

DUMELA



Newsletter from Botswana Sweden Friendship Association No 2/2018

Dear BOTSFA members



The beautiful Swedish summer is back. The land is green and blooming with flowers. As well as popular fruit trees including apple trees are all flowering in most plots. Sounds of happy birds are heard around 3 am in the mornings. Singing and enjoying much light and warm weather of the season. Everyone is in good moods preparing or already out to their summer houses or other holiday places.

In Botswana Winter has started and people are moving back from harvesting their fields, with lorries and tractor trailers full of bags and sacks with grain from this year's late rains.

As a newly trained florist, I am delighted and proud to have already been booked to prepare this year's Midsummer celebration with hårkrans/head crowns for eight members of the Hogård's family.

This issue of Dumela Newsletter features an article from two Botswana student in Sweden. It introduces the new members of the BOTSFA Board. Kent Nilsson, Swedish Honorary Consul in Botswana, provides us with updates on his column.

Lastly please feel free to visit BOTSFA website regularly. Provide more comments through info@botsfa.nu for sharing among members and friends. I encourage and warmly welcome you who are reading this but are not members of BOTSFA to join, particularly the youth. If you are already a member, the Board would like to see more active participants in the affairs of the Association.

Ke a leboga.
Happy Midsummer!



Nelly Kabomo-Hogård
BOTSFA Chairperson

Welcome to BOTSFA!

MEMBERSHIP FEES

• Individual: SEK 175 • Family: SEK 300 (incl. children up to 15) • Student: SEK 100 • Institution: SEK 500
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visit us on www.botsfa.nu

FROM THE CENTRAL DISTRICT IN BOTSWANA TO GOTHENBURG AND LULEÅ IN SWEDEN

INTERVIEW TEXT BY Julia Majaha-Jartby

PHOTOS BY THE INTERVIEWEES

Dumela met with two students, Gorgeous Sarah Chinkonono from Palapye and Mpho Ndebele from Kgagodi in central Botswana. Swedish Institute's scholarships for master's degrees landed Gorgeous at the University of Gothenburg where she is studying global health and Mpho at Luleå University where he is specializing in mineral exploration. The two students are separated by 1,300 kilometres. Gothenburg, where the second largest city in Sweden, is situated in the west coast and Luleå in the northmost part of the country.



Dumela: What did you know about Sweden when you left Botswana?

Gorgeous: I left my home country with no clue of where I was going, but with the assurance that I would be in good hands on arrival in Sweden. A friend from Botswana, who is under the same scholarship in Gothenburg, made all the arrangements for my arrival and stay for the first few days.

Mpho: Well, when I left home I was a little bit scared and naive because it was the first time for me to be away from my family and to live in a foreign country. I was very confused and uncertain as to what awaited me. I was worried about societal acceptance and doubted my interpersonal skills. I plunged into reading about Sweden and found a considerable number of good things about the country. Being a geologist, I was intrigued by the advanced use of technology in Sweden's education system; which I feel Botswana can learn a thing or two from. I became more interested in being part of this scientific revolution and advancement; so I decided to accept the scholarship offer and face the challenge.

Dumela: What did you find to be the biggest challenges upon arrival?

Gorgeous: People say it is hard to find accommodation in Gaborone where I lived before moving to Sweden. I arrived in Gothenburg to be confronted with a tough house search. Moving almost every month to a new place is not something I was prepared for, but that's life in Gothenburg! I had no choice but to adapt.

Mpho: The first few days in Luleå were a nightmare. I did not know anyone or where anything was, so I was mostly glued to my phone talking to my family and friends at home. Luckily, when I arrived, Sweden was on summer time – same time zone as Botswana. As days went by, I became part of the society. I gradually started spending less time alone. I interacted with my schoolmates through

organized events for international students, which aim to intergrate new students into the system through introducing them to the Swedish culture. A very exciting experience! I made lots of friends during that time, making it easier for me to get around – and minimizing the frustrations of missing home.

The weather conditions up here are extremely different from back home. It is very cold and very dark, most of the time. Of the two conditions, I find the darkness more depressing – we are barely outside in winter and if you venture into going out, an hour's light is what you get! Staying indoors is very difficult for me, as I am used to going out and my career has always been filled with outdoor activities and adventures. February is the coldest month. This year, -29°C was recorded in Luleå – a shock the body! The trick is to protect oneself against such temperatures by putting on the right gear. Like the Swedes say, »There is no bad weather, only bad clothing«.

Currently, the weather has taken a total twist. Over the winter, it was very dark and cold but, since early May, there has been a dramatic change – too much light and unbelievably warm. We can finally cycle to school and walk around putting on light weight clothes. Nature is extremely beautiful because the trees are blossoming, and the landscape is filled with an amazing variety of colours: Life is back! My friends and I go for barbeques by the beach and play interesting games – making Luleå an awesome place to be.

Dumela: What did you find most surprising upon arrival in Sweden?

Gorgeous: To my surprise, Swedes don't generally speak English. I experienced an element of language barrier. Everything in Sweden is written in Swedish. Even at the university most, if not, all information is written in Swedish – something I was not prepared for. Then culture shock; Swedes don't recognize the presence of another per-

son in a bus, tram or waiting area. No one greets you nor acknowledges your presence. Unlike back home where the first thing that one does in meeting another person is to greet, simply, »Dumela mma or rra«. Thanks to the orientation by the international students' office of the Göteborg Universitet, I got to learn a considerable number of things about Sweden and the Swedish culture. Also, interacting with people from all over the world made me understand the Setswana saying, »chaba di sa itsaneng di a tshegana« (nations that do not know each other laugh at each other). I laughed when I found out Ugandans eat grasshoppers and they were shocked to learn that I eat mopane worms.

Being in a foreign country makes one appreciate where one comes from. The time in Sweden has given me a sense of an African belonging. I have a greater appreciation for my country, something that I took for granted back home. Being in Sweden has provided me the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. It may sound strange that I had to be in Sweden to get the sense of being a proud citizen of where I am from, my country Botswana and continent Africa. I now look back and thank God that I am a Motswana. I wish there were events that our Embassy could carry out to bring all Batswana in Sweden together, just to interact. It would be nice to speak Setswana all day and laugh out loud. Swedes are not only reserved, they are at times too serious for my Botswana upbringing!

Dumela: What are some of the things that have struck you as »typical« of Sweden?

Gorgeous: Even though the Swedish are reserved, they are always willing to help when you reach out to them. You just need to approach them, and they will help. I also like their respect for time and punctuality.

Swedes never give a straight forward feedback. I find their system of feedback to be sugar-coated. For instance, if you present a paper, they will respond in a very appreciative and positive way – giving you the impression that all is

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Dumelang dear Botsfa members!

I have the difficulty of, today, reporting the sad and untimely passing of Peter Jönsson (1967–2018). Peter came to Botswana in 1976 with his parents Sven and Ulla-Britt and his brother Björn. Sven was on a Sida contract at time as a leather expert. The Jönsson family stayed in Botswana and made Lobatse their new home, where Ulla-Britt still lives today. Peter trained as a leather technician and spent more than 30 years in the industry. His work brought him all over the world but Africa and more specifically Botswana was always his true home.



Peter was a bush lover of note, and many are those who have enjoyed travelling with him through the Botswana wilderness. He leaves behind his two daughters Chelsea and Lea, his mother Ulla-Britt and his brother Björn. May he rest in peace.

We are now almost two months into the Masisi presidency, and our new president has already made it clear that he means business. He has removed the leadership of DIS, the much-criticized secret police and has promised to cleanup and reform the agency.

To tackle the big drop in »ease of doing business«, that has seen Botswana's position decline steep, the president has promised to create a »conductive environment for the private sector to flourish«. This will include »sweeping changes to our immigration laws and rules to open up our country in line with a liberal and globally integrated economy«. This is part of his broad roadmap to aggressively attract FDI and skills.

Our new Minister of Investment, Trade and Communications, Ms. Bogolo Kenewendo is following suit and has started tackling red tape and other obstacles making it difficult to start and operate businesses in Botswana. The goal is to create a business environment »where business is not hampered by unnecessary regulation and bureaucracy«. These are all developments that have been welcomed by the business community.

Greetings from a mild and beautiful Botswana. Pula!

*Kent Nilsson
Swedish Honorary Consul*

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well. It's only when you get the results that you get to know how poor the paper and presentation have been considered. For a Motswana, like me, that kind of feedback does not work because I am used to being told exactly how my the presentation is, without someone trying to sugar-coat the feedback.

You will also realize you are in Sweden when you see a beggar using a better and expensive phone than yours.

Mpho: The education system in Sweden is world class. I am learning so much and I am loving it! I am looking forward to going back home and imparting this knowledge

to others and help build a more resourceful human labour. It is an opportunity of a lifetime, that I feel every young Motswana who dreams to make an impact in our society must look for and harness.

Swedes are naturally reserved individuals. They may be perceived like people who do not like to have their space intruded. It is always difficult to start a conversation with anyone but after getting through to them they are quite welcoming and very jolly individuals, full of jokes and humour. I never feel intimidated or marginalized when I am with Swedes. I find them a friendly nation with a sense of love and acceptance.

BOTSFA's BOARD's new members 2018



Nelly Kabomo-Hogård:

From Molepolole/ Lentsweletau, Botswana. Moved to Eskilstuna Sweden in March 2011, to join husband Karl Hogård. Worked for Botswana Government for 31 years in different departments i.e: Water Affairs, Transport and Office of the District Commissioner as an administrator. Was assigned to assist the DC by settling marital and social disputes. Basically assigned as a committee member of the National Celebration Committees and other National Diplomatic visits to the districts, mostly in Gaborone and Kweneng District. Has two adult sons and three granddaughters.



Inka Löfvenmark:

Inka is a physiotherapist who lived in Botswana between 2010–2013. She worked as project coordinator in a partly Sida financed partnership project, establishing rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury. The Spinalis Botswana SCI-centre has a national uptake area but is located at Princess Marina Hospital and is now run by local professionals. She is continuously performing annual follow-up visits.



Constance Sönnergren:

From Manyana Botswana. Worked for IGI Insurance Company and was one of the first women to own a taxi in Gaborone. She owned a restaurant/nightclub and hair saloons. Moved to Sweden in 1987 with family. Worked for Marabou, Pharmacia Medicine and Hemtjänst. Volunteered for Red Cross and other organisations in Botswana and Sweden, where she continues to volunteer. Has three grown up children.



Andrea Pettitt:

Went to Botswana in 2013 to do ethnographic fieldwork on women and cattle in Ghanzi district, for her PhD thesis in Rural Development at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. After defending her thesis in 2016, Andrea now works as a researcher at the Centre for gender research, Uppsala University, focusing on questions of gender, agriculture and human–animal relations.

Staffan Strand, member of BOTSFA, invites you to the exhibition



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