



Iceland

Education Tour 2018



The Chinese Foundation Secondary School



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Foreword

From 17th February 2018 to 25th February 2018, 25 students and 4 teachers went to Iceland to have a music exchange with local students, as well as to study the sustainable development and culture of Iceland.

We would like to give the special thanks to our School Management Committee for the support and care of the tour, and to our International Mentorship Programme Advisor, Ms. Lin Wei, for her coordination of the music exchange in Iceland. We also would like to thank Mr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, President of Iceland, and Mr. Jin Zhijian, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of The People's Republic of China in the Republic of Iceland for granting time to meet our students and teachers.



Itinerary

17/2	Flight to Stockholm City tour at cultural sites in Stockholm
18/2	Flight to Iceland Hallgrímskirkja Church Reykjavik City Hall
19/2	School exchange and performance Geothermal Energy Exhibition Volcano House Solfar (Sun Voyager) Sculpture Tour to watch Northern Night
20/2	President Residence Raufarhólshellir Lava Tube Music exchange and performance
21/2	Golden Circle Trip
22/2	Blue Lagoon Hafnarfiordur The Chinese Embassy In Iceland
23/2	Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre Árbær Open Air Museum Perlan Museum
24/2	Flight back to Hong Kong
25/2	Arrive Hong Kong



Music

A. International Department of Landakotsskoli

In this international school visit, we noticed that the classroom size is smaller than that in Hong Kong. The principal told us that there are around 200 students in the school and most of them came from foreign countries around the world. Their ages range from 5 to 17 years old. The ratio between teachers and students is relatively low when compared to that in Hong Kong. From our observation, students did not need to wear school uniforms to school. Whenever they stepped in the classroom, they usually took off their waterproof shoes and walked around the campus with bare feet.

The principal introduced us to some younger students. They were about 4-5 years old. They welcomed us by singing a hello song that they sing to each other every morning.

The lyrics consisted of some Icelandic, English and Chinese. We were very surprised that they were exposed to many different languages since young age. In return, we were also excited to greet them with our Chinese music as well. What caught their eyes and attention most was the moment when our music teacher introduced them with the Chinese musical instrument guzheng. They probably had never seen this musical instrument before. Playing melody by using fake fingernails attached on the right hand fingers, and playing vibrato sound by pressing the strings down with the left hand made this performance very unique and special to the Icelandic students.



We were then divided into groups and joined the student ambassadors to attend three different lessons: Geography, Music and Science. Students there were very friendly and the teachers were patient and nice. Unlike the lessons in Hong Kong, we had Geography lessons outside the classroom. By making use of an application called Geocaching, we got our coordinates on the phone and searched for some hidden messages around the campus. It was an interesting exploration to learn about how students in Iceland used modern technology and combined it in their lessons.



Besides searching for information on the mobile phone, the teacher also brought us and their students to have a walk around the neighborhood. He told us more about the Icelandic history and some historical buildings around their school.



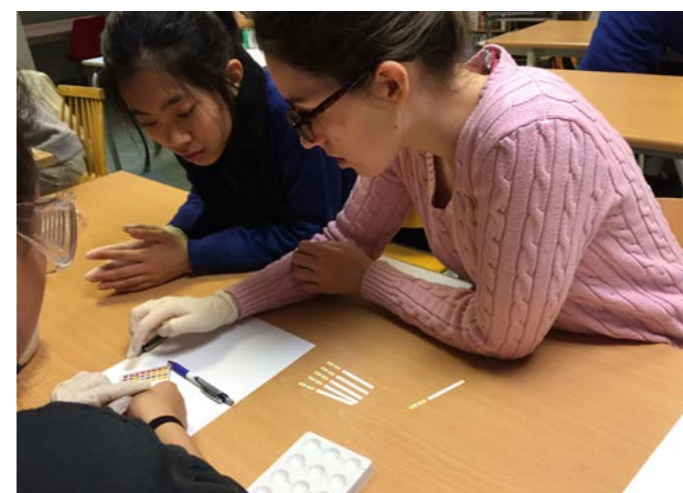
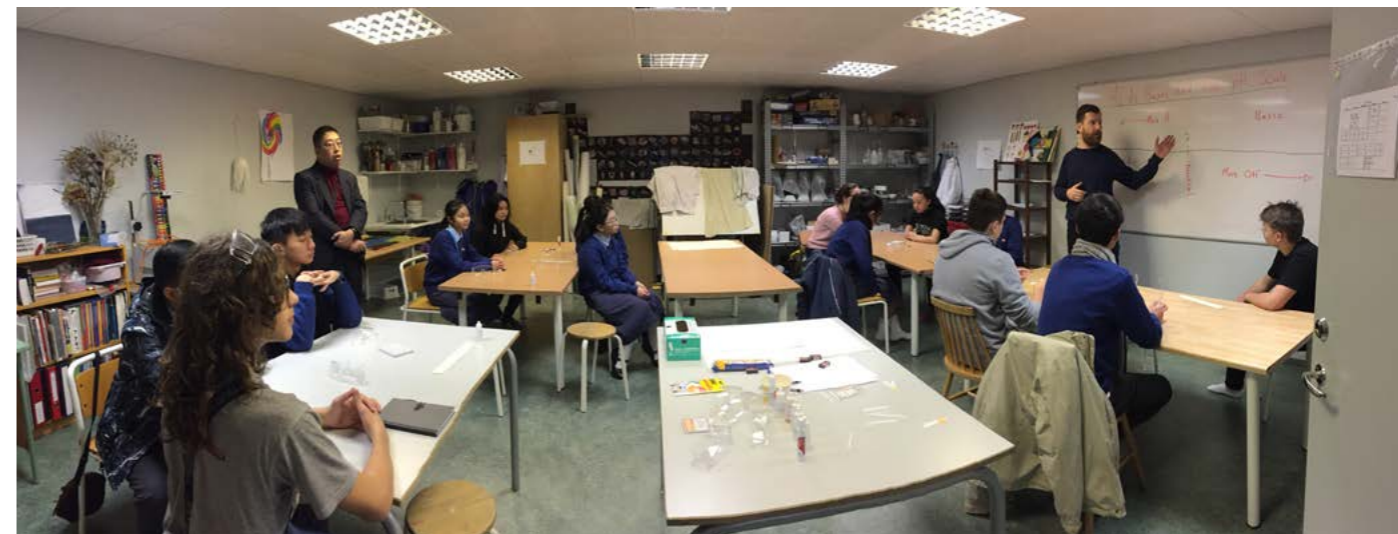
After attending the Geography lesson, we all proceeded to the music room. The room was equipped with many musical instruments and we had a chance to compose some music with the help of the student ambassadors and the teachers there. We all tried out some musical instruments we had never learned, such as keyboard, bass guitar, marimba and drum set.



The music teachers encouraged us to try making some sound and eventually we learned and sang a new song. It was a great moment to have fun and make music together.



In the last lesson before we left, we went to a multi-purpose room where we had our Science lesson there. The Science teacher taught us the formation of acid rain and how we could test the pH values of a number of unknown solutions as we worked in three small groups. By dipping the pH testing papers into the solutions, we then charted out a list of pH values for those solutions.



In conclusion, we found that the students in Iceland were more relaxed in learning than the Hong Kong students. In the lessons we had, they were all student-centered and task-oriented. Students were willing to ask questions and actively participated in lessons whether those lessons were held in classroom or outdoors. They could freely express their ideas. Not a lot of homework would be assigned because they would use most of the time to learn out of curiosity and explore the answers by themselves.

Our one-day visit to the international school ended with a healthy lunch and a friendly talk with the students there. We exchanged our contact information with the students there so that we could keep in touch with each other in the future. It was indeed an enjoyable and fun experience for all of us.



B. Tónskóli Sigursveins D. Kristinssonar

Our second day in Reykjavik concluded with a wonderful musical performance and exchange at Tónskóli Sigursveins D. Kristinssonar. Even though this concert hall was not huge, the acoustics were excellent. The theme of that night was “film music”. The program began with some solo instruments such as flute, violin, saxophone, horn and cello. Even though the performers were as young as primary school students, their skill levels were very high and their performances were brilliant. What was even more amazing was when a group of violin players performed two famous pieces, they all sounded like one voice - a solo violin.



They did have very good ears. Later on when asked what kind of music training the students received in the music school, the principal stressed the use of Suzuki method which was first invented in Japan a long time ago.

The program ended with a performance from our students. One of the pieces we performed was Hong Kong film music – “Under the Lion Rock”. This song was well known to many and became a collective memory to Hong Kong people. Arranged for wind instruments, string instruments and voice, this song was well received by the audience especially after a short introduction about this piece.

After the concert, a pizza party was held and we had a chance to interact with the music students there. We learned that the students enjoyed playing the instruments and they were as young as three years old all the way to college students. There were about 400 students in this established music school and the students took music lessons after school as an elective subject.



We made friends with the music students there. As we know music is very powerful and can connect people from all over the world, we shared a lot of happy moments together talking everything about music and culture.

There was a special program after the party. It was a rehearsal with the local music students. We were arranged to sit with the local students in order to interact with them musically. The experience was quite special, because the local orchestra conductor was conducting an Icelandic piece called Sveitin Milli Sanda.



When we first received this piece in Hong Kong, we had a hard time in keeping track of the rhythm. Although we tried our best, the mood was still not quite right. However, during the rehearsal at the music school, when we played alongside with the local music students, everything fell into the place and it sounded much better. As the local music students knew this piece well, they led and helped us get into the mood and the music easily. Then our music teacher introduced two traditional Chinese pieces to the local music students. We noticed that their music reading skills were really good and they understood the instructions and the music clearly. They were very curious how guzheng players tuned the instruments.



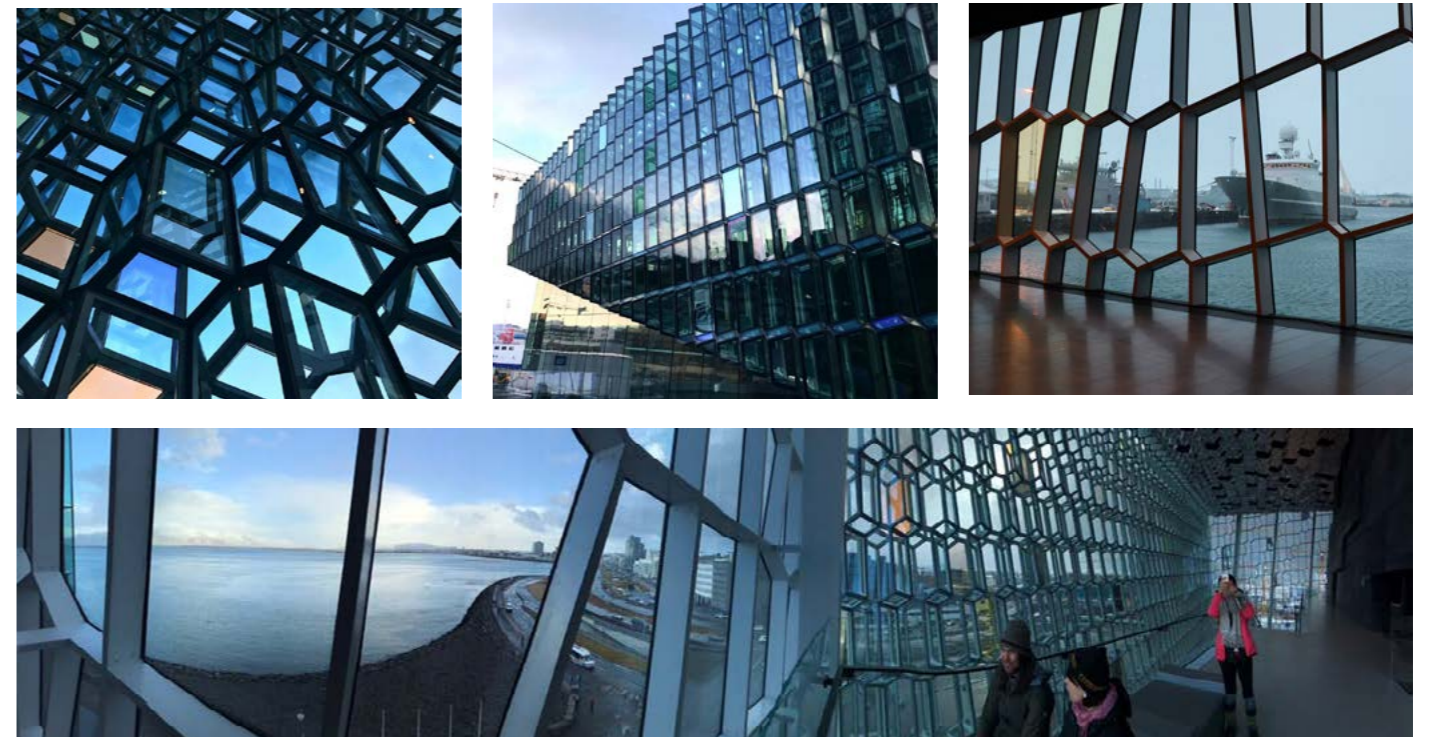
The whole orchestra fell silent during his tuning. They had never seen tunings of pitch by moving the position of bridges that support the strings. It was quite a special experience for the local music students.

Although the rehearsal was short, we treasured the memorable time with the local music students. We exchanged the gifts that we brought from Hong Kong. The local music students were thankful, amazed and excited by this small gift exchange moment. We were happy that we could make friends from all over the world.



C. Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Center

We went to one of the greatest landmarks in Reykjavik – Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Center. Even though it was finished in 2011, the cost of this magnificent building was so high that people in Iceland questioned about its practicality when the construction work first began. Upon completion, on the contrary, Icelanders were fascinated by its acoustic sound. Even famous musicians from all over the world were amazed by the acoustics there. This space has multiple purposes and is built to serve as conference halls and concert halls for orchestra music, dance, and opera performance. Both the interior and external view of this concert hall demonstrate a great collaboration work of various architects and acoustic engineers.



Looking at the building across the street, it shows its artistic side of many hexagonal glass windows, a design that was inspired by the Beijing National Aquatics Center, Water Cube, used in the Beijing Olympic Games 2008.

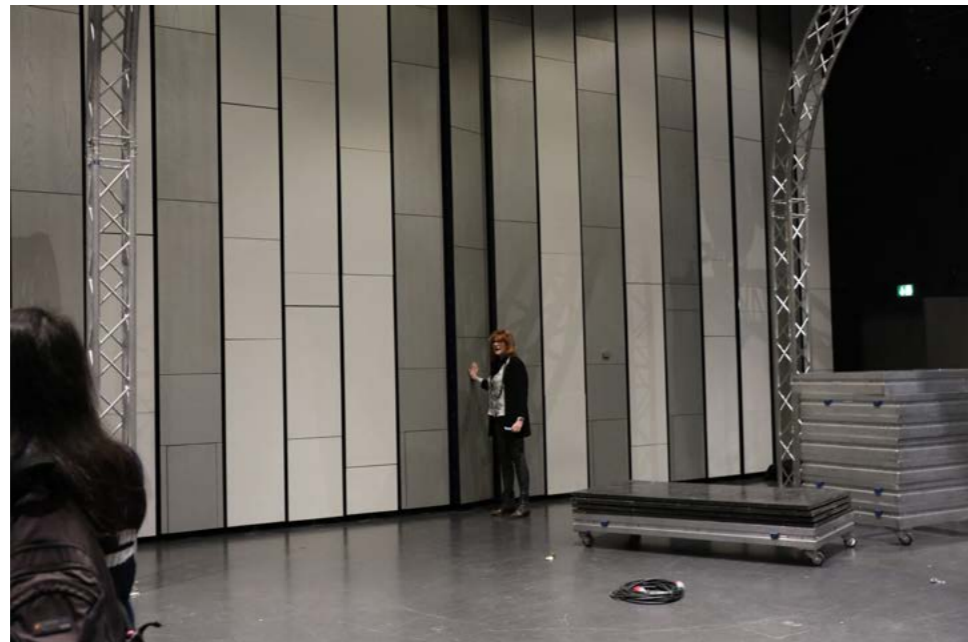


The use of materials such as interior dark pillars and floors was also inspired by Iceland's unique volcanic landscape.



On top of that, the design allows natural light to penetrate through the glass so that electricity and energy can be saved tremendously. We believe that the Harper Concert Hall is a combination of Iceland's futuristic design, love towards the environment and clever use of space.

The guide showed and explained each function room to us in detail. The conference hall is the only room in this building that is especially built with absolutely no echo sound and it is used for pop music concerts that use electronic instruments. Walls can be turned manually in a way to allow certain echo sound within the room if necessary. Next she guided us to the Northern Light Recital Hall that has more echo.



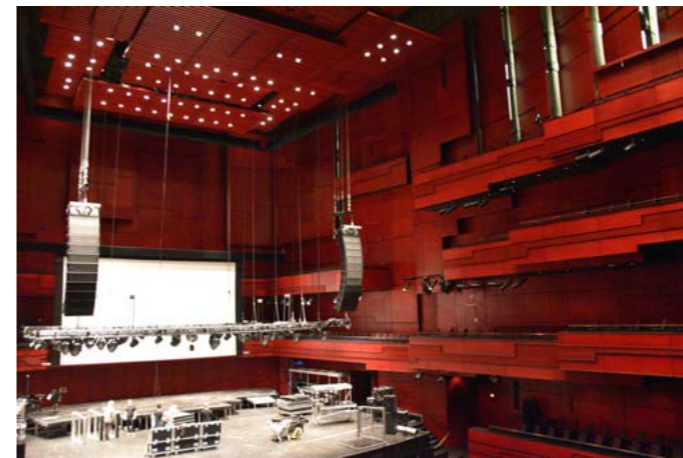
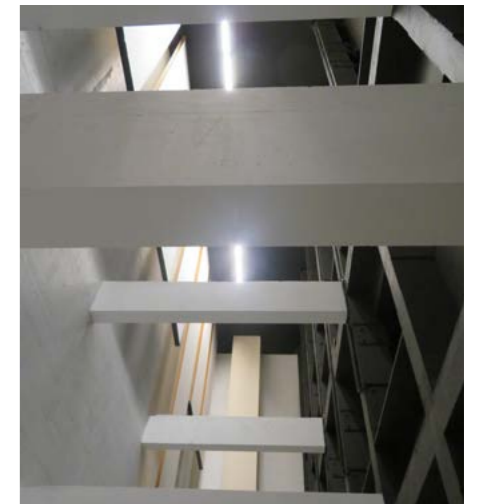
Layers of walls were built to make more round sound within the room.



With the help of the lighting, aurora could be seen in this room.

Walking out of the Northern Light Recital Hall, we reached the foyer of the building where she sang a song called Icelandic Lullaby on Harpa. Despite having a cold, her voice sounded gorgeous and it filled up the whole space.

Thanks to the wonderful acoustics there, the artistic place demonstrated how thoughtful the acoustic engineers and architects were to put in to build this place. Our tour ended with the last stop – the magnificent concert hall. This huge concert hall with an exceptionally high ceiling can accommodate thousands of audience in a concert.



All in all, we think that the concert hall is a spectacular place for learning about architecture and environmental protection. We had an unforgettable and unique experience in this unique building.

Sustainable Development

A. The Golden Circle



Iceland is a country located on both the North American tectonic plate and the Eurasian tectonic plate. The Thingvellir National Park is located at the boundary between the two plates. It was originally a flat land. However, due to physical movements under the earth's crust, the two plates move away from each other by 2 cm per year. This creates extraordinary landscape of the park. We were astonished by the power of the mother-nature

when we saw the magnificent view of the landscape.

In Icelandic language, the Golden Waterfall is called the "Gullfoss". There are several theories for the waterfall to be called Gullfoss. The glacial water is often coloured by the golden evening hue. This phenomenon suggests the name of the waterfall. On the other hand, the name was inspired by the rainbow which often appears when sunshine hits the water-spray thrown up by the waterfall. Another legend about the name of the waterfall can be found in the Sveinn Pálsson's travel journal: Once upon a time, a farmer named Gýgur lived in Gýgjarhóll. He had plenty of gold and could not bear the thought of someone else possessing it after his lifetime. To prevent this, he placed the gold in a coffer and threw it into the waterfall.

No matter how the name Gullfoss came from, it is no doubt that it is a huge and magnificent waterfall. We never visited a waterfall of such large scale. We were excited when the Gullfoss came to our sight. Gullfoss consists of two waterfalls. The height of the upper waterfall and the lower waterfall is 11 m and 20 m respectively. The average water flow in Gullfoss is 109 m³/sec, but it can reach a maximum of 2000 m³/sec. This flow is enough to fill 60 transportation containers with water in one second.



For a waterfall of such large scale like Gullfoss, it is easy to comprehend the possibility of using it to generate electricity from the waterfall. Actually, an Englishman wanted to build a hydroelectric power plant in Gullfoss in 1907. The proposal was declined and Tómas Tómasson, a farmer in Brattholt at the time, said: "I will not sell my friend". However, the waterfall was leased to foreign investors at a later time. Sigríður Tómasdóttir, the daughter of the farmer, struggled to have the rental contract voided. Although she failed in court, the proposed power plant was cancelled due to other reasons. The effort of Sigríður Tómasdóttir was selfless and unique. She has often been called Iceland's first environmentalist.

Gullfoss has been made a nature reserve since 1979. The aim is to give people the best possible opportunity to enjoy the beautiful natural scene. There were attempts to minimize man's footprint and to keep man-made structures to a minimum. The Icelanders tried not to disturb the land and geological formations. "I will not sell my friend" is a powerful motto indicating how much the Icelanders love the nature.

The next spot in the Golden Circle is the Geysir Geothermal Area. The first thing that attracted us is the green notice board which stated that we must be cautious in the area.

Although it had a heavy snow storm in the morning, we could not find much accumulated snow in the Geysir Geothermal Area. This is because the boiled water warmed the ground and the snow melted on the ground.



According to our local guide, the geyser area is not a common geomorphology in the world. There are only 5 geyser areas which are located in the US, Russia, Chile, New Zealand and Iceland. Among them, Iceland is the first place in the world where geyser was found. The English word “geyser” actually derived from the Icelandic word “geysir”.

The geyser is a high temperature geothermal area with a base temperature of around 250°C. Water is heated underground. As water is under pressure, superheating occurs. Once it gains enough pressure, water flashes to steam in the pipe and the geyser erupts. The mechanism is similar when we are boiling water and the whistle will alert us when the water is boiled.



It is really a special and unique experience for us to visit the geyser. The geyser can shoot up at any moment and we were all excited when it spouted. It would not be a boring activity even staring at the amazing sight for hours.



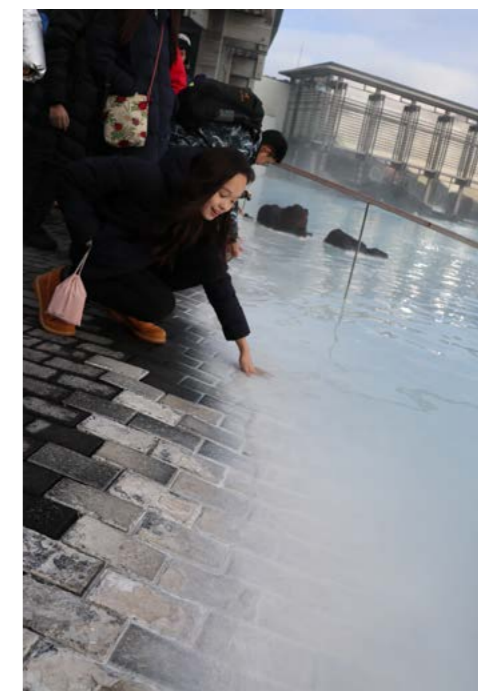
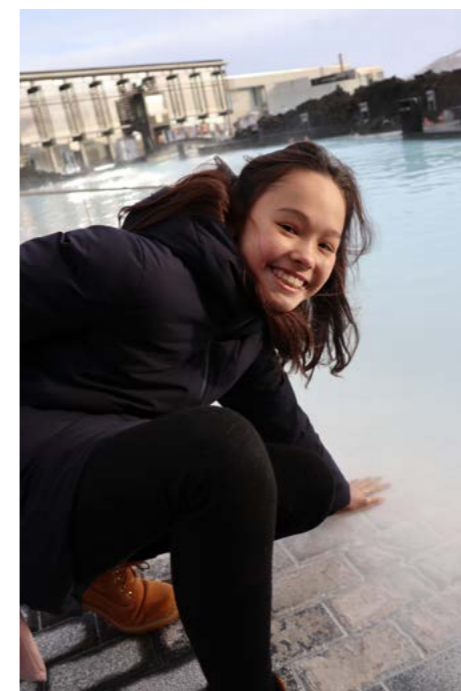
B. The Blue Lagoon

The Blue Lagoon is a famous spot in Iceland. The lava surrounding the lagoon is almost 800 years old and provides geothermal water for a nearby geothermal power plant. After used for generating electricity, the superheated water passes through a heat exchanger to provide heat for a water heating system and, finally, the water is fed into The Blue Lagoon for recreational bathing.



The lagoon contains 9 million litres of geothermal water and it renews itself every 40 hours. The water mainly contains silica, algae and other minerals. It is milky white in color, but silica in the water reflects the sunlight to make it look blue. This is why the lagoon is called “The Blue Lagoon”. However, in summer time, the water is green because of the growth of the algae. The average temperature of the lagoon water is kept at 38°C which is close to our body temperature.

We did not have a chance to bathe in the lagoon. However, we were all excited when we were allowed to feel the warm water.





The guide from The Blue Lagoon, Mr. Stum, introduced us an interesting culture of Iceland. The Icelanders believe in elves in general. According to his description, an elf is a small creature, human-shaped with wings at the back (so that they can fly) and is invisible. The elves live in the rocks and the lava and they will bring good luck or bad luck to people.



Some years ago, the owner of The Blue Lagoon wanted to build a five-star restaurant, Lava Restaurant, next to The Blue Lagoon. It was a good idea for the business. However, when the workers started the project, the machines did not function. All the machines were all newly-bought and the engineers could not find out the reason for the problem. One of the workers suggested their work might have made the elves angry and the elves stopped the machines. Therefore, they found an elf-expert to negotiate with the elves. At that time, the President of Iceland was also a strong believer in elves. He was invited to attend the negotiation as well. The original construction was required to be changed as it would destroy the elves' home. He saved all the updated design of the restaurant into a USB drive and put the USB drive into the hole of lava rock. It is mysterious that all the machines resumed after the USB drive had been "submitted" to the elves. According to Mr. Stum, the USB drive remains in the same position nowadays.

There is another story about elves in The Blue Lagoon. A German tourist took a stone from The Blue Lagoon a few years ago. He just took it as a souvenir. However, when he was back to Germany, bad luck followed him. The bad luck continued until he realized that the elves brought him bad luck. He then sent the stone back to The Blue Lagoon and made an apology. The letter of apology is still kept in The Blue Lagoon to remind the tourists to behave themselves.

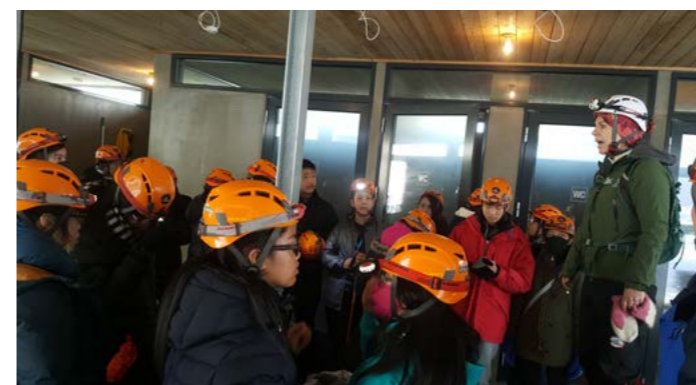
They may be just stories and elves may not be real. However, this is the culture of the Icelanders and it will be a matter for them when developing the country.

We were surprised that, in the souvenir shop, one of the staff spoke Cantonese fluently. We later found out that her parents immigrated to Iceland when she was young. This is the reason why she can speak Cantonese just like Hong Kong people.

C. Raufarhólshellir Lava Tube

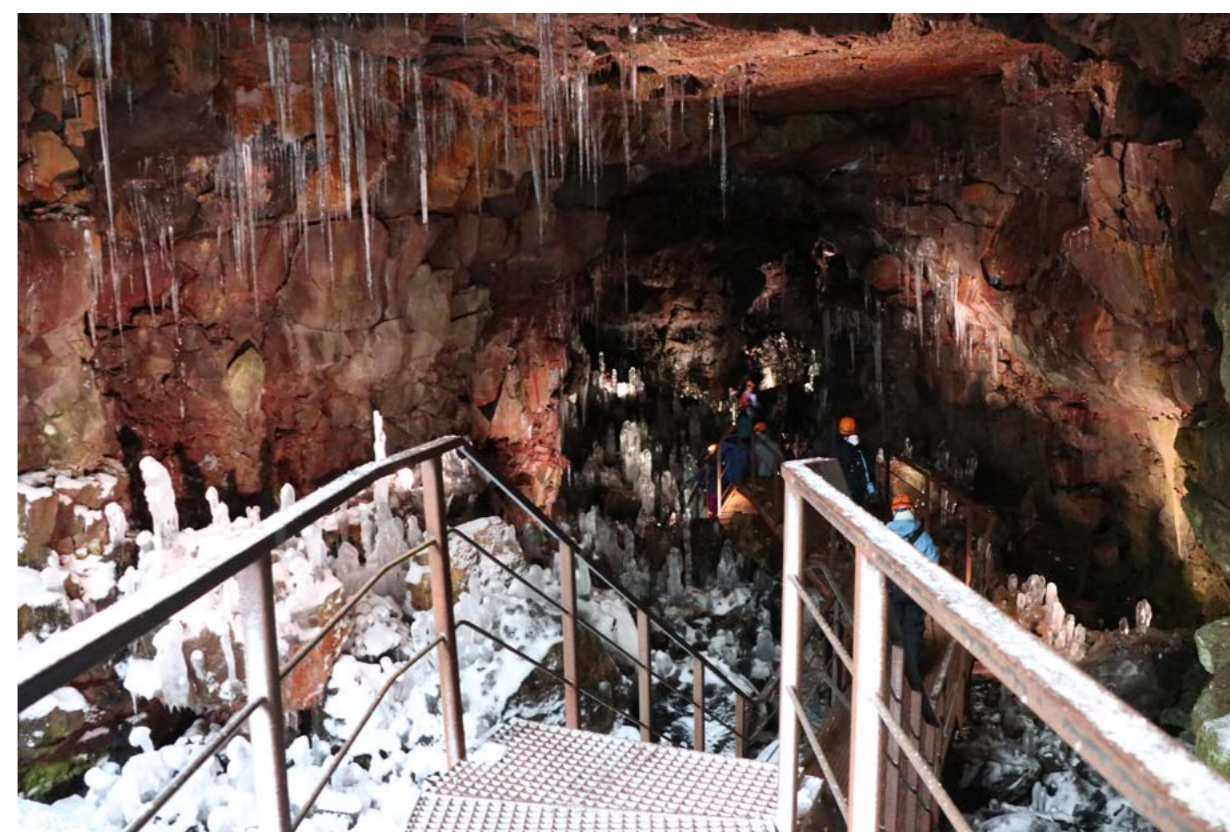


Going into Raufarhólshellir Lava Tube is a journey into one of the longest and best-known lava tubes in Iceland. Raufarhólshellir Lava Tube is located just 34 km away from Reykjavík city, which is about a 30-minute drive and is easily accessible year round.



It was really a great opportunity to witness the inner workings of Leitahraun eruption which occurred east of the Bláfjöll mountains about 5200 years ago. During our walk, we could witness how volcanic eruptions work and what influence they have on the surrounding nature. We were provided with a helmet, a headlight and chains for our shoes, and followed the actual path of the lava flow as it broke through the ground all those centuries ago. During the winter season, huge ice sculptures and wondrous snow artwork

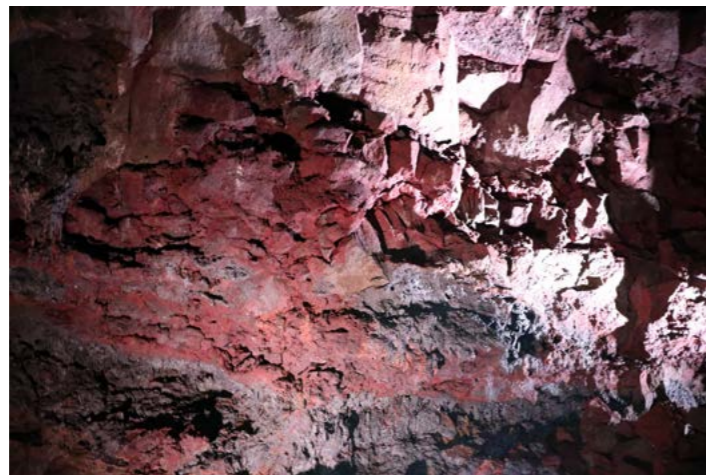
fill the inside of the ice cave, making our visit even more memorable. The total length of the tunnel is 1360 m, where the main tunnel is 900 m long. The tunnel is up to 30 m wide with headroom up to 10 m high, making it one of the most expansive lava tunnels in Iceland.



Near the entrance of the tunnel the ceiling has caved in creating three beautiful columns of light inside the tunnel, leaving natural skylights that let the sunlight pour in. At the end of Raufarhólshellir, the tunnel branches into three smaller tunnels where magnificent lava falls, and formations are clearly visible. The red color of the cave is caused by the oxidation of iron minerals in the rocks. The tunnel stays a consistent temperature of 4 °C due to the lack of sunlight in the cave.



There is a theory that if you stay in the cave for weeks without light, you will be blind because your brain will not feel the need to use ones' eyes and will start to degenerate. The cave is rather cold and dark at night, people and animals will not be able to survive.



The only living thing in the cave is a type of bacteria which glow in darkness.



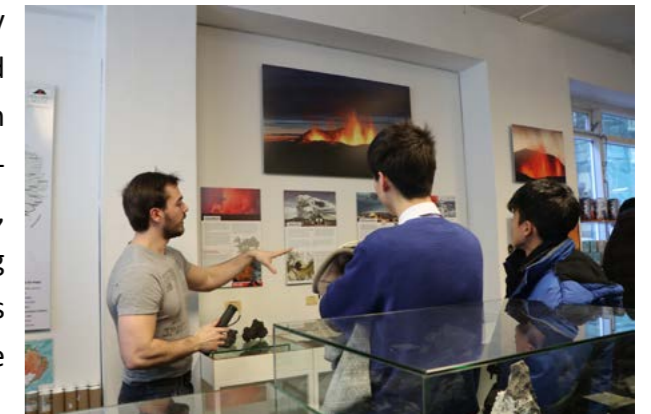
D. Volcano House



Volcano House provides information of volcano rocks not only in Iceland but worldwide. When we first entered the Volcano House, we saw a small cinema in which we enjoyed two mini films. Both of the films were informative that we could understand more about the Reykjavik eruption and a huge volcanic activity that happened in 1973. Near to the cinema, there was a small exhibition in which we saw many rocks and information about the volcanic eruptions happened in Iceland before. We could even touch the rocks with our bare hands!



The Eldfell Eruption happened on 23rd January in 1973. A small Icelandic island of Heimaey appeared less than a mile from the town of Vestmannaeyjar, which had a population of about 5,000 at that time. The newly-formed Eldfell volcano erupted for about six months, covering much of Vestmannaeyjar in ash, destroying several hundred homes, and sending lava to flow towards the harbour at one point, raising the water temperature to 44 °C.



The second most powerful eruption affecting Iceland was the 2010 eruption of Eyjafjallajökull. On 18th April 2010, a volcanic eruption occurred which affected the Western and Northern Europe for 6 days. This eruption produced lava with explosive activity. It caused around 1 km³ ice to melt, leading to flooding in the Southern Iceland. Most of the evacuated people were local farmers; their lands were destroyed and so they were unable to feed their livestock. For the positive impact of the eruption, a new tourist attraction was built so as to allow tourists to see the top of the volcano easily. The lava and ashes produced in the eruption, which contained rich nutrients, making soils in volcanic areas very fertile and good for agricultural use. The rocks could be used for construction.



When we first entered the small cinema of the Volcano House, we did not have a special feeling about volcanic eruptions because we live in a peaceful place, Hong Kong, where there are no serious natural disasters. But when we watched the video on the terrible natural disasters, we were shocked. When disaster struck, people's panic and helplessness came out. Nature was ruthlessly destroyed. Watching the city being slowly swallowed, we felt as if we were in it, we were very uncomfortable.

On the other hand, volcanoes also bring benefits to Iceland. They produce beautiful places, such as the Golden Circle and The Blue Lagoon. It also enhances the tourism development and boosts the economy. The volcanic eruption brings both benefit and harm to Icelanders.



Rocks in Volcano House

Basalt rocks

Basalt rocks are formed from the rapid cooling of basaltic lava exposed at or very near the surface of a planet. It is a common volcanic rock, and is a key component of oceanic crust in Iceland. Basalt rocks have mineral content and texture, which may be unreliable in some circumstances.

Andesite

Andesite is formed after an oceanic plate melts during its descent into the subduction zone to produce a source of magma. It can also form from the subduction zone environment. For example, it can form at ocean ridges. They are usually grey in color. It has a vesicular or amygdaloidal texture.

Volcanic bomb

Volcanic bomb is formed when a volcano ejects viscous fragments of lava during an eruption. They become solid when they are cold, and fragments before they reach the ground. It may cause severe injuries and death to people during an eruption activity. They explode from internal gas pressure when they are cold.

Ash

Ash is the solid remains of fires. It can provide nutrients to soil and contain minerals. The displayed ashes in the Volcano House were collected in the Eyjafjallajökull eruptions in 2010. In general, these ashes protect Iceland, creating specific waiver to cover it.

Tephra

Tephra is fragmental material produced by a volcanic eruption regardless of composition. In Iceland, Tephra horizons in South-Central area with the thick and light color layer. Rhyolite tephra can be found in the Central Iceland.



E. Geothermal Energy Exhibition



Iceland lies in the North Atlantic Ocean, with the Earth's surface plates parting in an average rate of 2 cm per year, that is 20 km over the space of 1 million years.

Molten rock magma wells up beneath the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. An additional volume rises towards a hotspot in Central Iceland. The fiery heart of the island plate movement and ascending magma caused volcanic activity at the average rate of one eruption every four years. A great deal of magma solidifies within the crust.



An active volcanic zone covers one-fourth of Iceland. The crust splits open within 30 individual volcanic swarms. Each swarm contains many volcanic fissures, open cracks and faults, while most also hold a large centrally placed volcano. Low temperature areas occur outside the active volcanic zone producing hot water not steam. Southwest Iceland contains four volcanic systems. Volcanic eruptions have often occurred there since the time of settlement in Iceland, and especially in the 12th and 13th centuries. The Heknet volcanic centre and the thin red little World Heritage Site are both situated within one of these systems. An eruption within this particular system occurred 2000 years ago.



Volcanic tuff formations and young lava flow are both common within the Heknet volcanic system conspicuous geothermal areas with the steam vents and mud pots as well as volcanic fissures, which are 2000 to 10000 years old-line system.



The geothermal areas in the Heknet volcanic system are high temperature areas created by volcanic activity and magma intrusions into the crust the same applies to other high-temperature areas in Iceland.

The Reykjanes Power Station is a geothermal power station located in Reykjanes at the southwestern tip of Iceland. The Reykjanes Peninsula is an area of high geothermal activity and several volcanoes are evident. Two power plants have been constructed to take advantage of this geothermal activity: Svartsengi Power Station, whose runoff creates the famous Blue Lagoon, and the Reykjanes Power Station completed in 2012.



The exhibition showed a lot of posters and different rocks. The posters showed the history and development of the application of geothermal energy in Reykjanes. Also, there were labels next to the rocks providing information about the samples.



Due to the geological location of Iceland, the high concentration of volcanoes in the area is often an advantage in the generation of geothermal energy. Most of the Icelanders always use geothermal energy to keep their houses warm, and keep pavements and car parks snow-free over winter. Geothermal energy is always used in diverse ways, including being harnessed for heating and the production of electricity. This energy comes rather cheap. So, in the wintertime, some sidewalks in Reykjavík and Akureyri are heated, and on the 40 km long road between Reykjavik and the International Airport at Keflavík, the lights on the lamp posts are on the whole night.



In 2010, five major geothermal power plants exist in Iceland, which produced approximately 26.2% of the nation's electricity. In addition, geothermal heating fulfills the heating and hot water requirements of approximately 87% of the buildings in Iceland. Apart from geothermal energy, 73.8% of the nation's electricity is generated by hydropower and 0.1% from fossil fuels.

Geothermal energy is not just restricted to Iceland. Across the world, countries that are located on the tectonic plates could generate electricity by using the same method as Iceland does. Iceland is a leading country in generating green energy and has expertise in the field of geothermal energy. It is a good example for nations of the world in how to use this unlimited self-sustaining resource for a clean living Earth.



A. Meeting President of Iceland

It was a great honour for us to meet Mr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, the president of Iceland during our visit. We visited him at the President Residence, Bessastaðir.



Mr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson shared with us the history of Bessastaðir. Bessastadir was built in 1761-1766 and housed a school until 1867. In the late 18th century, Bessastaðir was changed into a school for a few years before becoming a farm. In 1867, the farm was purchased by the poet and statesman Grímur Thomsen, who lived there for almost two decades. In 1940, Sigurður Jónasson bought Bessastaðir. At the time the government needed a place for the presidential residence, so Sigurður offered it to the government and they accepted it. It has been the presidential residence of Iceland ever since. Bessastaðir is now the home of the current president of Iceland, Mr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, along with his wife and four children.



Mr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson was very nice and guided us to visit the President Residence. He also explained the story of the facilities one by one. We were very interested in the Residence. We saw that the interior design was very modern but filled with lots of historical artefacts. For example, the room where meetings were held had a vase from the 6th century and a table and an old bible from the 16th century. We thought that it is a beautiful house which perfectly combines the present with fractions of the past.



We were given a tour down to the basement to see the artefacts found when reconstructing the place. It was filled with items left by all the previous owners. We thought that they were very fascinating as they were the history of previous inhabitants and presidents. It was a bit like a mini museum on its own.



Mr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson not only introduced his President Residence to us so we knew more about the funny history of Bessastaðir, but also shared with us a lot of cultures in Iceland, and answered our questions throughout the visit. Thanks to Mr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, we gained much more understanding of Iceland during the visit.



B. Meeting Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the PRC in the Republic of Iceland

In this tour, we could also meet Mr. Jin Zhijian, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of The People's Republic of China in the Republic of Iceland at the Embassy of The People's Republic of China in the Republic of Iceland.



Mr. Jin gave a talk on the relationship between China and Iceland. We learnt that China and Iceland were geographically far apart from each other. Yet, the two countries have enjoyed a long history of friendship. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1971, the relations between China and Iceland have been developing steadily and smoothly. Mr. Jin also shared with us some interesting facts about the cultural and economic relationship between China and Iceland.

We were also very impressed by the decorations about Chinese New Year in the meeting room. It showed that Chinese New Year is very important to all Chinese, even people are geographically far away from China.



Mr. Jin was very kind to answer our questions patiently. We sang our school song at the end of our visit. From this visit, we understood more about the diplomatic style of China.



C. Árbær Open Air Museum

Árbær Open Air Museum was founded in 1957 in order to give visitors a tangible sense of Reykjavík's past. It is a historical museum of the city of Reykjavík as well as an open-air museum and a regional museum. Its purpose is to give the public an insight into the living conditions, work and recreational activities of the people of Reykjavík in earlier times.

This museum is divided into three parts, the folk museum, the open air museum and the museum of transport. The folk museum contains different variety of tools and implements for fishing and farming, as well as the artefacts of the ancient Icelandic people. The turf houses in the open air museum allow visitors to know more about the ancient life and habits of the Icelandic people. The museum of transport shows the development of technology and transportation.



There are over 30 buildings in Árbær Open Air Museum. We could see how people lived in different times at different levels of society. There are many old houses which are very small because people in the old days were relatively short with a maximum height of 150 cm. Besides, the roof of the houses are more likely to be pointy, so as to prevent snow from staying on it which can avoid the collapse of the houses.



D. Surveys

(i) In Stockholm, Sweden

On the day we arrived in Stockholm, we carried out a survey on the culture of Stockholm with Stockholm citizens in the main street leading to the Nobel Prize Museum. Through the survey, we would like to understand more about the culture of Sweden. In this survey, we set different questions about cultures, including food and festivals. Results were presented in the form of word clouds.

Food

We asked the Swedish what food the local people like the most. Meatballs, which Sweden is famous for, was considered the most popular food.

We also found out some other special food like Flying Jacob, which is a dish with chicken and curry; Pannkaka, a dish like pancake; Jansson Tempatation, a dish mixing potatoes with onions, anchovies and cream. Seafood is also popular among the local people. Herrings, crayfish and salmon are some of the examples.



Festivals

From the word cloud, it seemed that Summer Burst was the most favorite festivals of the Swedish. The Summer Burst is celebrated in the mid-summer (in 2018, the Summer Burst will be held on 15th July to 16th July). Summer Burst involves music performance, and is held to celebrate mid-summer. Most Swedish like this festival since they enjoy the celebration.

Another festival that the Swedish like the most is the Pride Festival. This festival is to celebrate Sweden passes the law of accepting homosexual marriage, and there will be parade for the celebration. The festival will be held between 27th July and 8th August in 2018.

There are also many music festivals in Sweden, such as the Music Rock Festival, Peace & Love Festival and the Wayout West.



Language

From the questionnaire, we found out that most of the Swedish use English and Swedish in their daily life. Some of the people in Sweden know how to speak Mandarin since they can choose to learn Mandarin, which is an elective subject in school. Russian, German and French are also elective subjects in Sweden, so some of them can speak these languages.



Things that can represent Sweden the most

One of our groups conducted a survey to find out the most significant item that represents Sweden. Some suggested the castle in Sweden; some suggested the celebration tool they use, which is a horse in different colours. Some also suggested carrot and cinnamon roll bun. Of course, meatball is also considered the most significant by some Swedish.

(ii) In Reykjavik, Iceland

On the last day we stayed in Iceland, we did a survey about the culture in Iceland with the Icelanders inside a shopping mall. In this survey, we set different questions on the Icelandic cultures, including food and festivals. Through the survey, we would like to understand more about the culture of Iceland. Results were presented in the form of word clouds.

Food

The common food of Icelanders are fish, lamb meat, Mexican Slattin (taco), pizza and meat soup. Some of the interviewees mentioned that they usually eat food with potatoes.

Festivals in Iceland

There are different kinds of festivals in Iceland. The most popular festival is Seaman’s Day, which takes place on every first Saturday in June, to honour the people who have worked hard to support Iceland’s main industry and lifeline. Some others mentioned the National Day, Christmas, New Year’s Eve, Music Festival and Pride Festival.



Things that can represent Iceland the most

Some interviewees were proud of the beautiful landscapes and nature in Iceland, including the mountains and the volcanoes. It attracts tourists from all over the world to visit Iceland. Also, some Icelanders thought that the fresh air can represent Iceland the most.



Students' Reflections

Leung Cho Yat	I have learnt a lot from the tour. I found that the lava underground has a lot of functions. It somehow formed the Blue Lagoon, which is a lake that is warm all the time.
Johannsson Coco Margaret	I felt very lucky that I could meet with the President of Iceland and visit his residence. The library in his house is the most impressive — inside it was a table from the 16th century and a vase from the 6th century.
Kong Hoi Kiu	During the visit to a local school, students from Iceland and Hong Kong had to complete some tasks together. I made some new friends and learnt more about the Icelandic culture. My English also improved since we communicated in English to achieve a common goal. The trip is a great learning experience to me.
Wan Yin Chi	On our visit to an international school in Iceland, we joined in their classes with the Icelandic students, such as Music, Science, History and Geography. We had lunch together, too. During the exchange, I made a new friend who is called Jennallen.
Lam Yat Long	This is the first time for me to travel to Europe for nine days by myself. The whole experience made me become mature and independent. On the day of returning to Hong Kong, I couldn't wait to share my wonderful memories with my parent who was picking me up at the airport.
Leung Ling Yi	The Icelandic students are very friendly. I plucked up my courage to speak to them as I used to be a shy girl. During the visit, we could play the musical instruments with Icelandic students and sing a song called "I Follow You" together.
Kam Cheuk Yiu	People in Iceland are supportive of the sustainable development of their country. They use geothermal energy in their daily life, such as for heating purpose in their house in face of the cold weather.
Valleramos Bea Justine Marie Reyes	I have learnt a lot about the traditions of Iceland. On our visit to the school, I found that all of the students were wearing socks only, putting their shoes and coats aside. Different from students in Japan who do it to keep the school clean, Icelandic students take their shoes off in order to keep the floor dry due to melting of the snow on their shoes and coats.
Cheung Hei Tung	The visit to the Árbær Open Air Museum enabled me to know more about the old Iceland and the modern Iceland. People in the past mainly worked on farming while people in the modern days explore knowledge for advancement and betterment.

Davison Louisa Francesca	The school visit was my favorite part of the trip, seeing what Icelandic students and their school life are like. We made friends and learnt about the Icelandic culture through chatting. Their school is smaller in size as Iceland is much less populated by square kilometres than those in Hong Kong.
So Ka Ching Aimee	During the visit to a music school, we had a performance to the Icelandic students. It was followed by a music exchange, where the Hong Kong students played some Chinese and Icelandic famous songs with the Icelandic orchestra. It was fun!
Wong Ka Hei	We conducted a survey in the streets to know more about Iceland from the local people. I found that people in Iceland are familiar with English and they are very kind. Many of them favour a music festival called 'Iceland Airwaves'.
Zhang Yusi	I was able to see lots of great views and learnt more about the cause and effects of volcanic eruptions. With lots of lava and magma underground, the Blue Lagoon was formed. Also, this makes geothermal energy available, which provides at least 85% of energy source for people in Iceland, for heating up the room and water in the house.
Wong Laam	During the tour, we visited two schools in Iceland. The students there are friendly. They shared interesting things about their schools, such as their school life and the buildings on their school campus. Students from the two places also exchanged contact information with each other!
Wong Kai Lam	I learnt how to be independent. I used to travel with my parents who managed everything for me including keeping my passport and packing my luggage. The 9-day trip was an opportunity for me to learn to do all the things by myself. Despite being the first time to go on a tour by myself, I found it interesting.
Lam Chun Tung	The nature in Iceland is very beautiful. The waterfall at the Golden Circle is the largest waterfall I have ever seen. Also, this is the first time that I saw snow as Hong Kong doesn't snow.
Choy Hiu Tung	The students from the music school are passionate about learning and are willing to accept challenges. I remembered that a cellist was asked to play the score of double bass on the spot. He didn't refuse to do it but took up the challenge and tried his best to do it. I think we should learn from their learning attitude and be brave to try out new things.
Hung Tse Yen	I like the Blue Lagoon the most. Before the tour, I think it was created by people by adding hot water. After the visit, I learnt that the Blue Lagoon was formed due to the lava. It is blue in colour, because of the presence of the silica and the way it reflects sunlight.

Sze Po Yan	I learnt more about the cultural differences between Hong Kong, Sweden and Iceland. Hong Kong people have a fast pace of life every day, which is the same for Swedish people. However Icelandic people have a much slower pace of life.
Tam Evelyn Yan Lok	During the tour, I learnt that Iceland is one of the places in the world that has high volcanic activities, which cause frequent volcanic eruptions. Iceland is located on the mid-Atlantic Ridge where the two tectonic plates move away from each other by 2 cm per year. The volcanic eruptions caused casualties in a bad way, but also formed beautiful landscapes in Iceland.
Chan Kin Chun Jonathan	During the visit to the international school, I experienced how the teachers teach their students. The most memorable part of the visit is the music lesson. Students from Iceland and Hong Kong played different kinds of musical instrument which we had never played before. We all enjoyed ourselves in the performance which brought us happiness and harmony.
Leung Vanessa	I came to know more about Iceland. The tour guide gave very interesting descriptions and told us many stories about Iceland. He said most of the Icelandic people believe in elves while Chinese people follow Buddhism. I found that 'culture' is in fact an intriguing topic and I also learnt that it is important to respect different cultures.
Lau Tammi Hiu Tung	The education tour is no doubt a very memorable event in my life. Being able to go to Iceland, seeing the wonders, making new friends, learning so much is such a fortunate thing that has happened in my life. Learning to learn from others and improving ourselves is the most effective way of learning is my biggest takeaway from this tour.
Tang Cheuk Hei	Even though Iceland is just a small country, it can produce its own energy sources without relying too much on others, which is very amazing and eye-opening.
Wong Hon Ting	Thanks for the arrangement by Ms. Lin, the tour provided a lot of cultural experiences. During the exchange with students in a music school and an international school, we learnt more about the music culture of Iceland since we rehearsed and played some Icelandic music with the local students together.





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