

## Personal Reflection

by Matty Braid, Stockholm University, Sweden 2007

Student exchange is a fantastic opportunity to immerse your self in different cultures. Not just the culture of your host country but also the cultures of the plethora of people you meet through the exchange programme, extra curricular activities, additional travel and in everyday interaction. I believe that through meeting such diverse humours, idiosyncrasies and perspectives on the world a real value of your own heritage, sense of belonging and especially sense of self is discovered.

For example, when you meet someone for the first time you introduce yourself and soon after comes “where are you from?” which in turn produces stereotypes, past experiences with people from that country, and many other thoughts, questions and inquisitive thinking on a number of different topics. For you to answer these questions you need some prior knowledge and perspective of your own, and being able to convey confidence in your opinion. This to me was one thing I found amazing, being able to speak publicly and in small groups about thing that you some times take for granted like Tasmanian devils, gum trees, a cricket bat, and having people wanting to hear first hand about these. And of course on the other hand having some of your own thoughts, questions and intrigue about other countries and cultures answered. The perspective that I gained from exchange is insurmountable and I will never regret the money I spent.