Cross-cultural journal

to help in analyzing your reactions in a new culture

Author: Norbert Kaplan

Country: Slovakia

1. **What have you learned about Finnish lifestyle, culture, history, society, communication etc.**

As a person who hadn’t known much about Finnish lifestyle, culture or history before I came. I can say that I have learnt very interesting facts about Finland. I had known that Finland was country of NOKIA and lakes. That’s why this course was one of must-enroll courses. Beside this course I learnt a lot about Finns just from my observation. I have seen that Finns don’t talk to each other. They don’t know how to start “small talk” but it’s okay because I don’t like when people are talking about nothing or just because they have to. If they want something, they just ask. This same is also in Slovakia. Next thing, I have found out that Finns are really “Green” and they have different bins for every type of trash. This is not common in Slovakia, we have just one bin where we throw everything. There is an opportunity to separate trash in biggest cities but people usually don’t care. Maybe I’m of the person who do separate.

 One of the difference between Finns and Slovaks is that Finns like their politicians. However, our history says that we have a reason for it. Most of Slovaks don’t like our politicians because they usually want to fill up their pockets. I have seen that many Finns do their work because it is also good for the country, not just for money.

 The Kalevala wasn’t nothing special for me because we have also similar book which was collected from Slovak people. If you want to know more you can find something on the site: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pavol_Dob%C5%A1insk%C3%BD> . Other thing we have common is passion for hockey. I would like to take part a Hockey game during my studies.

 One thing I don’t like that Finns are very strict. I don’t know if “strict” is the perfect word for explaining what I mean. I miss in Finnish life a little bit of the Italian colorful lifestyle (just little bit☺). It doesn’t have to true because I know just 2 Finns and we only meet at the school where everybody puts aside the funny site of his/her personality.

 I learnt so many about Finns, Finnish culture, lifestyle, etc just in one and half a month. I found some conclusion just from my observation but I could understand the habits/behavior/way of thinking because of the course. So an exchange student, I appreciate this course.

1. **You observation /description and opinion / analysis on some event you saw**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Observation/ Description** | **Opinion / Analysis** |
| Teachers take off their shoes during a lecture and they are walking front of the screen/whiteboard just with socks. ☺ | When I saw it after two days of my arriving, I couldn’t believe what I saw. Firstly, I thought that it is because of some health issues but on next day it happened again during different lecture. Even, a woman dressed very formally and smartly was walking just in socks front of the whiteboard. That was very weird from me. Nobody, especially women, in my country would never take off their shoes during a lecture or meeting.  |