

A Journey Beyond Borders: My Transformative Experience Abroad

My exchange semester in France marked the beginning of a journey that would deeply transform me both as a person and as a citizen of the world.

What started as an academic pursuit became an ongoing exploration of identity, human connection, and intercultural understanding. Studying in France opened my eyes not only to new methods of learning but also to new ways of thinking, living, and communicating.

In France, I was surrounded by diversity. I met Albanians, Italians, Mexicans, Spanish...., each carrying with them their own beliefs, values, and ways of life. Our conversations were not limited to academic topics—they were rich with personal stories, shared meals, and long nights where we spoke about our dreams and the challenges of navigating between our roots and the world beyond them. These friendships taught me that culture is not something abstract it lives in people, in gestures, in food, in silence, in music.

I became more aware of how our national cultures influence the way we express emotions, resolve conflict, and form relationships. For example, I noticed that some cultures, like the Spanish and the Italians, tend to be more expressive, spontaneous, and communal, while others, like the French or Germans, might emphasize structure, formality, and individual space. But beyond stereotypes, I learned to appreciate the nuances, the in-betweens—the way individuals carry, resist, or reinterpret the norms of their cultures.

In Spain, what struck me was the joy that seemed to spill into the streets. I remember watching people dance to music in the streets, as if life itself was reason enough to celebrate. I saw a Hindu cultural celebration there, woven into the Spanish urban life, reminding me of how migration and coexistence shape the modern world. The food was more than a meal—it was a ritual of connection; I tried to speak Spanish—hesitantly at first—but the warmth and patience of the people gave me the courage to keep going. Language was no longer a barrier; it was a bridge.

In Italy, I encountered another rhythm of life. I loved how Italians speak with their whole bodies—how communication was not just verbal but emotional, physical, musical. Their architecture enchanted me: every building seemed to have a story, every piazza a memory. The people I met were deeply charismatic, and their sense of humour and lightness reminded me to take joy in the present moment. In Italy, I felt a culture of affection and openness that contrasted with other places I'd been, and I began to reflect on how values like time, beauty, and togetherness are lived differently across societies, I visited churches that echoed with stillness, spaces that made me contemplate the role of spirituality in European life—how it has evolved, persisted, or transformed in secular societies. This brought me into deeper reflection about the place of religion in shaping cultures, communities, and even silence.

Germany, on the other hand, offered a different kind of depth. I met both local Germans and Indian migrants. I was touched by the intercultural friendships they formed and how many of them engaged in conversations about identity and belonging

Traveling to Albania was an unexpected experience—one I approached with humility and curiosity. I was initially afraid to travel alone, but I was quickly embraced by people whose hospitality was deeply sincere.

Morocco, my home country, also became a place of international discovery. I met Colombians, Germans, Costa Ricans, Balinese, Brazilians, Portuguese, Americans, Tunisians, and more. These interactions showed me that intercultural exchange is not something that happens only abroad—it can happen wherever curiosity lives. I saw my own country through their eyes. I listened to how they experienced Moroccan hospitality, traditions, and even struggles. These reflections made me more critical, more empathetic, and more hopeful.

The more I travelled, the more I realized how language, religion, and national identity are not fixed categories but living, breathing realities. I became aware of my own biases, of the unconscious comparisons I made, and of how easy it is to misinterpret difference as distance. I also saw how powerful it is to connect across those differences—to find a shared rhythm in a song, a shared silence in a sacred space, a shared hope in a conversation.

This journey abroad did more than show me the world—it showed me myself. Being far from what I knew pushed me to redefine comfort, to trust strangers, to speak new languages, to listen without judgment. It made me reflect on what it means to belong, what it means to grow, and what it means to live fully.

Today, I am more patient, more reflective, and more open to change. I don't see cultures in opposition but in dialogue. I don't see people as strangers, but as teachers. And I don't see travel as escape, but as an invitation—to understand, to connect, and to become.

This was not just a journey of geography. It was a journey of the soul.

And it has just begun, and hopefully it will last so I can continue learning from different people different culture to absorb them pushing me to discover and develop myself to become a better person, for myself and my people. And in the future, I can pass my knowledge to my children and so them self could grow this passion for travelling and meeting souls from all over the world and embracing it