

# **Enhancing Global Competency through Student Exchange**

*Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders: International Exchange Program with the Catholic University of Applied Sciences North Rhine Westphalia*

The CHRIST University and the Catholic University of Applied Sciences North Rhine Westphalia (katho) are excited to announce the continuation of our successful academic partnership through the DREAMS-Project, part of our DAAD Project "Social Responsibility and Leadership in Communities" (SoL). This year, we are proud to invite four distinguished students, including Devika Mahesh, Samiksha Periwal, Shruthi Sachin Mahajan, Sakshi S Arjunagi to participate in a transformative Student Exchange Program from June 01 to June 09, 2024, in Cologne and Muenster.

## **Program Overview**

The DREAMS-Project, conceptualized in India by Dr. Lijo Thomas Pathickel from CHRIST University, focuses on the resilience and holistic development of young people. Since 2021, katho students in Germany have been engaging with this project, fostering a robust exchange of ideas and cultural practices.

## **During the exchange, students will**

- Visit pupils, students, and partner schools in Cologne.
- Engage in discussions on how cultural differences affect young people's problem-solving approaches.
- Attend English Seminars at katho.
- Visit Social Work and Psychology institutions.

These activities aim to provide a deeper understanding of the DREAMS project and enhance the academic collaboration between CHRIST University and katho.

## **LUD Grants: Supporting Global Educational Exchanges**

The Learning and Understanding Development (LUD) Grants play a pivotal role in supporting initiatives like the DREAMS-Project. These grants provide crucial financial assistance to students, enabling them to participate in international

exchanges that broaden their horizons and enhance their professional and personal growth.

## LUD Grants are designed to

- Foster cultural understanding and global competencies.
- Encourage the sharing of best practices in education and social work.
- Promote leadership skills and social responsibility among students.

## Key Learnings and Experiences



1. During our stay we visited Ferdinand Lassalle Realschule (school), where we engaged with 5th-grade students who displayed remarkable enthusiasm and curiosity. We introduced them to the DREAMS program and our roles within it. The students were highly interested and asked numerous questions, indicating their eagerness to understand and potentially participate in the intervention program.



2. Another highlight was our visit to "Lobby For Girls" in Cologne, a recognized youth welfare organization offering support to girls and young women, including those with disabilities and from migration backgrounds. This visit underscored the

importance of diversity and tailored support services, which resonated with the challenges faced by young women in both Germany and India. The interactive nature of this visit provided a deeper understanding of the common social issues and potential solutions.



3. We also attended a workshop led by my colleague Devika on "The Effect of Poetry Intervention on Emotional Intelligence among Indian Young Adults," which was both insightful and thought-provoking. Additionally, sessions on social psychological findings on prejudice and discrimination, including topics like sexism, racism, ableism, xenophobia, and ageism, were particularly enlightening. These discussions allowed us to draw parallels and contrasts between the social contexts of India and Germany, promoting the cultural differences and common grounds.

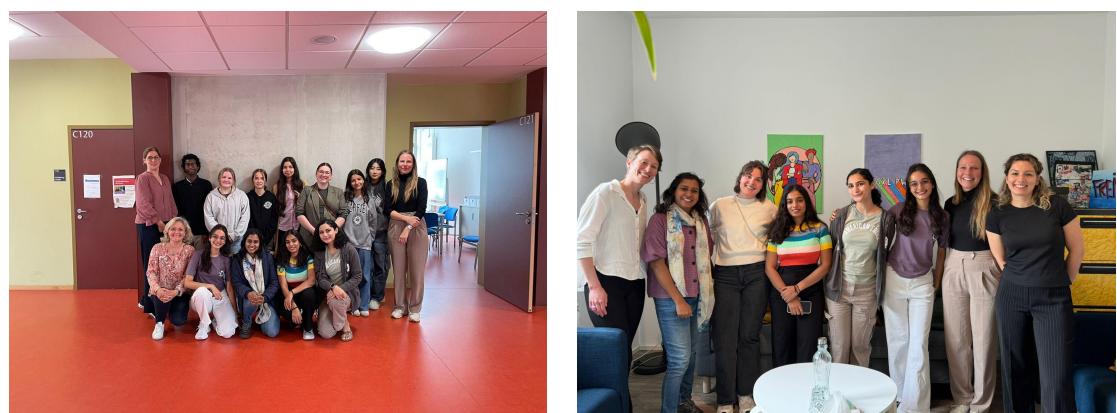


4. A particularly engaging part of the program was the discussion on social work: data, competencies, and digital values in practice. This included a critical evaluation of AI and its implications, debates on data protection, and the significance of digital ethics. Our visit to the AI Museum in Bonn further connected these discussions to

practical applications and historical perspectives, enriching our understanding of AI's role in society.



5. The program also included an educational visit to learn about European borders, particularly between the Netherlands and Germany. We explored the historical changes from rigid to more flexible borders and discussed the implications of such changes, particularly in the context of post-World War dynamics. This historical insight was informative in understanding the broader socio-political landscape of Europe.





In conclusion, this exchange program has been instrumental in broadening my perspectives on educational methodologies, social work, and cultural understanding. The insights gained will undoubtedly enhance my contributions to the DREAMS program and my academic endeavors.