

Praktik - West 2010 - 10.6.2016
Bastien Hermann
aus Frankreich

Praktikumsbericht

~~Hermann~~ Bastien

I spent 3 months in Marakissa...

Arriving in the Gambia, I had quiet an idea about what I was looking for but I did not really know what I would actually find there.

I was moving there with a simple and, in a certain way, selfish wish. I hoped I could find myself and I believed I could do so in Africa. Precisely, I wanted to bring interest and sense to my work. Interest: by dedicating myself in actions that would answer concrete and immediate needs of the people. Sense: by believing that we can be generous and give without expecting any other award than gaining the respect and the recognition of the people.

From the first minute, the first contacts, I found there a « brother », then a second one, a third one, to finally feel as if I belonged to a big family.

Everybody at the school, in the village, and more globally everyone I met in Africa offered me a cordial welcoming and their friendship. Despite their own difficulties, people communicate a deep interest to the other, a real concern and solidarity by facing problems, keeping all the time an incredible sense of humor. At a point that I could wonder myself who between them and me finally needed more the other one.

At the school, I met with qualified teachers. Everyone of them as well as all the others employees work with a rare implication. They succeed in teaching the kids in good conditions and in giving them the best tools for the future. Despite their common engagement, the lack of means is obvious at the school as well as at the village. As a consequence, the teachers have to manage their classes without the sufficiently teaching and leisure material (books, notebooks, pencils...) which are however necessary for kids of that age, but also have to face with more complicated situation due to the families' financial problems that could obstruct the schooling of the children (difficulties to pay uniforms or food, priority given to the work at the field before the obligation to attempt school ...). In a country where being a teacher is not so valued as well as being a soldier or a policeman and as a consequence, a profession that may not be the best career to follow in order to ensure the needs for its family, the devotion of all the people I worked with was simply admirable.

In this context, every single help from European volunteers is useful. There is no need to be an experimented teacher, a graduated doctor or an engineer: the most important is to give of its time to the other, to learn to listen, to stay at the disposal of everyone and to make himself available to find finally in his own experience what can be useful to the others, at the school and outside the school.

Following these principles, I spent 3 great months giving class to the children in the morning, but also giving assistance for the organization of special events for the kids, helping at the maintenance of the school material, answering the requests of the sponsors in Europe, or also working at the field each time it was possible. More than teaching, I actually spend my time learning.

I spent 3 months in Marakissa... only 3 months. Indeed, time goes very fast when you feel at your place, proud of what you give or do, and happy in the middle of people you like. For all these reasons, I wanted to thanks particularly Ebou Kamara who realizes an incredible work at the head of the school and who dedicates most of his time for the others.