

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

LET'S MEET NIDUP: The first International Student of the Department of Nursing and Midwifery

Nidup

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It's been almost a year in Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), Male', studying to be a nurse. I thank the Maldives National University (MNU), FHS and all the associated members and staff for making my stay wonderful. In Male' I found my second home, indeed the best home in the Maldives. Everything is so great, sometimes I feel like I am in heaven!

In the beginning, when I arrived at FHS I was met with one of the lecturers of the Nursing Department. It was a very pleasing moment; she welcomed me with a smile, gave a clear and a brief introduction of the FHS building and classrooms. Then I was brought to introduce to the Faculty Dean, Course coordinator and other senior lecturers where they too welcomed me with a smile, handshake and kind words. They were all

warm and charming. I was extremely delighted more than I can pen down. I felt so pleasant and comfortable with all the awesome people around me. That moment I wished I had brought some gifts to present them as a token of appreciation for their hospitality. Unfortunately I had nothing in my hand except an empty bag on my back.

I always remain indebted to all the Nursing Faculty members for facilitating me, and especially to the Faculty Dean, Madam Shaheen and my Course coordinator, Mrs. Salma Hassan. Despite having their tight schedule they never forget to meet me in person or have a phone call and find out how everything was. I am highly impressed with their professionalism, care and sensitivity displayed throughout the year. I am truly grateful to have people who are like parents to me in a foreign nation.

Besides this as I entered FHS, I met with a big surprise, I was severely shocked and astonished to realize that all the lecturers in the Nursing Department were female! I did not find a single male Nursing lecturer. However, they were all highly experienced and qualified in the field. Teachings were superb and were all so generous and supportive. What a big surprise on this earth? On the other hand, I really appreciate the Maldivian women for keeping up the power and dignity of the women. Big shout out to all the female staff! I can't stop sharing this amazing discovery from a tiny island nation with my friends and family aboard. I could not have guessed the surprises that awaited me. I received a second jolt when I came to know that all my classmates were also girls! No boys except me; I'm on the only boy among the 17 of us. Never in my life did I expect this would be the situation. Poor me, this gave me the biggest shock. I felt so restless, lost hope, withdrawn and nearly collapsed on the floor. However, I managed to regain my position. I wondered a lot how I could adjust with this whole bunch of girls especially

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in the practical session! Nevertheless, I tried to be calm and normal. I was doing okay soon. Whenever I shared this story with my friends and family, they used to laugh at me. But my Mom is little philosophical, she used to say "Human mind is incredibly adaptable it will be alright with time whatever the situation is". She's absolutely right! It's very easy to get along with the Maldivians girls, especially my classmates. They are all kind, friendly and helpful. They also used to show me the way around the building as I was having difficulty locating the class rooms. They used to teach me their local language so patiently, and to top it up, they also marked my birthday; I was extremely happy!

I'm most intrigued by the Maldivian hospitality they consistently displayed. All the Faculty members and students are awesome. On the welcoming night, the Healers group (the student group of FHS) took a special effort to award me a certificate as the First International Student and presented me a locally hand crafted trophy. Thanks to Healers group! I felt so lucky. Meanwhile, that night my good friends from the different departments took me to the one of the restaurants and we had another pizza welcome. I'm deeply touched by their togetherness, calmness and reliance. Most importantly, I feel their actions stem from their heart. This to me is happiness, wellbeing and spirituality I experienced in the Faculty of Health

Science and Nursing Department. I love all the Maldivians infinite as I do my family members and I would always keep Maldivians as my brothers and sisters in my heart with the principle, "One human One family".

By the end of the year, I started falling in love with Maldives- Not only do they respect foreigners, their love for the culture and tradition spreads from their sincere interaction with foreign guests and immediately infused the exact enthused energy and sedated guest like me. I find the weather conditions and food are bit of a challenge to me. The usual temperature in Maldives is 31 Degrees Celsius and that's too hot for me. I don't like drenching with perspiration. Hoping to get acclimatized soon. When it comes to food I found another challenge-there are no "vegetarians" among the locals. Fresh and organic vegetables and fruits are very rare to find and expensive. Secondly, one of my favorite foods, fresh cow milk and yogurt or other dairy products are not at all available. I am also unable to find food that I like. This has made miss my Mom all the more. Even in the restaurants, vegan cuisines are rarely available. I am hopeful that I will get adjusted as time goes by. I like to think positively. Thanks for all the attention! Be blessed!