



# **KTH Global Development Hub TRAVEL REPORT**

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**KTH Programme: CDEPR**

**GDH Project theme: Water supply, infrastructure**

**Partner University: Botho University**

**Dates of Exchange: 01/22 – 05/22**

## INTRODUCTION

I heard about GDH several years ago and I've been wanting to go since then. This spring I finally got the opportunity to go. I studied one semester in Botswana at Botho University.

The reason I chose Botswana in particular was that the project sounded very interesting. It attracted me to work in projects that develop solutions to a local societal challenge. I had also heard very good things about Botswana.

I studied two courses at Botho, one in strategic marketing that is part of my master's and the project course. I was also able to study a distance learning course from KTH which took place during the same period as my exchange.



View from Kgale Hill.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Pre-departure

Visa, visa, visa... Prepare everything you can for the visa because it was a long process. One of the requirements was an identity card that needed to be issued and stamped by the Swedish Tax Agency, I wish I had done that before I left. This, together with passport size photos and proof of sponsorship from KTH, I recommend fixing before you leave to avoid a lengthy process.

If you are planning to travel around Botswana, it may be good to also bring malaria pills.

It was expensive to withdraw money and the many places prefer cash. So, I recommend getting some kind of bank card with 0% currency surcharge, free currency exchange and free withdrawals to avoid double fees on every withdrawal.

If you go during spring term like me it will be very hot when you arrive, towards the end of term it will be much cooler, so a light jacket and some long trousers are good to bring too. During some periods it rained a lot, so a raincoat and durable shoes can be good to pack with you.

### **Accommodation**

I lived on the Botho campus in an apartment together with two other students from KTH. I chose to have a room myself, and therefore paid double rent. The arrangement seems to be that you pay 1250 BWP rent "per bed", I paid 2500 BWP. The apartment I lived in had two bedrooms each with a bathroom, a living room with a balcony and a shared kitchen.

It was practical and convenient to live on campus. There are two shopping malls nearby and a nice mountain to hike in. However, it could feel a bit remote from time to time and it was difficult to get around town.

There is no washing machine, so you either have to wash by hand or try to hand it in to a laundromat. In my experience, laundromats were expensive, so I went for hand washing. We had a balcony both in the apartment and a large roof terrace where things dried quickly.



Entrance at Botho University with Kgale Hill in the background.

I paid rent once a month and did this in an office on campus. Paid a few times by card and other times via bank transfer, both worked. It might be good to save receipts as

this doesn't seem to be saved in their system (I was asked to prove how I paid the rent and at the time was glad I saved receipts).

There were no plates, cutlery, glasses, frying pans or any utensils at all in our apartment so we had to buy them ourselves. I don't know if this is the case for all apartments on campus, but it might be worth asking before your arrival.

In retrospect, I am happy with my choice to live on campus precisely because it felt safe and was so convenient with school and shops nearby.

### **Transportation**

By far, transportation was the main issue during my stay in Gaborone. There are two options for getting around, you either grab a cab or you go by their local bus called combi. Neither is rather reliable, but they did get you around town. Be prepared to get your patience tested.

The advantages of taxis were that communication was often easier, the combi drivers rarely spoke English, which made it difficult to understand what was happening and if you were on the right combi. Cons with taxis: I can't remember a single taxi being on time once and it was quite expensive. Always bring a book or something, I had to wait for a taxi for 2-3 hours several times.

You also get to go on various adventures on the roads when you go in taxis, such as picking up random cakes or dropping of balloons before reaching your end destination. It was for sure a fun way to explore the city but extremely time-consuming. I did learn however learn after 3 months that taxi services are not supposed to operate like this. There could also be problems with getting in touch with taxis as many drivers often run out of mobile data.



Dropping of some balloons during a taxi ride.



In a combi.

The advantage of combis is that it is much (!) cheaper, and they go their route without detours. However, it is difficult to understand how to ride and it can get crowded. We were not advised against taking a combi by Botho, but they recommended a taxi.

Traffic in Gaborone is crazy, so be prepared to queue. At some times there was less queue than others, but towards the end of the week, such as Thursdays and Fridays, there was a constant queue.

### **Costs**

Prices was generally very similar to Sweden, but in local currency of course which was about 0,8 SEK when I was there.

At times, certain things were very expensive like fruits or fresh vegetables. It could also be hard to find these types of groceries. By the time I left Botswana I had not seen a red onion or tomatoes in any food market for weeks.

If you want to travel, save some money because it's really expensive. Flights are much costlier than in Europe and lodges are very pricy. I did however mention that I was a student and was offered discounts at two separate lodges, I recommend you do the same if you go.



Farmers market once a month with food, books, local crafts etc.

I highly recommend always having some cash on you as many shops prefer this form of payment and some shops only accept cash as a form of payment.

## STUDY EXPERIENCE:

### GDH Project Experience

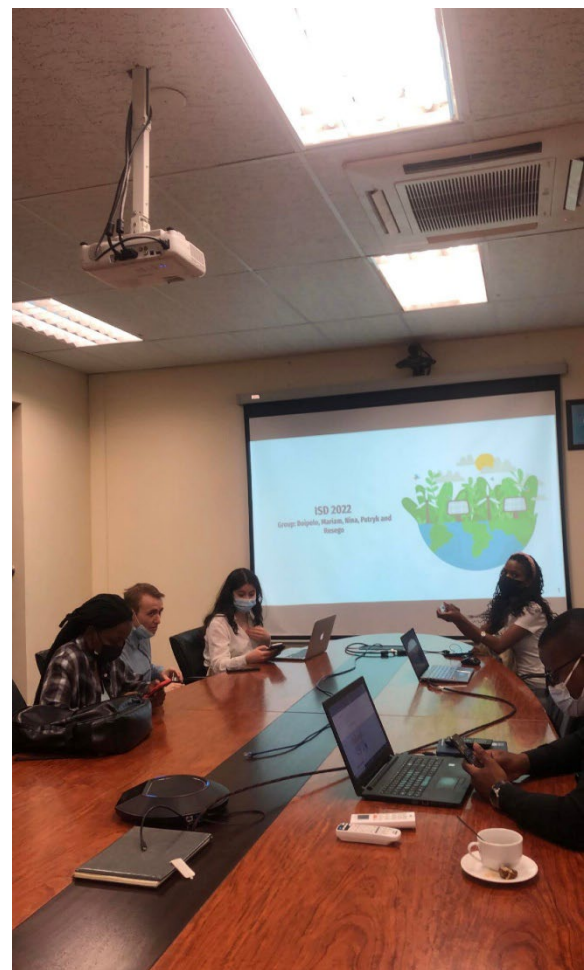
It wasn't until well into the semester that we were presented a list of projects to choose from. It was frustrating at times that it took so long to get started, but it also gave us the opportunity to study the theory behind Design Thinking. Despite great efforts, we never got in touch with anyone from the company. This was a big shock to us all.

We therefore had to be adaptable and steer the project in a different direction. My experience is that keeping an open mind and being adaptable was critical to accomplishing this project.

It was a lot of fun working together with local students, we were able to combine and exchange experiences and knowledge that really became valuable for the result.



During a group meeting for project.



During a presentation of project.

### Courses outside of project

I also studied a course in strategic marketing at Botho. I had this approved in advance to be credited in my master's. I thought the structure of this course was similar to KTH with part-examination submissions and a final exam. The professor in this course was great.



During a marketing class.

I also studied a distance learning course from KTH as this course ran during the same period that I was going away. The whole setup worked well.



I also engaged in a course or project called Girls for Girls Botswana that was highly rewarding, fun, and educating. You also got to meet a lot of ambitious and interesting local people who give lectures on equality and very openly shares their experiences on the matter and discuss their way to success. It was also a great way to meet friends.



During a G4G event at the NeoHub in Gaborone.

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES/TRAVEL:

### Travelling

I travelled a lot during my time in Botswana. Partly because my schedule was very light, but also because there is so much cool stuff to see. I highly recommend going north and experiencing nature and wildlife in northern Botswana. This was absolutely one of the sickest experiences of my life. It is also close to South Africa and only a 2-hour flight to Cape Town which I also visited a couple of times in the spring.

But be prepared that traveling in Botswana is crazy expensive, so apply for all scholarships and save money in advance if you can.



Cute rhino family.



Don't get stuck in the mud during your travels.



Moremi wildlife reserve.



Moremi wildlife reserve.



Tired lion.

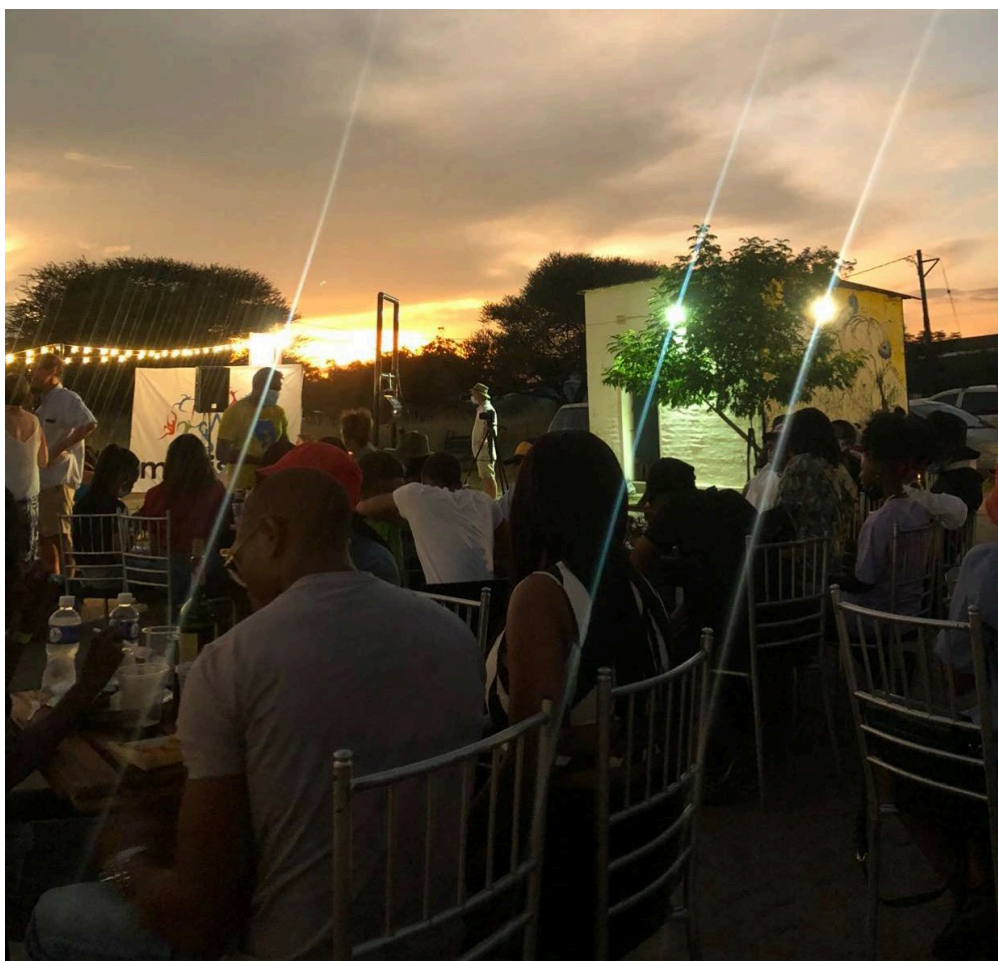
## Culture

My experience of the culture is warm, chatty, fun, open and a lot of dancing. There seems to be a lot of events where local gather up and celebrate. Such as the monthly farmers market or arts and crafts fairs.

Almost every weekend there was some type of event that you could go to which was super nice, my favourite was the farmers market on the first Saturday of every month.



Weekend hike up the Kgale hill.



Arts and crafts fair with live music and food trucks.

## Conclusion:

Spending time in Botswana has been an amazing experience. If you get the opportunity to go I recommend you take it. Be open for whatever Botswana brings you. In retrospect my experience exceeded my expectations but not in the way I thought they would. With that said, practice patience, be open and go have the best time ever in Botswana!

Hade gott haj!



May GDH publish your report on the KTH GDH web page for future GDH students to read?

YES  NO

May GDH share quotes and/or pictures from your report in brochures, webpages, etc. for marketing purposes?

YES  NO

Further comments: (outside of the formal report. Not to be shared outside of the GDH steering group)