

UCD 2018 Summer School report

This serves as a report of my experiences in the journey that I undertook to the UCD 2018 Summer School. When I first received an email from the UJ International House representative, Mr Berneth Koopman stating that I was one of the eight students that were selected from the Karibu Jamii Ladies Residence (previously known as Skoonveld) that is situated in the University of Johannesburg's main campus (APK), I was so elated but yet so anxious because I had never flew out of the country before. The preparations were taking a toll on me as we were in the middle of examination season and I felt like cancelling on this trip, but because of the support from my fellow team mates I held on and tried to juggle both the load of examinations and preparations for the trip

The reality of me going to Ireland kicked in when I received an email from the travel agency that included my flight tickets. I had never been so happier in my life. I couldn't stop opening my email inbox because I couldn't believe that I am really going to be representing the University and South Africa as a whole in not only Dublin, but in Europe. On the 30th of June 2018, we were all ready to leave and took off to the O.R Tambo International airport. My nerve wracking experience was when I walked in the airplane because I am absolutely afraid of heights. The plane to Abu Dhabi took off and excitement was overflowing amongst us. As scary as it was, I believe it's one moment I am forever going to cherish.

On the first of July 2018, we arrived in, according to my experiences, the most beautiful airport of Ireland. We spent almost two hours taking pictures after arrival before we could head to the University because the place was exceedingly exquisite. We took the trip to campus by one of Ireland's luxury busses and I believe this was helpful because we got to get the glimpse of what Dublin looked like. The beauty of the city was like I was watching a movie. I was amazed by the architectural excellence, the beautiful rivers and lakes that surrounded the city, the agricultural activities that were practiced by ordinary citizens and the fact that the sun set at 11pm. I got a chance to see amazing things that Dublin had to offer such as the sea harbour, the Queen's hotel, the famous tourist attraction Temple Bar and many more. I could get a feel of Cape Town in Dublin because of it's serenity and it's beauty.

The University College Dublin (UCD) was the biggest campus I had ever come across. It had more than 8 faculties in one campus, of which I found very amazing. Each faculty building had a fascinating architectural element that represented what the faculty is all about, for example the Science faculty had a DNA stranded staircase. The tour around campus was very important because we didn't get a chance to miss out on seeing how beautiful the place looked like. Everything was just so perfect; the facilities, the place and most importantly the people. At first I thought we were going to be discriminated as we were the only Africans in the school, but the UCD team that hosted us consisted of very beautiful personalities. They made us feel welcome and always ensured that our needs are taken care of.

Throughout the Summer School week, we learned about the basic pronunciation and spelling of the Irish language, the origins of the Irish language, the music, their super energizing dancing and their poetry. My favourite was learning about the dance. I found it very interesting because it is way different to how we do it in our country. It has a very complex choreographic techniques which cannot be perfected by many. We thought we would get the dance moves quick because South Africans are known for their dancing abilities, but this time it wasn't as easy. Learning about the history of Ireland was essential to my knowledge as I now know that as much as we live in the same world, we live in many different ways.

I believe that this trip has shaped me to be a better person and to look beyond South Africa. It has made me see that I have the potential to do what I want at whatever given time. I now have a different perception in how to approach life and it's hardships. The Dublin trip was the most amazing thing to have happened to me. I am forever going to be grateful to the UJ International House for granting me the opportunity to see the outside world.

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