. The workshops were prepared for only the participants of the SIP/OIN program, which left little room for socializing and making new friends. However, when we did attend the classes, the other students were welcoming and although the teachers were not informed of us visiting their classes, they were also very willing to let us participate in class discussion and listen to their lecture. The classes were an interesting part – I wish we spent more time integrated into the classroom rather than slightly unorganized workshops/events.

The campus was beautiful. It is in the outskirts of town, and not close to good shopping opportunities or street foods but the facilities are beautiful. There is a space for two to share a room comfortably. There was a self-serve laundry machine and a place to dry clothes! It was clean, cool and comfortable. It was very luxurious. There is a mall (Phoenix Mall) only 10 minutes away from the guest house that has everything you could possibly need – from new phones to groceries. However, it does not have a pharmacy.

We had some rough moments – two of the six participants had to visit the hospital for stomach bugs or dehydration. In both instances, an English-speaking hospital staff was communicating in Hindi or only speaking to the program administrators rather than the patient. It was inappropriate and was not handled properly. There is a 5-star general hospital near campus. If medical assistance is necessary, please insist that the program administrators take you there instead of to their friends/family doctors. I recommend bringing medication that you are familiar with to avoid visiting a medical facility. I brought peptobismol, immodium, tumms, malaria pills, hydration tablets, vitamin c tablets, and every advil I could think of. I took medication I was familiar with and healed quite quickly when I caught a stomach bug.

I met some wonderful people from all over India and Europe on this trip. I would highly recommend it. It was an enriching opportunity that I am grateful for.