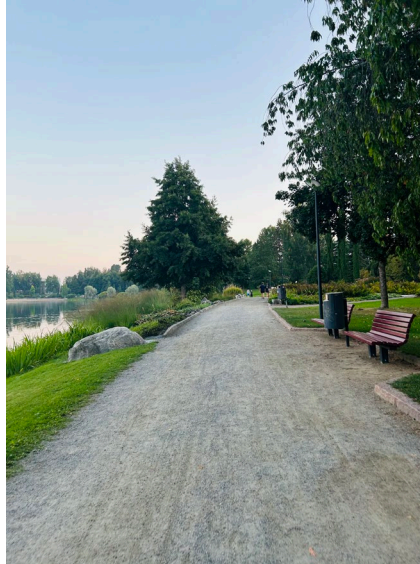


Experience in Finland – Dorteia Nakandjibi, University of Namibia

I am Dorteia Nakandjibi from the University of Namibia, I am deeply grateful for the SANORD (Brian O'Connell) scholarship, which has allowed me to embark on this life-changing journey in Finland. It has only been a week since I arrived in Kuopio, and the experience so far has exceeded my expectations in every way.



My first week, from the 2nd to the 5th of September, was filled with orientation activities that were both enjoyable and incredibly informative. I had the pleasure of meeting students from all over the world, representing various fields of study, and the warm welcome from the Finnish people made me feel instantly at ease. Finland, with its serene beauty, green landscapes, and abundant lakes, has been a delight to explore. Though the weather is unpredictable, alternating between sunny and rainy, I've learned to always carry an umbrella! Finland's natural beauty offers so much tranquility!



One of my first impressions was the safety and openness of the country, plus the practice of removing your shoes immediately after entering a room (house), I like this part! My apartment is not fenced, for example,

but this only reinforced Finland's reputation as one of the safest and happiest nations. The environment here feels secure, and my apartment is a comfortable space, it feels like home.

Academically, I am excited about the journey ahead. I recently completed my registration and look forward to delving into the courses I've selected. Given my passion for agribusiness, I believe that the business courses I've chosen will enhance my knowledge and help me contribute to the development of agriculture as a business in Namibia and Africa. I am eager to see how the Finnish education system operates and to immerse myself in this enriching academic environment. I'm also thrilled to work with both my home university supervisors and exchange supervisors here at UEF, and I believe this experience will contribute greatly to my research project and academic development, overall. Having access to such supportive academic guidance is a great opportunity, and I'm eager to make the most of it.



Joining the student union has been another highlight, as it connects me with fellow students socially and academically. I've already formed bonds with my peers, and the sense of community here is truly welcoming. In terms of cultural experiences, one of the first Finnish foods I tried so far was the rice pie, which I loved for its simplicity and natural taste. I'm excited to try more Finnish cuisine, especially their salmon and pastries.

I've also had the opportunity to experience one of Finland's most cherished cultural traditions—the sauna. It was an exhilarating and refreshing experience that left me feeling completely rejuvenated. I can understand why the sauna is such an integral part of Finnish culture, and I've come to love it already. It's not just a physical cleanse, but a mental reset, and I look forward to making it a regular part of my Finnish journey.

In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Southern African Nordic Centre, University of Namibia and the University of Eastern Finland for this opportunity. This exchange program is already having an impact on me and I am excited to see what the upcoming months in Finland will bring. I believe this experience will not only advance my career but also enrich my personal development.