

Impactful cultural experience

SUNWAY International School (SIS) regularly encourages learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

In December 2015, this idea took flight when SIS brought a group of students and staff to South Korea last year to launch its flagship SIS Abroad programme.

Essentially a student cultural exchange programme, SIS Abroad is a two-week study abroad programme developed by Sunway International School to provide international learning opportunities for its students in three key areas – college-readiness, culture and citizenship.

The SIS Abroad exchange programme consisted of engaging on-site learning experiences, combined with Korean language classes at Kyunghwa Girls' High School and English Business High School, cultural tours of historical sites, natural attractions and Seoul city, as well as spending an unforgettable Christmas at a Korean homestay for an authentic local experience.

In piloting this inaugural study abroad session, SIS teachers had a say over the educational content and cultural experiences that students were exposed to, ensuring a well-rounded and holistic



Students travelled to South Korea under the SIS Abroad exchange programme.

balance of discovery and socialisation.

Hence, participants were presented with a programme that included classroom sessions in Korean educational institutions for introductory lessons in the Korean

language, exploratory excursions to cultural and historical sites to fully absorb and appreciate their significance, and small group discussions to enhance students' intercultural knowledge and awareness of global concerns.

Students also had the opportunity to visit a popular amusement park and spend the Christmas holidays with their Korean homestay hosts.

"Ultimately, we want our students to immerse themselves in another culture. Through living with their host families, they get acquainted with, understand and fully appreciate the norms and uniqueness of Korean culture," says Vanessa Yates, one of the teacher facilitators who supervised the trip.

SIS Abroad allows students to learn about themselves and the world and what it means to be a global citizen.

Participants in the programme gain many powerful lessons throughout the exchange, which paved the first steps to learning about citizenship.

"What captured my attention most throughout the trip was how everyone we met were affectionate, accepting and warm, each sharing with us parts of their identity. The culture has grown to become globally recognised and more advanced in technology than many other countries around the world. I thoroughly enjoyed the wholeheartedness of the staff and students at Kyunghwa School, the

traditional games, short Korean phrases and wheat-infused food. It is an experience I'll never forget," shares Grade 11 participant Hayley Lee Sue Jean.

The learning the students take away with them from SIS Abroad endows them with a sense of appreciation and acceptance for their differences, and finding traits in common to unite and learn in harmony and mutual respect.

SIS aspires to have students who can identify with being part of an emerging borderless world, who can easily adapt and assimilate into a wider community and whose actions contribute to enriching the community's values and practices.

By respecting others, valuing themselves and honouring ideas and opinions, these students are walking examples of the school's values and create a learning community that is respectful, caring and inclusive.

Learn how your child can be part of SIS' international community by visiting the SIS Parent Info Session from March 5 to 19 from 10am onwards.

■ For more information, visit sis.sunway.edu.my/PIS or call 03-7491 8070.