

## **Student Experience Report – Erasmus Mundus - Spring 2025**

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**Home University:** University of Oldenburg, Germany

**Host Institution:** University of Stavanger, Norway

**Exchange Period:** January 2025 – May 2025

My semester in Norway, from January to May 2025, was an enriching and transformative experience, both academically and personally. I chose the University of Stavanger as my host institution because of its strong research environment in migration and intercultural relations, which aligns closely with the goals of the Erasmus Mundus Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR). I was particularly interested in experiencing how a Nordic welfare state like Norway approaches integration and support for migrants and refugees, and how this context could deepen my understanding of European migration policies.

Academically, the semester exceeded my expectations. I had the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary and critical discussions around topics such as multiculturalism, integration, structural discrimination, and psychosocial responses to forced displacement. The courses were intellectually stimulating and highly relevant to both current global challenges and my own academic interests. What made the experience even more unique was that some of the professors delivering the courses were from partner institutions within the EMMIR consortium — including guest lecturers from Slovenia. This brought a diversity of perspectives into the classroom and enriched our debates with comparative insights from across Europe. It felt like a truly transnational academic space, where we weren't just learning *about* intercultural relations, but actively practicing them.

One of the highlights of the semester was conducting qualitative research based on refugee narratives, which not only deepened my academic perspective but also helped me develop key analytical and intercultural competencies. Alongside my coursework, I participated in an internship with the SILLKs4Justice research project, which gave me valuable hands-on experience with academic research and collaboration in the Nordic context.

Outside of the university, I volunteered at Caritas Stavanger, supporting migrants and refugees in their integration processes. This experience allowed me to apply my academic knowledge in a real-world setting and build connections with the local community. Living in Stavanger also brought its own set of discoveries — from adapting to the long winter days to exploring the breathtaking Norwegian landscapes. While the cost of living was certainly a challenge, I managed it with careful planning and by accessing student discounts and local resources. Socially, it took time to adjust to the more reserved communication style, especially coming from a warm and expressive Latin American culture. However, over time, I found meaningful connections and came to appreciate the calm and respectful way Norwegians engage with one another.

This semester helped me grow in many ways. I became more independent, resilient, and self-aware. I learned to balance a demanding academic schedule with practical responsibilities and community engagement. The experience strengthened my commitment to working with migrant communities and affirmed my desire to continue building a career rooted in social justice, care, and intercultural understanding. For future students, I would recommend coming prepared — financially, mentally, and emotionally. Norway is a wonderful place to study, but it's essential to plan ahead. Engage with the local community, even if it takes some effort at first. The rewards are

worth it. Don't shy away from the cold — go for hikes, try the local food, and embrace the outdoors. And most importantly, be open to growth in unexpected ways.

My time in Norway was more than just a semester abroad — it was a chapter of learning, connection, and deep reflection. I'm returning with a richer academic foundation, a broader worldview, and a renewed passion for creating inclusive and compassionate systems for those on the move.