

Erasmus+ - Kalix 2023

Now, just one and a half weeks after our visit in Kalix, it all already feels a bit unreal. There was just so much to see and so many impressions, that I already can't remember every day anymore. Nevertheless, I think the following aspects have all been fantastic experiences.

After the visit of my exchange partner, Leon Öhlund, I already knew that travelling to Kalix takes up a lot of time. So on Friday, 17th March, we first took the train from Stuttgart Main Station to Frankfurt Airport, then flew to Stockholm, then flew to Lulea (the next big city nearby Kalix) and then drove an hour to Kalix, a city with approximately 7500 inhabitants nearby the Swedish – Finnish border.



The line to the gate and the security check at Frankfurt Airport was over 300 meters long. Good thing that we had over four hours spare time between our train and the flight.



It's safe to say that when I finally entered the cute and typical house of the Öhlunds, I was tired, but still looking forward to the first day.

On the first day, there was something you really don't have in Stuttgart: a snowstorm. So our ideas for the day were a little bit restricted by the masses of snow that were falling from the cloudy sky.

Me and the Öhlunds still went to Kalix and visited the absolutely spectacular mall with around six shops. It's funny how there wasn't a shop to buy clothes but rather a candy shop where you could mix all different kinds of sweets for a good price.



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Picture 1: view from the room in the basement I was staying in

Picture 2: first bag of candy, many to follow

But on the contrary to german malls, it was very quiet; and we spend the day hanging around and resting a bit.

The second day was the opposite of Saturday: because the weather was absolutely magnificent and we all were ready for an adventure, we got up early to go to the cabin out on the frozen baltic sea. Save to say, I had never rode a snowmobile before, but if there was any time for it, it was now. Going over 60 centimeters of ice at about 70 km/h was a unique experience that I hopefully will never forget.

Out on the sea, we were greeted by absolutely no way to get inside the cabin – there was more snow blocking us than it had snowed in Stuttgart in the last ten winters combined. But after a while, we could finally rest and appreciate the nature.



We then went on a tour with the snowmobiles to see some more of the spectacular view. Besides that, we found a place with rock solid ice going about three metres into the air, and the biggest hill in the region of Kalix with a staggering height of 33 meters. From up there, you could see ice, snow and trees as far as your sight went.



person in the middle: Oscar, Leon's little brother

smaller picture: me standing on pure ice



Back at the cabin, we went for a quick sauna trip, including jumping into the icy snow with only bathing trunks on. That's why in the evening, I was even more tired as if I had done the journey to Kalix two times in a row.

It was time to meet the other students from Sweden and Spain on the Monday.

After a short meetup in the canteen of the school, we went to a moose farm where we learned a bit about the traditional people of Sweden, the Sami, and ate mashed potatoes with moose meat from the farm.



After that, we went over to Finland, visited a bigger mall where we got a little bit of free time to buy even more candy and then drove back to Kalix.

Leon had ice hockey practice afterwards which I watched with interest, but where I also was happy to be on the stands and not on the ice.

In the evening, we all met up at a building that you can rent for hanging out, where we played table tennis and got to know a few more students.

Tuesday, some of the Swedish students had a national test, so we played an online escape room in the canteen. After that, we had a traditional lunch and played some volleyball in the sport center of Kalix before going down to the city hall to create our own books about migration with our exchange student.



Following, we had a traditional swedish fika in the canteen, of course with some cinnamon rolls and coffee. In the evening, the bigger part of the group met up at a rented house to hang around a bit, and on the way home, we finally saw what we wanted to see all the time: northern lights.



Wednesday was the last day where the spanish people were still in Kalix. So, after all that luxury in the last days, we went ice bathing in water just over zero degrees. The cold taking your breath away in half a second was an experience I will never forget, and by the time I got into the sauna, I couldn't feel anything in my feet.



After lunch, we learned two traditional swedish and finnish dances and ate tacos (a very traditional swedish dish) afterwards. In the evening, it was already time to say goodbye to the spanish students.

On the last day, some of the swedish students had national tests again, so we visited the craft lesson of the 8G class. We then presented our books and ate a traditional lunch one last time before our bus left at twelve o'clock.



The time in Sweden was one of the best experiences I had until now. The time just flew by and before I knew it, we already had to go home again. I really liked how the program wasn't

just lectures and learning, but a lot of fun like sports or ice bathing. I was staggered by the masses of snow and a bit overwhelmed by impressions, tastes and experiences. I really recommend going on exchanges now that I know what a fantastic time you will have there. Writing this report, I was set back to an awesome week which I will hopefully never forget.

