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Editor's Notes:

Hello everyone,

It's amazing how fast the time is going here; it has been two months since I arrived and there's lots of volunteers coming and going in the next few months.

Saint-Louis has been a bit busy the last months due to the replacement of the bridge (after more than 100 years) but now it's getting better, there's just one arch to replace and everything will be complete. So we hope that it will all be ready for the Jazz Festival next month.

We are sad because of the volunteers who leave, but also very excited to meet the new ones arriving.

This month we received very good news from former volunteers, helping the people of Saint-Louis even if they have already left the country.

A huge thanks to everyone who contributed to the newsletter this month. Special thanks goes to:

- Barbara Van Hove for her article regarding her experience at the Care Project.
- Elisa Estrada for her wonderful donation to the Talibé Kids.
- Thyra Beekman for her great picture
- Fabiana Hofer for her article regarding her experience in Senegal

I want to invite you to join us in our Facebook Official Group. Find us by searching Projects Abroad Senegal – The Official Group.

Feel free to join us in our Facebook group and do not forget to add me so we can keep in touch, before, during and after your trip to Senegal! My Facebook name is Jorge-Projects Abroad.

Or if you are a Twitter fan, you can also follow the latest news here; our name is Proj_AbroadSN

Best wishes from Senegal!



Jorge Aguayo
Social Manager
Projects Abroad Senegal

Volunteer Story

Woensdag 16 maart vertrok ik vanuit Brussel richting Dakar met een bang hartje. Aangekomen in Dakar begon mijn persoonlijk avontuur, een sprong in het onbekende. Mijn enige gedachte toen ik aankwam was: zal de stafmedewerker van Projects Abroad aanwezig zijn? En uiteraard hij stond me al een uur op te wachten.

Mijn aankomst bij mijn familie was erg hartelijk, en ik mocht al direct op Senegalese kookles. Ik keek aandachtig hoe de Tioubioudjem klaargemaakt werd. Tijdens mijn eerste maaltijd zat ik op de grond met mijn lepel in mijn rechterhand te denken aan hoe mijn familie en vrienden zouden reageren in

deze situatie, ik vond het prima.

Hier kon ik wel gemakkelijk aan gewoon worden.

Mijn tweede dag in Saint Louis werd ik voorgesteld aan de andere vrijwilligers en kreeg ik een rondleiding doorheen de stad, vanaf dat moment wist ik dat 2 maanden veel te kort gingen zijn.



Op maandag was mijn eerste werkdag in het Talibee center. Ik kreeg een introductie en werd daarna direct op pad gestuurd met mijn drie Senegalese collega's en twee andere vrijwilligers, die mij heel snel op mijn gemak stelden.

Toen we aankwamen in de eerste Darra was dit meteen ook een confrontatie met de eerste echte armoede. Ik kwam toe in een Darra waar 10 kindjes tussen de leeftijd van 5 en 15 jaar leven. Van zaterdag tot woensdag leren ze de Koran uit het hoofd. De omstandigheden waarin ze leven is niet voor te stellen.





Wij verzorgen de kinderen medisch. De kleine wondjes die ze oplopen moeten zo snel mogelijk verzorgd worden want door de leefomstandigheden kan dat snel infecteren. Indien er meer medische hulp gegeven moet worden dan begeleiden wij de kinderen naar het ziekenhuis.

Op donderdag en vrijdag zijn de Talibee kinderen vrij en mogen ze de Darra verlaten. Op vrijdag krijgen de kindjes brood met chocopasta en een drankje.



Uiteraard loopt het centrum dan over van de overenthousiaste kinderen die allen een broodje willen. Wachten staat dan ook niet in hun woordenboek waardoor het nogal chaotisch kan worden.

Sinds enkele weken hebben wij ervoor gezorgd dat de kinderen ook op donderdag kunnen komen naar het centrum. Op donderdagmiddag kunnen ze dan gewoon kind zijn en spelen zoveel ze willen.

Kleuren, spelen met de bal of met de springkoord. Wat hen nog het gelukkigst maakt is gewoon iemand die hun aandacht geeft en die kijkt hoe mooi ze een prent hebben ingekleurd. Vol trots komen ze hun tekening tonen hopen op een complimentje.

Sommige kindjes kom ik af en toe tegen in de straten van Saint Louis. Ze komen dan vol enthousiasme aangelopen om goeiedag te zeggen en een handje te geven. Dat maakt mijn dag volledig geslaagd.



Mijn verblijf van twee maanden zit er bijna op en ik wou dat ik terug in de luchthaven van Dakar was hopen dat de Projects Abroad medewerker aanwezig zal zijn.

Barbara van Hove - Care



Volunteer Activities

DIRTY WEEKEND

A few weeks ago, a group of volunteers, local people and staff members gathered to help clean a 'Daara', which is the place where Talibé (people of low resources) live.



After we got lost for a bit on the streets of Saint Louis, we finally arrived at the meeting point at the area of 'Diamaguene', where the Daara is located.

Talibés, a nurse and the supervisor of the 'Projects Abroad Centre pour Jeunes' Lamine Tall, along with some volunteers and staff members got organized to help clean this place, where around 50 people live in very difficult conditions.

The activities consisted of cleaning the two rooms where Talibés sleeps and also the common area where they receive the coranic education, as well as some dishes and cups.





Removing trash, moving books and folding clothes were some of the other activities we took part in; the time went very fast due to the cooperation of many people present there and after an hour and a half the first part of the work was done.



After we finished, all of us sat in the common area to listen to Lamine, talk with the Talibés about how important it is to keep the Daraa clean and invited them to have more consciousness about personal hygiene and trash management.

Also, the Talibés were invited to the Centre pour Jeunes, where they will have the chance to shower and do some activities supported by the volunteers, such as maths or learning French.

I want to thank the volunteers who attended this activity, it may seem that it was just a tiny effort, but be sure that was a big help for the Talibés.

Thank you very much!



Destination: LOMPOUL

Located to the Northwest of Senegal, around 145 km from Saint-Louis, and with a surface estimated to be 18 square km; this desert gives a foretaste of the big Mauritanian deserts and is often visited on a day or overnight trip.



The desert of Lompoul overflows with the dunes of thin sand oscillating between the ochre and red colours.

It is here you can see the most beautiful dunes in the country, of which the heights vary between 40 and 50 meters.



The amazing landscape and the tranquility of this place will mean you will never forget either playing on the dunes or just taking time to relax; this is one of the places in Senegal that you cannot miss.



Also, if you want to explore the surroundings, the dromedary ride is always an option and if you want to stay overnight there's also a camp where you can experience a night nomad-style in it's stylish Mauritanian Bedouin-type tents.



Elisa Estrada's Donation



Our Country Director Moctar Ba and I went to the Talibé Centre to give new clothes and some books to the kids. This generous donation was sent by former volunteer Elisa Estrada.

Elisa came to Senegal last February to do a Teaching Placement, working at the school teaching English to adults and in a Talibe Centre as well.

After her departure, and few days ago, we received great news. Elisa sent two big containers with clothes and books to the Talibes!

So Moctar and I made our way to the Projects Abroad Centre pour Jeunes to meet the Coordinator Lamine, along with the nurse and social worker.

On arrival everything seemed like any other normal day; the kids were playing, some of them washing their clothes or taking a shower and also receiving medical attention.



After the proper salutations with the staff at the centre, we got into the office to take out one of the containers that Elisa sent to us.

Lamin spoke with the kids letting them know that they will receive new clothes and the smiles on their faces came immediately. After this notice all of them made a line, waiting for their turn to get into the room.



One by one all the kids that afternoon received their clothes and they couldn't hide how happy they felt.

It was amazing to see how happy they were after getting new clothes. Something that we take for granted everyday made the day for those 51 kids.



All the Projects Abroad Team, Staff at the Talibé Centre and, for sure, the kids, we want to say to Elisa:



***THANK YOU VERY MUCH !!!
MERCI BEAUCOUP !!!
DIEREDIEF !!!***



Lyceé Ahmeth Fall

Ahmeth Fall is set in an attractive white-painted two-storey building around a large courtyard and it's situated at the south end of the main island of St Louis, almost right on the 'point sud' and near the museum.

It is a forty-minute walk or short taxi ride from most of the volunteer accommodation in the Sor area, and a twenty-minute walk from the Projects Abroad office in the north end.



The school is open from 8am to 4pm and depending on your timetable, you will be able to return to your host family most days for your midday meal.

Every volunteer's role is different and flexibility, on both sides, is the key to all our placements. As long as you are prepared to work hard and do the best you can no one will insist on you doing something you are not happy about.





In the beginning you will be given a timetable of English classes to take and a syllabus or textbook to follow. However, you can use your own ideas when considering how to teach the material. You will work alongside one or two of the local English teachers, assisting them, teaching your own classes and covering for colleagues when they are away. Lessons generally last between one and two hours.

The school also offers a wide range of sports and sometimes puts on plays and other shows, it is also keen to promote activities such as drama and English Clubs



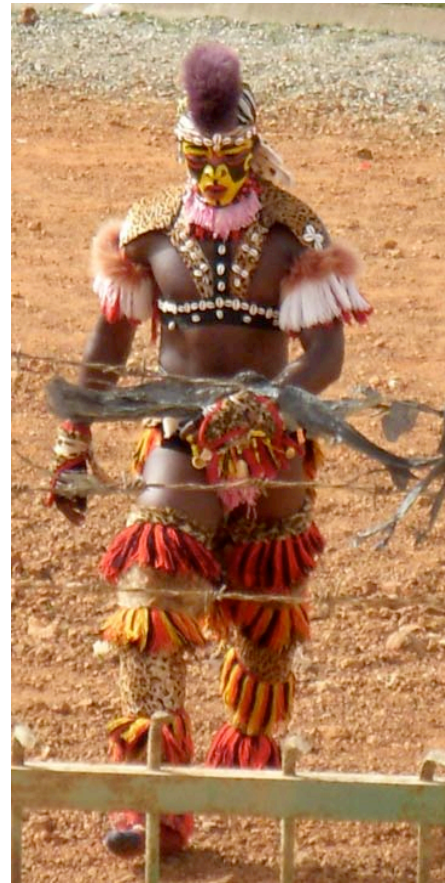
Traditional Senegalese Wrestling

'Laamb' in Wolof (local language) is currently one of the most popular sports in Senegal, gathering thousands of people in stadiums or during numerous local contests all around the country.

Traditionally, young men used to fight as a distraction, to court wives, prove their manliness, and bring honor to their villages.

It used to be practiced to celebrate the end of the harvest time among the Ethenies of Sérères and Diolas, groups from which most of today's great fighters still come from!

It was meant to rejoice, perpetuate folkloric characteristics, and to designate the strongest man of the village who will become the champion wrestler until the next year.



In this day it's easy to find boys training on the beaches or, less commonly, in a wrestling arena where the wrestlers have to pay for their training.

Senegalese wrestlers train extremely hard and may perform press-ups and various difficult physical exercises throughout the day to build up their strength.

However, whilst they believe strength is important they also believe that there is an element of luck in the winner.



Before the event, the beating of the drums, along with the mellow voices of the singers, will alert everyone that it's about to start.

The crowd would gather around a sandy pit and watch several bouts before the final bout of 2 champions. The fighters would wear "wrappers" around their waists, which would be provided by their fiancés or female relatives, and the rest of their body will be naked.



It's carrying on centuries of traditions, full of rituals, highly magical, islamo-animist mystique.

Fighters wear Gri-Gri amulets (to bring them luck in the fights), oil themselves with magic lotions prepared by each warrior appointed 'marabout', with milk also, and a band of 'Griots' will beat the drums (called sabar) inciting wrestlers to fight.



The winner is the one who manages to get his opponent on his back, by any means, there are no fixed rules of what is allowed or forbidden.

Former Volunteers

Une des périodes les plus riches de ma vie

Le 19 février 2011, je m'envolais pour le Sénégal, via Bruxelles. Après une nuit passée à Dakar, la capitale, je m'acheminai vers Saint-Louis le lendemain matin. Le voyage fut épuisant et le taxi très inconfortable sous une température de 30° à l'ombre.

Après quatre heures de route, je débarquai enfin à St-Louis, une ville du nord-ouest du pays, surnommée la «Venise africaine». Les membres de ma famille d'accueil étaient si nombreux qu'après un mois je ne pouvais toujours pas reconnaître tout le monde.



Tout était nouveau et différent pour moi, les règles d'hygiène, le respect mutuel et la courtoisie sont très différents des nôtres. L'esprit de famille et de solidarité sont des valeurs bien plus marquées que chez nous.

J'ai commencé mon travail dans un centre de Talibés. C'est dans le centre de Talibés de l'association «Aider Sans Frontières» que j'ai pu concrétiser mon engagement social.

Les Talibés sont des enfants qui ont été confiés par leurs parents à un marabout chargé, de leur enseigner le Coran. Vêtus le plus souvent de haillons, ils parcourent les rues de la ville pour mendier.



L'aumône collectée sert à subvenir à leurs besoins vitaux. Mais ils doivent en reverser une partie, que ce soit sous une forme financière ou matérielle, au marabout et aux personnes en charge de leur éducation.

Le Centre de Talibés a pour vocation de dispenser aux jeunes Talibés une éducation de base et de les assister dans les soins quotidiens. Des soins dont j'étais justement responsable. Tous les jours, je rendais visite aux enfants à domicile pour nettoyer et panser leurs blessures, qui étaient parfois des abcès, de petites plaies ou des entailles.



C'était bien de se sentir utile, j'ai eu un immense plaisir à regarder rire ces enfants, qui avaient toutes les raisons de pleurer, et les voir s'émerveiller devant des ballons de baudruche et se régaler de Chupa Chups me reconfortait. Je les aidais aussi dans leur hygiène corporelle quotidienne. J'avais le sentiment d'être utile et à la fin de mon séjour, j'ai compris que les craintes que j'avais avant mon départ, étaient inutiles. Bien au contraire, ces quatre semaines resteront pour moi l'une des périodes les plus riches de ma vie. C'était mon premier voyage du genre, mais sûrement pas le dernier.

Fabiana Hofer



Recipe of the Month - Yassa Poulet

(Senegalese chicken with onions and lemon)

Yassa Poulet is a famous Senegalese dish that has become popular throughout Western Africa. The long marinating of the chicken in the lemon juice helps to tenderize the tough poultry found in the region.

4 to 6 servings

Ingredients

- Chicken, cut into serving pieces -- 2-3 pounds
- Onions, thinly sliced -- 4-6
- Hot chilli pepper, minced -- 1-3
- Lemons, juice only -- 4-5
- Dijon mustard (optional) -- 2 tablespoons
- Peanut or vegetable oil -- 1/4 cup
- Salt and pepper -- to season
- Oil -- 2-3 tablespoons



Method



1. Add all the ingredients except for the oil to a large non-reactive bowl and mix together. Refrigerate and marinate for at least 4 hours, preferably overnight.
2. Remove the chicken pieces, wipe dry, and grill, broil or sauté them until well browned. Set aside.
3. Heat the oil in a large pot over a medium flame. Remove the onions from the marinade and add them to the pot. Sauté for 8-10 minutes until they are well-wilted and starting to brown.



4. Add the rest of the marinade and the browned chicken pieces to the onions; reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until cooked through and tender, about 30-40 minutes.



5. Adjust seasoning and serve with rice, fufu or couscous.

Variations

- **Yassa Poisson:** Substitute 2-3 pounds of firm fish fillets for the chicken. Marinating time only needs to be 30 minutes to an hour in this case. Grill the fish and sauté the onions. Then simmer the marinade without the fish for 10-15 minutes. Finally, add the marinated grilled fish and simmer for 10 minutes more.
- Sometimes vegetables are added to the pot to stretch the meat and add more flavour. Add 2-3 chopped carrots, 1/2 head of chopped cabbage or a handful of green olives when you bring the marinade to simmer.
- Half of the lemon juice can be replaced with vinegar. Cider vinegar works well.





Yassa Poulet



Yassa Poisson



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Discovering Senegal



Talibé Kids at the 'Aider Sans Frontieres' Centre by **Thysa Beekman**

Want to contribute to our newsletter?

Each month we will be featuring a photo from Senegal in the newsletter, elected by our Senegal Office Staff. If you are a former volunteer your photos are also welcome.

Show everyone your best shots!!

jorgeaguayo@projects-abroad.org

