

Student Experience Report Stavanger, Norway SoSe23

Preparation

I did not had the task to apply to the University of Stavanger as I was already admitted to the university by the my admission to the program of Migration and Intercultural Relations. Though I decided to arrive at the university the day the classes started and not arriving in the country earlier due to the expensive life in the country.

Travel and Arrival

I travelled to Stavanger, Norway on January 17, 2023 the day classes started though the exchange semester started on 11 January 2023. I used an air flight from Bremen, Germany and arrived in through the Sola airport with weather of extreme cold temperatures.

Accommodation

Throughout the exchange semester I was hosted in the student halls managed by the Sis bolig organisation which I applied to and was granted a place to reside while I was in Oldenburg. The hall I lived in was both 20 minutes by foot to the university and to the city centre.

Studying at the host university

Studying at the University of Stavanger was a great experience as their arrangement of classes are different from that of Oldenburg but also learning in the semester was well structured and at a good pace. The elective modules we had, had intensive weeks of learning and class discussions followed up with a research paper. Before the next module could begin, we were given a month to complete the research paper of the previous module which was a very good thing because we had more time to write the paper. Apart from that, the infrastructure found in the university was quite impressive as there were many places with chairs and tables for a student to work an assignment.

Everyday life and leisure time

I found former school mates at the university who back home in Malawi, we were in the same university though they were doing the sciences and I was doing the Humanities. I found them having an event one day a week which was usually on Friday where they gathered as a group to cook traditional food that we cook in Malawi and eat. Games and interactions followed after the supper as it was usually organised during the evening. I also found a church which I used to go to back in my country where I met and made new friends from DRC, Uganda, South Sudan, Phillipine, Brazil and Norwegians just to mention a few. Some of them were resettled refugees, others students and others came to Norway because of marriage and it was a good time I spent with them as sometimes we played games after the church service.

General Experience

Life in Norway is expensive so incoming students need to be aware of this and strive to spend their money wisely. Norwegians do not like to talk to people openly and worse still in buses they opt to be quiet and not to be disturbed which some incoming students might find it strange. They might as well encounter racist experiences but they can find friends in parties when they go out. I would encourage them to try as much as possible to find some students that are from their country so that they can create a community where they can speak their mother language and cook traditional food just as what happened with me. Most importantly, I advise them not to miss classes but to attend all of them as absence in classes warrants a fail grade in the courses at the university. Everyone in Stavanger except some old people speaks English which will be a very good experience to the international students as they will not struggle with language issues.