



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Health and Society
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	01-09-2021 until 14-12-2021
Country (exchange)	Finland
City (exchange)	Kuopio
University (exchange)	University of Eastern Finland
Faculty (exchange)	Different ones

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Especially in the time with COVID-19 and all the online learning I wanted to study in another environment. I really wanted to go abroad and meet people from other countries with other cultures. It was a nice opportunity for a 'break' during my studies in Wageningen.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

The situation was unsure because of COVID-19 so I wanted to make sure to choose a country with a good COVID-19 situation. Finland, Sweden and Norway were the countries I preferred. After the country selection I searched for courses and the courses in Finland seems most interesting to me. I also wanted to go to a place where I could live in the cold and snow.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

You have to fly to Helsinki from Amsterdam Schiphol. I took the train to Kuopio, which is 5 hours of travelling. There are also flights from Helsinki to Kuopio. A few people took that flight but the train is the cheapest option.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Health promotion and management	5	Topical national and international health policy strategies, health promoting schools, hospitals, work places, tools for health promotion management, ethics in health promotion management.	3	It was a independent study, which means reading a book and make an exam. I prefer attending lectures which was not part of this course.
2	Principles of nutrition	5	Basic concepts in human nutrition. Function of the nutrients in the body and their requirements. Major food sources of nutrients.	4	I really liked this course but it was the hardest course I took because it was really into biomedical insights, which I didn't had on beforehand.
3	Public Health Nutrition	5	Concepts and definitions in the field of public health nutrition. Diet and risk of chronic diseases (obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, bone health, cognitive decline). Undernutrition. Determinants of dietary habits, food choice models.	5	I really liked this course. There were so many discussions in the lessons which was really interesting. It was always a combination of lecture with groupwork.
4	Public Health in Humanitarian Crises	5	The course will strengthen understanding of: The concept of crisis; Causes (natural, man-made) of humanitarian crises and disasters; The general impact of crises in the light of recent examples; Climate change and health; Environmental impact of disasters and humanitarian crises; Typical public health consequences of humanitarian crises; Mental health in disasters; Disaster	4	This course was refreshing for me because it was a new topic which I was really interested in. We had to write an essay and attend lectures.

			preparedness; First response, humanitarian aid; Longer-term issues of management in humanitarian crises; Specific challenges of public health in complex emergencies; Water supply, sanitation, and food supplies in extreme conditions; Role of various actors, international collaboration; Disaster epidemiology; Disaster prevention.		
5	Globalization, international migration, and cultural security	5	Cultural security, international migration, and negotiations of identity, Civilizations in the global age, Globalization, mobility and conflicts, Sources of cultural diversity and change.	3	This was also an independent study. I had to read a book and after that make an exam.
6	Community based health promotion	5	International, national and regional perspectives to community-based health promotion. Impacts of interventions and quality assessment in evidence-based health promotion. Ethics and cultural issues in community-based health promotion.	4	This was really nice because I had the opportunity to work with people from other countries.

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

Four of the courses existed of lectures and writing essays. For me the essays were a bit of a struggle sometimes because there is a lot of freedom. Once you get started and have a nice topic it is very nice that you can research whatever is interesting for you. The other two are independent courses. The lesson material in Finland is free for every student which is very nice because you don't have to spend a lot of money on, for example, study books. I had to read two books and in the end I had to take an exam. There were two essay question which must be answered. The academic level is a bit lower than in the Netherlands.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)

The culture of the university is really nice. They always wants to help you and are sending e-mails regularly to ask if everything is working out. If you have struggles with your courses or deadlines, they always want to help you. This is, for me, an important difference with the WUR. In Finland, they really care about your mental health and take care about the workload. If you have a lot of deadlines which causes a lot of stress you can always ask the teacher if you can postpone a deadline. During my time, the engagement with local students was not that much. I only took courses for exchange students and the Finnish students did not participate in this courses.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

The university is offering a very nice lunch. The government gives money for this and so the meals are really cheap (1,60 vegetarian and 2,60 for meat) and healthy. The food is really nice and there are a lot of different options. The sport facilities are also really nice. Sykettä offers one semester of sporting for 35 euros. You can join group lessons and by doing this you can try a lot of new sports. The gym is also accessible with Sykettä.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)

I signed up for a room via Kuopas. I lived in Katiskaniementie and I can really recommend this place. You can choose between a 2 or 3 person apartment and you live near the lake and it is 15 minutes by bus to the campus.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

Finnish people are really introvert. You can always ask them things, but they are not the ones starting the conversation. In addition to that, the Finnish language is really hard to learn. Finnish people do not have a special cuisine, in comparison to the Netherlands. They eat a lot of mashed potatoes and fish-soups. Their manners are really good. Especially in corona time they wash their hands often, use face-masks. Besides that they are really clean and always leave their shoes at the entrance.

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

The house rental in Kuopio was much cheaper than in Wageningen. The difference can be up to 100 euros or even more. However, the price of living in Kuopio was much more expensive than in Wageningen. Groceries, activities and going out to a pub are expensive.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

There is a student discount for the taxi when you use it on Thursdays. You always have to ask the taxi driver to really get it. In the city centre, at the Kiosk, you can buy a card for the bus. It is around 37 euros for a month and I can really recommend it. I always used it to travel to the university.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

The Kuopio tower is something you have to visit. Autumn in Finland is really beautiful because of all the towers but the winter is also really beautiful. Try to visit the tower at least once in autumn and once in winter. You have a sight over the whole city and environment up there. Also Takho and Koli National Park is a really nice place to go for a hike. You can rent a car to get there in one to two hours. Lapland is also recommendable. You can join the ESN trip but I planned it with friends and did it by car.

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

The environment from Kuopio. We always looked for beautiful places to go with train or bus or car but it is also worth it to stay in Kuopio for nice hikes. There are a lot of hiking trails in the environment.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

Nousou bar is really nice to go out and with the ESN card you can get discount for the drinks. Ale Pupi is also nice to go. They have discount on Thursdays and in general the drinks are cheaper than other clubs. Rosso is a really nice place to go for dinner. They have delicious pizzas.

7. Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The challenge I experienced was choosing the right courses. When I started at the university, a few courses were not given. I had to make some changes but they really helped me doing this. Filling in all the forms for Erasmus was also a bit of a challenge. I had to email a lot between Wageningen and Kuopio to get the right things done so this was a bit stressful.

What was your best memory abroad?

All the trips that I've done and the people I met from different countries is my best memory from abroad. Finland is, in my opinion, not a typical vacation country so this was a really nice opportunity to visit Finland and to really live in the country for a few months. Otherwise I would have never done this and would miss all the beautiful nature this country has to offer.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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