

**Subject: Final report of BOC Scholarship Recipient tour to Sweden 2024:**

Dear: Respected SANORD Board

I have recently returned from my 3-month study abroad in Sweden and my experience can be broadly described as, 'A once in a lifetime opportunity that was nothing short of amazing academically, socially and culturally'. Within the span of 3 months, I had the pleasure of seeing and living in Europe, a far distant accomplishment I had since the age of 14 .

I was hosted at Högskolan Väst (University West) in Trollhättan, Sweden. Trollhättan is quite a small yet cozy city with loads of parks and nature reserves/forests. Most things are quite close and is easy to walk from A to B. I had managed to get myself a bicycle to make traveling a bit easier and this had been a great help. I attended class twice a week which forms part of my MA in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) specializing in Political Science. We were a class of about 17 students from many parts of the world. I now have friends from England, Brazil, Pakistan, Palestine, Sweden and even Chechnya! They were quite welcoming and friendly so it was easy to adjust and make new friends.

During my stay I had managed to get placement for my internship which is scheduled to run from August-December 2024. This internship is integrated into the degree and aims to give students the opportunity to hone their theoretical knowledge in a practical environment hence 'work-integrated learning'. Through WIL, students get an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to real-life situations and are able to bring back practical experiences into the classroom, thereby improving learning and the student's understanding of his or her field. I also managed to find a supervisor for my mini thesis who is an expert in the field I aim to research; security studies. I completed my exams in Sweden in the last week of May and I would say it was a success (achieving codes A and B as final course marks).

Thereafter, I decided to use my time and personal resources well by travelling to Poland and Belgium. In Poland I stayed with a childhood friend and I got to see and learn about a different part of European culture and history. It was a great experience and something I will always remember. In Belgium, I visited students and colleagues whom I met on a trip in Worcester (February 2024) while conducting field work. Apart from creating new networks and friends, I had a tour

of the EU parliament located in Brussels. That exposed me to they day-to-day work of what parliament members do. As my field is Political Studies, mainly international politics and affairs, it was certainly a good idea and educational experience.

Please see the below following pictures:

These was taken at the host university; University West.









This was taken at Gothenburg University, where I visited to enquire about their PhD programmes.





The was taken at a 18<sup>th</sup> century castle in Poland:



EU parliament in Brussels.









This picture was taken at the Royal Palace in Brussels.



To conclude, my trip was enriching academically, culturally, socially as well as professionally. I visited the University of Gothenburg and actually got to meet with a potential supervisor for my PhD. Having travelled to China and now Europe, I most likely see myself pursuing a PhD out of South Africa and then coming back to share what I have learnt.

I have thanked the SANORD board and director many times before but I could not thank them enough for choosing me as the candidate for this opportunity. I am sure my experience will not only be beneficial for me, but for many others with whom I can share my experiences with. The world is out there for us to explore and SANORD helped facilitate that for me and many others (past and future recipients). This initiative is great and I hope it continues for many years to come.

Yours Sincerely,

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