

The last two years we have been hosting YAPpers in the Netherlands. Both years I joined the tour and every time I had the time of my life with the YAPpers from different countries. It has always been a dream of me to participate in a YAP tour as well. I was so happy to finally participate in my first YAP tour through South India especially to meet all the different amazing people and off course to see all the new things that India can offer me. It's so beautiful to see that everybody treats you like a member of their family and they will do everything for you to make you feel comfortable and happy and I think that's one of the most beautiful things about the YAP tour.

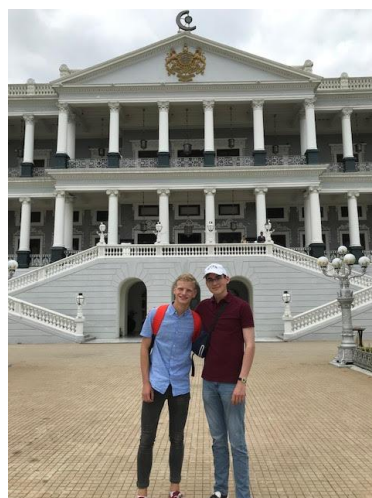
On the 14th of July Lukas (Austria), Sindri (Iceland) and I met at the airport in Dubai to fly together to Hyderabad, our first stop. Driving from the airport to the city centre was a big surprise, because the



Indian traffic was way different from the traffic in Europe. In the afternoon we had some time to take some rest and settle for the upcoming days in Hyderabad. In the evening we had a party where we watched tennis and where finally together with all the twelve YAPpers. Our group was a mix between five German people, two from Denmark, one Austria, Iceland, Belgium, UK

and me from The Netherlands. The other days in Hyderabad where lovely as well.

The activities where a good mix between culture, party and relax. We visited the Taj Falaknuma Palace,



the city centre, a factory where they produce traditional Indian clothes and a lot more beautiful places. The YAP group became so close with the people from Hyderabad that the goodbye was more difficult, but it's beautiful to see how close the YAP group became in such a short time and from that time we knew that this was going to be a trip that we would never forget.

From Hyderabad we went by train to our next stop Vijayawada. The welcome was very good ,but it was surprisingly hot. We did a lot of interesting and fun stuff in Vijayawada things as playing games, sports with the 41 club and round table of Vijayawada. We also visited a very beautiful fort on a big

mountain in the middle of the nature. While we were visiting the fort it started raining really hard. It was a surprise but it gave a really nice atmosphere because the fort was located in the forest.

The third stop was Chennai. In my opinion this was one of the best cities because it was located next to the beach. We had a short but very nice time in Chennai. We finally had time with the group together to just relax and talk with each other. The main activity that we did in Chennai was definitely surfing. We had so much fun and almost the whole group was able to stand up on the surf board.



Unfortunately it was a short visit in Chennai, however it was still very interesting to see how fast we became friends with all the people.

After Chennai we took a domestic flight to Madurai, also known as the city of temples and that was absolutely right, because we visited a really beautiful temple and a palace. We couldn't make pictures at the temple but it was huge. It was a big complex with four main towers and seven small towers between the four towers. Madurai gave me a really good view of the old Indian culture. In the afternoon we climbed one of the mountains that was located near to the city.





After a six hour drive in the van we reached Coimbatore, our fifth stop. We were welcomed with coconuts, flower chains and a poster with all of our names. In the evening we participated in an AGM and we played games with all of the 41 club members of Coimbatore. In Coimbatore we visited the Shiva's temple where we experienced the tradition of meditation and yoga and we visited the giant statue of the head of the god Shiva. We also visited the forest where they teaches us a few things of a traditional farm in India. On the last day in Coimbatore we did something more adventures, because we went kayaking, hiking and played different sports.

After Coimbatore we were supposed to go to Calicut, but unfortunately because of the really bad weather we skipped Calicut and we divided the two days in Calicut over Coimbatore and Mysore.



We had a very relaxed stay in Mysore, because we were in Mysore for four nights. The son of my host participated in the YAP program through The Netherlands so it was a nice experience to visit his family in India, because he was not at home.



The first time I saw the big palace I was surprised by the size of the palace. It was so big and beautiful, but the palace had one more surprise. Every Sunday evening all the lights that are placed on the palace light up. It was an experience that I would never forget. It was so beautiful. Also the inside of the palace was very

interesting because a lot of things are from different European countries. After the palace we visited the famous zoo. One of the many things that we visited in Mysore was the largest IT company in Asia called Infosys. It was huge. For example we went from one side of the complex to the other by golf car and it took fifteen minutes. Because Calicut was cancelled we saw an elephant for the first time in Mysore, because we went to an elephant farm. We were able to feed and pet the elephants which was quite an experience. After the farm we went rafting, because there was a river located next to the farm. It was so cool, because the river was so beautiful and the nature around. We also had the opportunity to swim in the river.



Bellary was one of the highlights of my trip although it was a short stop it was still a highlight, because we visited two absolutely beautiful temples and one of them had a lovely elephant. The elephant is holy so that's why it had marks with paint on his skin. Everybody of the group was blessed by the elephant. My host was a big collector of 41 club and round table stuff. He gave me a really good view of how it feels to be a tabler or 41 member. We also had a pool party in the evening.

Our last stop was one of the biggest cities that we've visited. We were welcomed at Bangalore airport and in the evening we had a party at the house of a 41 club member. In Bangalore we visited a horse race track which was very interesting because I had never seen horse racing before. We had lunch at a golf club and visited a chocolate factory. Our last night together in India was magical, because it was the last time that we were together as a group. It was an emotional but lovely evening.



We really could see how much impact the trip had on our friendship. In such a short time we became really good friends and I personally think that is one of the most beautiful parts of a YAP tour.



If I could I would definitely stay for a longer time. It is really hard to capture the beauty of the trip in this story and I feel so lucky that I had the opportunity to make all these friends from all over the world. I really would like to thank all the host families that took such a good care of us the trip wouldn't be the same without them. I hope that everybody can have this experience like I had whatever happens or who you are, you will enjoy the trip. I think that is the beautiful part of the 41 club and round table.

Robin Cox