

The students and colleagues had the opportunity to learn and improve their skills in archery and were acquainted with pretty unique animals. [No animal got hurt in the making of this teambuilding]

Every year, the months of September and October are a crucial period for the International Office. Hundreds of international students are arriving at the university, and for many, this is the first time they leave their home country and their family. Pre-arrival advice, support with visa process, information on living in Germany, travel advice, etc. – our main goal is to help each and every one of them have a smooth start in their studies and in their new life in Germany. This includes planning welcome events, orientation sessions, and various social activities in and around Heidelberg. In addition, once all the students have settled in, we in the International Office host our famous annual International Week, with guest lecturers from our partner universities.

To support us, we are very lucky to count on an active team of student helpers! Working as a team demands building trust and learning to communicate openly, especially given the intercultural aspect of the group. To help the students get to know each other, and because work can also be fun, our colleague Anja Loos (International Office & Alumni Relations Manager) organised this event for the team on Friday, 17th September. In Zuzenhausen, a tiny village south of Heidelberg, we met Michael, the owner of the Adventure Centre “Erlebniszentrum Mühlekolb“. During the whole afternoon, the team took part in various activities, such as coordination games and archery, all aimed at one target – creating a strong and trustful team on which everyone can rely.

Armed with their bows and arrows, the students divided into three groups and went hunting for (fake) animal targets. After about two hours of playing Robin Hood, Michael took us on his tractor and drove us to see real woolly and fluffy animals, a dozen of beautiful lamas, where we made the acquaintance of two newly arrived lamas, Mr Maier and Mr Müller. After feeding the friendly animals, it was time to feed our hungry team members with a well-prepared BBQ. Then, we planned different events for the upcoming semester start and International Week. As Prajwal Kunder, our Indian student helper in the International Business and Engineering Master Programme said, “I am looking forward to some intense volunteering ahead!”

In the train back to Heidelberg, Eduardo Giffoni de Castro Neves, our Brazilian student helper from the Dance Movement Therapy Master Programme, shared with us his impression of the day: “I need to say again to each one of you a huge thank you! You are all such fun, great, and kind people. Being together and sharing laughter and kindness makes life so much better!”

We are very pleased to have such a strong and motivated team of student helpers! We wish you all a very good start in this new academic year!

To learn more about the Erlebniszentrum Mühlekolb: <https://www.erlebniszentrum-muehlekolb.de/>

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