

Florence Network Annual Meeting 2015 in Copenhagen

Anton Gyllin VK13, president of the Student Board of Florence Network and a nursing student at the Swedish Red Cross University College, shares his experience of the yearly conference in Denmark.

Florence Network Annual Meeting is a network and a great opportunity to get to know your future international colleagues. The network aim to both enhance and develop the international dialogue between universities and working nurses/midwives. By networking, exchanging information through several different workshops and lectures the network aims to learn from and improve our current situation as nurses and midwives within Europe. The network consists of 18 countries and approximately 40 university colleges throughout Europe, making this network one of the biggest of its kind in the world. No other similar network includes as many students as Florence Network, which also makes it the internationally biggest student activity.

We spent five days (13.04.15 - 17.04.15) in Copenhagen, primarily in the Metropolitan University College having a well-organized program containing lectures, workshops and networking mixed with some opportunities to savor a couple of cultural experiences included in the program. Students, teachers, Erasmus coordinators and a couple of vice chancellors from most member schools were present. This year's theme was innovation within nursing and midwifery.

The first day at Metropolitan University College was meant for us to arrive, receive a welcome and make the first acquaintances. The evening contained networking and social hours. It is through these networking hours that most of the informational transfers take place.

The next day started at 08.30 am. We were officially welcomed by Anne Mette Jørgensen (Head of Department Metropolitan University College), Dorte Guling (Head of Nursing Department, University College Zealand) and Theresa Leal (President of Florence Network). They all gave moving speeches regarding Denmark, their school system and how honored they were to host the Florence Network Annual Meeting 2015.

The morning continued with several presentations such as *Falling into the light* and *Development of Fall Detection Technology: a Nurse-led User-centered Approach*. In the beginning I was eager to write everything down and act as I am used when attending a

lecture. But I quickly realized that Florence Network Annual Meeting is not about studying for an exam or knowing everything a lecturer said; it is about being open-minded and interested in different study systems and cultures. It is about sharing experiences to help each other improve and develop within our profession.



In the late afternoon we enjoyed a beautiful canal tour in Copenhagen, as one of the cultural activities on the agenda. It offered great indulgence to all who attended.



Wednesday started at 08.00 am. We had a one-hour bus journey to the University College Zealand in Roskilde. I must say the lecture hall we were in really impressed me, wonderful and very modern. The university had glass walls which made the atmosphere open and welcoming. We had several lectures such as *What competence will European health care professionals need in the future?* and *Intercultural Communication* and watched a very impressive movie about prejudice and ideas about different cultures. In the afternoon we had workshops and discussions. I visited the workshops of

Internationalization at Home: Solutions instead of limitations. What are the challenges? and *Quality in International Exchanges – How and what should we measure?*. These workshops really opened my eyes and gave me a new insights about the importance of exchanges during my time as a student.



Thursday presented us with the unique opportunity to visit different hospitals, where we each had to choose one. I visited a neonatal ward, delivery rooms and post-natal care. Denmark and specifically Copenhagen is famous for their innovative and advanced healthcare for women during and after their pregnancy. It was a real privilege to take part of it. The reason I chose these wards was because I have worked and seen similar wards in Sweden, Turkey and Tanzania. This gave me the opportunity to compare these countries health care more thoroughly.

Thursday also contained the closing speeches by the hosting university, the president of Florence Network and the president of the Student Board, in other words: Me. It was with mixed feelings that I stood up there in front of all attendants at the conference to present the Student Boards experience and work before and during the conference. Since this was my last year as a nursing student, I gave up my presidency and a new president was elected, Simon Dauding. Simon is a nursing student at the Metropolitan University College in Copenhagen, where he also works at the international office as responsible for student exchange.

Thursday evening we had a special occasion: The Gala Dinner. Everyone went to the greatest lengths possible to look smart. We dressed up accordingly and enjoyed the best food Copenhagen could present. Our in-house chef did his best to spoil us with the amazingly tasty smørrebrød, salmon and meat. The atmosphere was so relaxed and the gala always presents the opportunity to really connect with your international colleagues. A wonderful conclusion of an extraordinary experience.



Anton and friends having fun at the gala dinner.

On the last day we indulged in a visit to Shakespeare's Castle. Not all of the members got a ticket for this exhibition, so we were just a small group. A guide showed us the castle from the very top to the deepest caves underground. It was a strong insight into Denmark's history.

This year's annual conference was very well organized and the experience gained from this is hard to explain. You get inspired to do and learn more when you see all the innovative lectures, you make international acquaintances that you will keep in touch with forever, you learn so much about the European situation for all nurses and midwives which gives you a totally new perspective of the situation in Sweden. I wish all students at the Swedish Red Cross University College the opportunity to attend this conference.