

March 20, 2025

Press Release

**JMI welcomes team from University of Applied Sciences, Erfurt, Germany as part of Academic Exchange Program**

A delegation comprising students and faculty from the University of Applied Sciences (UAS), Erfurt, Germany is visiting the Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) from March 17 to March 27, 2025. This visit is part of the MoU established between JMI and UAS. Notably, under this MoU, academic exchange programmes have been ongoing since 2002 .

During their 10-day visit, the German delegation will attend academic lectures covering issues and concerns of marginalized groups, including children, the elderly, and access to healthcare and the unique positioning of social work education and practice in India. The lectures will provide insights into social policies, governance, and interventions aimed at addressing these challenges.

The team was warmly welcomed in the Seminar Hall of the Department of Social Work by the Head of the Department, Prof. Neelam Sukhrmani, Faculty Coordinators, Dr. Asiya Nasreen and Dr. Sanjay Onkar Ingole alongwith the other faculty members and students of the department. The room exuberated with pride and cheer while recollecting the longest standing partnership and the persistent efforts made by both universities for ensuring the continuance and expansion of this learning platform.

The team began their cross-cultural engagement with an exploration of the Jamia Archives, where they were introduced to a diverse collection of books, manuscripts, and historical artifacts. They also visited the Premchand Gallery, gaining insights into Munshi Premchand's literary contributions and Jamia's efforts in preserving cultural heritage.

The delegation later visited the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof Mazhar Asif who extended a warm welcome to the German team. In his address, Prof Asif emphasized India's rich cultural heritage and JMI's vibrant academic environment. "The diversity and composite culture of India has a few parallels in the world", he said. Prof Asif delved on the rich traditional knowledge system of India and encouraged the visiting German participants to explore and get a taste of the country's plural and multicultural ethos in its food, dresses, culture and language during their ten-day stay. He expressed his immense satisfaction with the efforts made by the Department of Social Work, JMI in curating a program that also provided an exposure to the rural areas, where he said, "the soul of India lives". The Vice-Chancellor also congratulated the JMI students selected to visit Germany in June, under the exchange program.

As part of their itinerary, the Erfurt students attended a session at the Nehru Guest House, where they delved into JMI's history and its role in India's freedom movement,

including, the birth of the institution in 1920 as a nationalist initiative championing indigenous education under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The discussion also covered JMI's transformation into a central university in 1988, its commitment to socially engaged education, and the contributions of scholars from Germany to building Jamia, the most prominent among them being Gerda Philipsborne, fondly remembered as Aapa Jaan. The team was also apprised of the history of the Department of Social Work, JMI and the contributions of its founders in shaping its dynamism that continues till date.

In addition to the academic discussions, the delegation will participate in exposure visits to various NGOs such as HOPE Charitable Trust, Blind Relief Association, Action India and Butterflies. These visits will offer them a firsthand experience of grassroots initiatives working towards social inclusion and empowerment. The delegates will also have the unique opportunity to stay with Indian students, allowing them to experience the familial and cultural aspects of Indian homes.

To provide exposure to rural realities and development interventions, visits have been planned to rural development projects initiated by the Central University of Rajasthan and Barefoot College, Tilonia. These visits will highlight innovative approaches to sustainable rural development.

Beyond academic exchange, efforts have been made to familiarize the delegation with India's rich cultural traditions. Activities such as organizing *Iftaar*, visiting iconic landmarks like India Gate, Nizamuddin Dargah, Dilli Haat, and Jama Masjid have also been scheduled as part of the exchange program.

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