

HeritageINDIA 2019



heritageINDIA
RETURNING TO OUR ROOTS



HeritageINDIA 2019 by INDIASPORA powered by 360Plus Foundation, USA & facilitated by TYCIA Foundation, India



Kerala: Sunset boat ride



Group photo at Kanyakumari



Delhi: At Jama Masjid



Kerala: Chinese fishing net



Ahmedabad: MGIS group task

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INTRODUCTION

India's Riches: History, Culture, Diversity, & Democracy

Indiaspora, powered by youth leadership nonprofit 360Plus Foundation, is proud to announce a new initiative, HeritageINDIA. A unique, immersive, 3-week summer program, this initiative gave high school students of Indian descent the opportunity to connect to their ancestral homeland. Students experienced and engaged with India's rich and diverse cultural history by completing hands-on projects, participating in stimulating discussions, and building friendships with a cohort that shared in this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

HeritageINDIA took place July 21 – August 22 with the exciting theme of India's Riches: History, Culture, Diversity, & Democracy. Students visited three areas of India that are geographically and culturally diverse, yet all very much represent India: New Delhi, Gujarat, and Kerala. HeritageINDIA was for high school students who were between 15 to 18 years of age at the time of the trip and are of Indian descent. Preference was given to those who have never had the opportunity to visit India.

HeritageINDIA was overseen by Indiaspora Patron member Sridar Iyengar, an independent mentor investor in early-stage startups and former Chairman and CEO of KPMG India, who has created youth immersion programs for a diverse group of youth through his nonprofit organization, 360Plus Foundation. The adults accompanying them are trained and highly experienced in organizing international travel programs. Students were under adult supervision of Sridar and 360Plus professionals at all times during the trip.

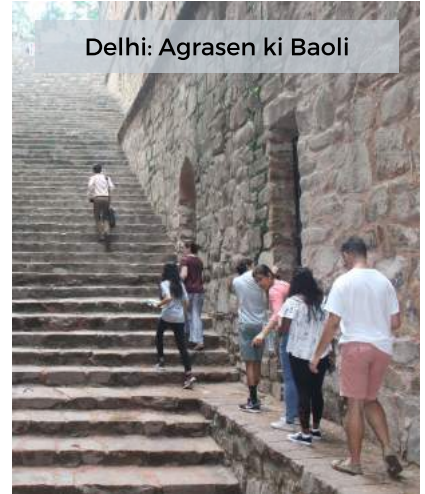
Ahmedabad: Gandhi Ashram



Session with K Gopalakrishnan



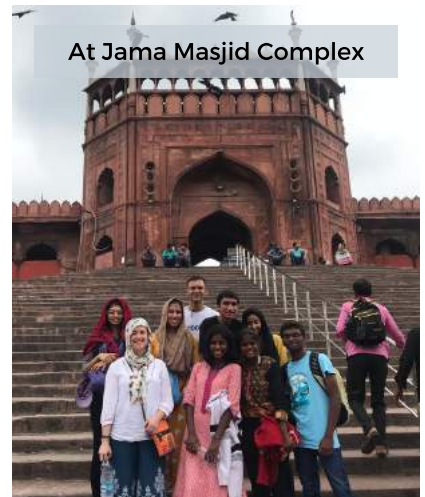
Delhi: Agrasen ki Baoli



Kerala: Vivekananda Statue



At Jama Masjid Complex



Delhi: Natural History Museum



Delhi: Closing exhibition



Kerala: Walk with Bony Thomas



STUDENT BIOS



**Anuja
Konda**

Over the past several years, Anuja Keerthi Konda, an incoming college freshman from Fremont, CA, has grown to love volunteering her time to serving those in need through organizations such as Hrudaya Foundation, Key Club, All Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Little Taare, and many more. She currently serves as MSJHS's Senior Class President and SURF Representative for the Fremont Board of Education. Anuja has received commendation and recognition certificates from elected officials such as Congressman Khanna, Assembly members Chu and other officials. Anuja has also received "The President's Volunteer Service Award". In 2019, she received the "Young Inspirational Woman of the Year" award from the Indo-American Community Federation (IACF). Anuja's future career aspirations include becoming a Pediatrician and research scientist.



**Nithya
Venkat**

Nithya Venkat is 17 years old and is from Maple Grove, Minnesota. This fall she will be a senior at Maple Grove Senior High. Words cannot describe how extremely excited she is to be a part of the HeritageIndia experience and reconnect with her cultural heritage. At school, she is a member of her school's speech and debate team, of which she will be serving as the president for the upcoming school year. These activities have taught her so much about advocacy, communication, and what it means to be a leader. This transcends into her social life as well as most conversations with her friends usually digress into political discussions and debates. Though she has a passion for social justice, she hopes to study Biological Sciences in college and one day practice as an OBGYN. In her free time she loves to write poetry and claims to spend WAY too much time watching Netflix.



**Nirali
Patel**

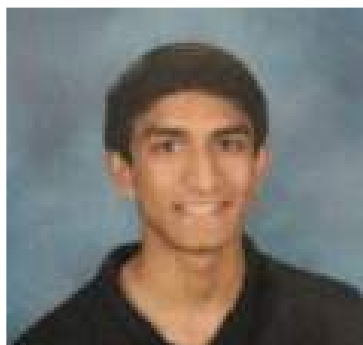
Nirali Patel is a rising sophomore at Woodlands High School in Spring, Texas. She is a bubbly, adventurous girl who isn't afraid of getting out of her comfort zone to face new, exciting challenges. She strives to help others out and inspires them to do what they love. She is part of a few clubs that allow her to positively impact others. As Vice President of a Gavel Speaking Club, she has earned a certificate for completing her first ten speeches and a medal for winning second place in a speaking competition, and she hopes to start a mentoring program for new members to help them achieve their speaking goals. Nirali is also part of The Hindu Temple of The Woodlands Youth Club, Girl Scouts, and a school-bound club called Interact. In these clubs, she donates to multiple shelters, helps organize and maintain social gatherings, learns skills such as CPR to help people in need, and contributes her own volunteering ideas.



**Krish
Jayarapu**

Krish is a rising sophomore at Carmel High School, Carmel, Indiana. He volunteers at local food pantries and soup kitchens. In his free time, he enjoys talking with people, playing soccer, and playing the viola. He is passionate about biology and chemistry, where he competes in the U.S.A. Biology Olympiad and U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad. In addition to that, he participates in AIME and ARML math competitions. He is also very committed to fixing environmental issues.

STUDENT BIOS



**Ishaan
Koradia**

Ishaan Koradia is a rising junior at Panther Creek High School in Cary, North Carolina. He enjoys taekwondo a lot and is currently a brown belt. He has an odd interest in politics. He does not get much spare time since he is always tied up with school work, but when he does, he either plays video games with his little brother or plays basketball with friends. Ishaan took part in community work last summer by volunteering at an after school program for two months where he assisted in creating fun activities for kids in the program.



**Riya
Bhalla**

Riya Bhalla is a rising sophomore at Ridge High School in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Some of her hobbies include darkroom photography, singing, archery and eating donuts! She has worked with organizations such as Kids For Peace, a non-profit organization designed to empower kids to spread peace around the world. Recently, the organization held a car wash to raise money to build a school in Pakistan. Similarly, they held a coin drive, to bring education to children in Kenya. The organization built a school there, last year. She is eager to spend her summer in India and meet new people!



**Pranjali
Lobo**

Pranjali, who goes by PJ, is a rising sophomore at Gateway High School in San Francisco. When she was younger, and even to this day, she has a passion for sports. Some of her hobbies include soccer, snowboarding, and science. She describes herself as energetic, funny, but also very focused when she needs to be. Her connection to India is that she was born there. She was adopted so she doesn't have the experience of living there. Pranjali lives with her older sister Maya and her mother and father. She is excited to meet new people and to learn about different parts and cultures of India.



**DJ
Jassal**

DJ Jassal is an incoming college freshman from Alexandria, Virginia. Having learned the importance of selflessness and giving back from his parents, who immigrated to the US from India, DJ holds a great passion for community service and social justice. In his time outside of school, DJ works to lead GIVE: a non-profit organization involving over 1,000 students from across Northern Virginia that serves to provide free tutoring programs for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. He hopes that, by going on the HeritageIndia 2019 trip with Indiaspora, he can learn more about his homeland and also take his passion for social justice to an even larger scale!



**Sridar
Iyengar**

Sridar's passion is to work with young people and entrepreneurs. He is co-Founder of the 360Plus network focusing on providing "learning through travel" opportunities to students in the US and India. He is an active mentor of and investor in early stage ideas and companies. He started his career with KPMG in 1968 and worked with them in the UK, US and India until he took early retirement in 2002. Post retirement he has served and continues to serve on the Boards of major companies in India. He was Past President of TiE Silicon Valley and TiE Global, one of the largest entrepreneurial networks. His interest in promoting good citizenship and governance saw him serve as President of Foundation for Democratic Reforms in India and as a governing board Member of Janaagraha Center for Citizenship and Democracy, where he co-created the www.ipaidabribe.com website.



**Gabrielle
Trippe**

Gabrielle Trippe is the Philanthropy Initiatives Manager at Indiaspora. She comes from a background in international public health, and began her career in sub-Saharan Africa, where she worked on issues such as HIV/AIDS, human rights, and water and sanitation issues. Her experience in India began as a William J. Clinton Fellow with the American India Foundation. She served in Hyderabad and focused on women's and girls' health, in addition to work with the the LV Prasad Eye Institute. Most recently, she worked with Purpose as Research and Partnership Development Consultant for a campaign to reduce avoidable blindness in India. A Fulbright-Hays Scholar and a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles, Gabrielle holds a Masters in Public Health from Columbia University.



**Mohit
Raj**

Mohit has more than nine years of work experience in the development sector, designing, implementing and monitoring the impactful projects in the streams of education, livelihoods and youth empowerment with the focus on children, women and persons with disabilities, incarcerated youth with both social and entrepreneurial capabilities. In 2010, Mohit with his best friend and college mate, began name 'Turn Your Concern Into Action' (TYCIA) Foundation with a dream of bringing 100 out of school children into mainstream education. With a limited resources and immense enthusiasm, he jumped in the ocean of development space which was never in the plan. TYCIA Foundation has grown since, and has helped facilitate numerous 360Plus programs.



**Tabish
Bilal**

Tabish graduated from Jamia Millia Islamia where he studied Human Resources Management. After a short experience in the corporate world, he quickly understood that it was the development sector that moved him. He joined TYCIA as a fellow of the Transforming Tihar program and is now in charge of Youth Empowerment. He is currently engaged in providing learning opportunities to young national and international high school students through the 360Plus Leadership Collective. He is also engaged in APV School Project in Anjanisain Village, Uttarakhand. In his free time, he likes playing and watching football and is a Chelsea FC supporter.

TRIP LEADERS

DELHI HIGHLIGHTS

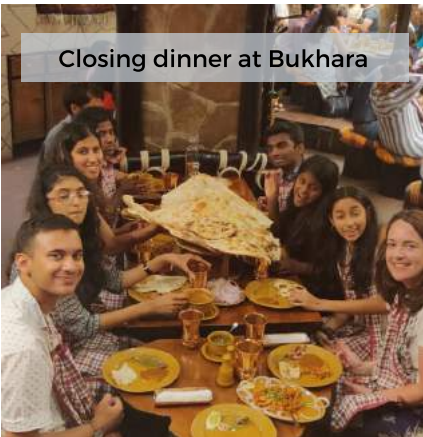
Session with Sohail Hashmi



Heritage walk in Old Delhi



Closing dinner at Bukhara



Delhi was the first stop for the HeritageINDIA cohort. This was a unique starting point as it incorporated all of the themes of the program. One of the highlights that illustrated the incredible religious diversity, culture, and history of India was the heritage walk through Old Delhi. Here the students visited the Jama Masjid, Digambar Jain Mandir, strolled through the narrow alleyways eating some local cuisine, and that evening walked through the Nizamuddin Dargah for exposure to the Sufi music, Qawwali. Citizenship was uniquely highlighted with a special visit to the U.S. Embassy. The students were given a personal tour and meetings with a few top government agents working in organizations such as USAID and the Food and Drug Administration. Furthermore, the students were given a window into the cultural arts and heritage of India with a special curated visit to both the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum and the National Museum. A trip to India would not be complete without seeing one of the great wonders of the world and so we chose to close our trip with a visit to the Taj Mahal.

Curated visit to Agrasen ki Baoli



At Hazrat Inayat Dargah



At India Gate

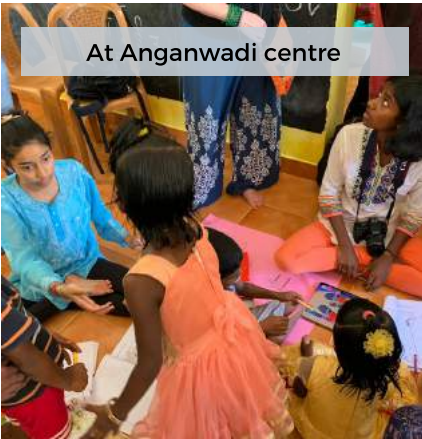


Agra: At Taj Mahal



KERALA HIGHLIGHTS

At Anganwadi centre



At Kerala Startup Village



At sunset point, Kanyakumari



The next stop was to the southern state of Kerala. Here the students had the unique opportunity to visit Start up Village and meet with Kris Gopalakrishnan, sponsor of the HeritageINDIA program and chief mentor of Start-up Village. Start-up Village is India's first not-for-profit incubator that focuses primarily on student start-ups and telecom innovation. Other highlights included visiting the land's end of India, Kanyakumari, (located in Tamil Nadu), where the Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea, and Indian Ocean all meet together. The students also had the opportunity to visit something quite unique to the religious diversity of India, the Paradesi Synagogue, which is the oldest active synagogue in the Commonwealth of Nations. Finally, and perhaps one of the most memorable parts of Kerala, was the students' trip to Hope Community Village. This village offers long term family care to children who have lost the care and protection of their parents.

At Moonmuttery Falls



At Hope Village, Kumarakom



Make-up session before Kathakali



At Kanyakumari



AHMEDABAD HIGHLIGHTS



Local Gujarati food



Fun at MGIS school



Lunch time with locals

There were several highlights of the time the students spent in Gujarat, especially given its unique history of being the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi. One of the first places the cohort visited was the Ashram of Gandhi. Here they were able to learn about Gandhi Ji's life and fight for freedom as well as see where he used to reside for a part of his life. The next few days were spent with the students at the Mahatma Gandhi International School. Here the students interacted with one another while working on a special project about Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi which culminated in a beautiful presentation booklet on what the figures represent to them. Decisively one of the most exciting surprises of the trip was meeting with the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Tushar Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi shared a meal with the cohort and came to speak at the school to all of the students, sharing his own personal journey and encouraging them in their own journeys to lead lives of dignity, equality, and justice.



At ISRO Museum



At Bhumel Village



Local community visit



Session with Tushar Gandhi at MGIS

TESTIMONIALS

"While I was drawing MLK for the picture, I felt inspired, inspired to make a change in the world. The words, "I have a dream" kept echoing in my head. And as the other kids in my group were working, I could tell that they genuinely cared about the ending product too. Their faces were like diamonds, shining with happiness."

-Nirali Patel



Kerala: activity at local school

"Farms in America and India are similar, but have some major differences as well. One main difference that I found was the use of technology. Despite lacking efficient advanced resources, the farms in India manage to effectively continue their farming business which is surprising."

-Krish Jayarapu



Ahmedabad: art work at MGIS

"Spending that day in Kowtukal really allowed me to gain more perspective on my life, and allowed me to gain a greater sense of gratitude for everything that I have. In the village, people seemed to be content with whatever they had, whether they had a lot or very little. This has made me more humble"

-DJ Jassal



Kerala: visit to anganwadi centre



Kerala: paddy farm

"It was amazing to see the amount of work people do during the day. We saw villagers washing and drying clothes in the river, and saw many snake boats bringing fish back to the village houses. We found it surprising they can survive easily without using modern day technology."

-Riya Bhalla & Ishaan Koradia



Kerala: visit to local village

"The most notable theme I sensed throughout this experience was: reconnecting with roots. From the young Indo-American innovators working with USAID to the personal life experiences of our presenters who all decided to return to India after living in America, I was thoroughly impressed by the pride each of these people."

-Anuja Konda



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSOR

Dear Mr. Gopalakrishnan,

We want to express our sincere gratitude towards your incredible generosity for sponsoring HeritageINDIA 2019. Your generosity made this initiative possible and gave the opportunity for eight Indian American high school students to claim their birthright. Furthermore, you took the time to show them Start-up Village and share with them about your work and mentorship. We know the students have gained not only new knowledge and life-long friendships, but an appreciation for India of which they would never have without seeing and learning about the vast riches of India at a grassroots level. We fervently look forward to seeing how these students take their learnings to create new endeavors, continuing to build bridges between the U.S. and India.

In gratitude,

INDIASPORA team
360Plus Foundation team
TYCIA Foundation team