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May 2013



## *Letter from the Editor*

Smell like holidays here in Senegal! With the famous Jazz festival, Saint Louis has been kept moving during the whole month of May. Many jazz artists from all around the world joined in this international meeting. The opening day was great with Baba Maal, a guitarist and singer from north Senegal, the most famous after Youssou Ndour. Baba Maal had charmed the public with his original and beautiful voice. One of the artists that marks Saint Louis very well with his flexible band was Vieux Mac, please Google him or have a look on YouTube, some videos are uploaded on our Facebook page in case if you want to have a look.

Alright, about projects now! Our Care and Microfinance Projects were the busiest projects during this month. However we made a tour in our Teaching Project at Sidy Ndiaye School in order to see a great volunteer by the name of Imogen Pretti ( South Africa) in action. Some pictures below to give you a little insight into what our volunteers were busy doing. :)

Many great volunteers, like always, left this month, most of them have been here for a while so we organised couple of goodbye drinks for them. Sometimes we met the night before they left and the next day in the morning especially at "Delice du fleuve" if their flight is late in the current day. It was really hard to say goodbye to them but like some say great experiences and great meetings last forever. We really hope to see you soon again.

Special Thanks to Melanie Horstead (England) for posting that lovely blog about her experience in Saint Louis.

Ann Charlotte Pearson (Germany) from our Music Project who shared her experience with us so far!

We say thanks to all the great volunteers that left this month like Greg Smith, Thomas Southall, Nina Olsen, Laura Bidault, Laura Stocker, Michelle and Annette, Eveline Starink, Jonathan Williams, Taylor Houghton.

We are missing you, good luck for your next step!





We would like to invite you to find our Official Facebook Group by searching Projects-Abroad Senegal – The Official Group. Also, if you would like, add us as a friend so that we can be in touch before, during and after your trip to Senegal.

My Facebook name is Habib 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.

**Habib and Fina**

## *Volunteer story*

### *Senegal Success: One Love*

### *Volunteering Abroad - A Senegalese Success Story*

Want to 'volunteer' abroad but are feeling fairly cynical about what's out there? Here's some first-hand experience that will give you something positive to think about.

I used to be very cynical about the whole process of volunteering abroad and the companies that offer this experience. I was determined to visit my country of choice: Senegal. Though I'd considered going independently on my first trip, I'd done the maths and taken into account my family's pleas of 'No, don't go alone, do a...group trip, anything just don't go alone on your first trip' and decided to go with an organisation. Whilst for some, a single quest into the wilderness of choice Ray Mears style may be perfect for them, my family fortunately know me well enough to encourage me otherwise (if you knew me, you'd know). I searched around and one organisation offered me all that I wanted from an 'organised' trip giving me time and space for independence and personal research too. I found 'Projects Abroad'.



I wanted independence to live and work in a country very different to my native soil and have the safety net of someone I trusted being there if something were to go wrong. My expectations were exceeded. I signed up and paid for the trip (I'll address payments later). Even before setting off, Joke and Fina, both delightful and charming young ladies and part of the Projects Abroad team kept



continuous contact. They checked my flight times, told me who'd be there to meet me at the airport answered all my questions and phoned me to check all was good. After a long trip: two flights and a brief stay over in a hotel in Dakar, I woke to the cheery sound of Habib's voice and smiley face at my hotel door. Habib, from Projects Abroad, was to become a good friend of mine, he works tirelessly for

the volunteers and the local people, as all the staff do. Habib and his best friend and work partner the lovely Cheikh, Yoke, Fina, Zale, Malick and Moctar were all things to all people: they organised trips, organised a Christmas dinner for the impoverished children on the street and Habib himself organised a concert in Saint Louis to raise the profile of local artists and musicians. They are family and I miss them dearly.

There are many internships and work placements you can choose from. I'd opted for a journalism placement. Amongst assignments I had, I worked for 'Ndar Info' Saint Louis' only online newspaper. I met one of the hardest working and most dedicated people in my life: Cheikh Saadbou Seye. He was to be my boss and mentor whilst I was there. Cheikh is the creator, the journalist and editor of 'Ndar Info'. He is passionate about his city: he once stopped en route to a meeting and took photos of drain pollution, 'people need to see this' he says. He is serious about not being biased as a reporter; he received nasty calls for not presenting a politician in a favourable light but as he said, he didn't mind because he wanted to represent the truth. He got emotional about a small village in the Saint Louis region that had virtually been wiped out; he'd travelled miles alone to report on it. He works hard and I like to think that all the volunteers that come on this placement can offer him support, he is so encouraging and appreciative of any work you can do for him and any report



you can write for him. He is a source of inspiration to me and he inspires me still whenever I lose motivation.

You can't help but be inspired by the projects that other volunteers around you are doing too. Another friend of mine I met from Canada, Mary, did a music project and learnt how to play the djembe (the drums); she took traditional local dance classes and performed with the group called 'Company Zumba'. Without the funding and support from volunteer placements I'm sure the company would find it difficult to continue. And then, there's the Talibe Centre. The Talibe Centre was set up to look after the street 'student' children. The children are sent from far and wide, alone, to study at Qu'ranic schools in the cities, they beg for their keep on the streets and many are severely malnourished and ill. They are often covered in open wounds and scars and some are injured. The Talibe Centre is one place they know they can go in Saint Louis for aid. Projects Abroad volunteers there dress their wounds, teach them basic skills in classrooms and hand out food amongst the many services they provide. It is there that you can also sign up for the micro finance project. The micro finance project started with a women's group and then opened to older Talibe: providing young people with a small start up loan to set up a business and teaching them basic business and numeracy skills so that they could then manage that business. We were taken on a tour of the city one night and met some of the proud successful business owners who had made it. I was happy to witness first-hand what this was all about.

### [Read More](#)

Written by Melanie Horstead





## Juggling competition!

A few weeks ago, a great volunteer by the name of Thomas Southall (UK) organised a soccer juggling competition in Medina Marmyal football centre.



Thomas participated in the Care Project in Senegal. He worked at Hlm Talibe centre, a centre that aims to assist street children also called as Talibes.

Thomas is a really passionate of football and organising this competition in Senegal was a dream to him. He was inspired by a famous TV show called

Skill School. His idea was very welcome by the coach of Marmyal, Mr Khali Diaw.

As Thomas needed the best in this field, Khali chose 12 young very talented within the small category.

Thomas had 3 jerseys and a lot of candies to offer.

Six groups of 2 to start the competition. Each participant had 30 seconds to show the best of him and the winner of each little group was qualified to the next step. Then we had three groups of two. The competition was very tight at this stage but we finally had our three finalists. One of them was automatically eliminated by the public but nevertheless he benefited of a soccer jersey which was really cool :)



And then we came to our two heroes Messi and .... Thomas did a very special introduction of our two winners before they started. Supporters were shouting and clapping their hands saying like " ALLEZ ALLEZ lool



Well the tournament was over Messi won the competition and as there was remaining two beautiful jerseys , Messi chose the one he likes and Tapha took the other one : ). The losers enjoyed their candies :)

The coach congratulated Thomas for his really nice initiative. It was a great moment.

## *21st edition of the international Saint-Louis Jazz Festival!*

Jazz first became popular here in the 1930s when records produced in Cuba were aired on the radio in St. Louis. After WWII, visiting U.S. soldiers popularized jazz bands, and by the 1950s jazz took root, and St. Louis has been



enjoying jazz ever since. In St. Louis, traditional music instruments like Koras and African drums are mixed with modern instruments for an incredible sweet jazzy symbiosis. The festival is also an excellent platform for new jazz groups.

The festival started on Wednesday 15th at Place Faidherbe and ended Sunday 19th. Baba Maal, a great singer and guitarist from Podor (Senegal), the most famous musician after Youssou N'Dour opened the event :)! Among the list we have Afrikiyo, Shula, Wato, Edith Lettner, African jazz Spirit, Bujazzo Big Band, Frank SALIS H30, Ray LEMA, Howard University Jazz ensemble and Dhafer YOUSSEF.

During the time of the Festival there have been concerts every single night in all the biggest places on the Island such as Hotel de la Residence, Flamingo, Quai des arts, Nulle part ailleurs, Embuscade but also at Sor like at Racing Club. Cheikh is now in charge of the posters delivery as you can see in the picture above haha ! Joking



## Music and Culture update

Ann Charlotte Pearson ( Germany ) talks about her experience so far at the Music and Culture Project

Musik und Kultur – Wo Sprache aufhört, fängt Musik an.



Ohne Französisch-Kenntnisse in ein französisch-sprachiges Land zu reisen, scheint auf den ersten Blick nicht meine beste Idee gewesen zu sein. Erwartungsgemäß gestalteten sich die ersten Tage in der Gastfamilie auch recht schwierig, und ich bin bis heute froh, dass meine holländische Mitbewohnerin für mich übersetzen konnte und kann, wenn die Kommunikation mit Händen und Füßen versagt. Dennoch lernt man

die wichtigen Sätze wie „Je ne parle pas Français.“ ausreichend schnell, und dank des Musik und Kultur-Projekts lerne ich ja Wolof und kann meine Familie damit beeindrucken. Mein Wolof-Lehrer spricht idealerweise etwas Englisch – nicht wie ich befürchtet hatte nur Französisch – und somit komme ich auch hier blendend zurecht. Die wichtigsten Sätze fürs Taxi und die alltäglichen Sachen



habe ich schnell gelernt, und so kann ich mich jetzt schon gut alleine verständigen. Die anderen Kurse kommen hervorragend ohne Sprache aus, müssen sie auch, denn sowohl der Djembe- als auch der Tanzlehrer sprechen kein Englisch. Aber hier läuft alles durch Vor- und Nachmachen, und im Notfall hole ich halt mein Wörterbuch raus (auch wenn sich das Nachschlagen der Wörter als schwieriger herausstellt als gedacht, denn netterweise wird

ja nichts, wirklich gar nichts so geschrieben, wie man es spricht).





Nach eineinhalb Wochen im Projekt fühle ich mich rundum wohl und denke ich kann eine Menge von der Kultur hier lernen. Für mich als Deutsche gibt es hier nämlich wirklich besonders viel zu lernen, unter anderem, Geduld zu beweisen. Ich mit meiner deutschen Pünktlichkeit (nämlich am liebsten 5 Minuten vor der Zeit) habe es hier wirklich nicht leicht. Aber schon nach einer Woche kann ich



das alles sehr gelassen nehmen und die häufig entstehenden Wartezeiten, da ich es einfach (noch) nicht über's Herz bringe, zu spät zu kommen, sogar als positiv zu empfinden. So hat man nämlich Zeit Dinge zu tun, die man gar nicht auf der to-do-List hatte. Schmunzeln muss ich dann aber doch das ein oder andere Mal, da die Zeit doch immer wieder Ursache witziger Geschichten ist. Zwei davon

möchte ich zum Schluss noch zum Besten geben. Zum einen ist es doch immer wieder komisch, von seinem senegalesischen Bandleader zur Pünktlichkeit ermahnt zu werden. Ich nahm das ganze anfangs etwas zu wörtlich und war wirklich pünktlich, was mir zwar Lob aber auch mehrmalige halbstündige Wartezeiten einbrachte. Gestern fand ich einen der Gründe dafür heraus: Die Uhr von meinem Bandleader ging 40 Minuten zu spät - dabei hatte er sich vielleicht wirklich Mühe mit der Pünktlichkeit gegeben. Ob er sie jetzt umgestellt hat, weiß ich allerdings nicht...Die andere Geschichte ist noch etwas besser, sie handelt davon wie ich zu spät kam. Mactar hatte meinem Tanzlehrer in weiser Voraussicht eine frühere Uhrzeit gesagt als mir, da dieser wohl häufig etwas spät dran ist (aus europäischer Sicht). Ich kam zu meiner besagten Zeit und war somit 45 Minuten zu spät. Irrsinnig komisch, dass er in diesem Fall doch wirklich pünktlich war.

Ich bin zwar nach wie vor traurig, mit den Senegalesen nur wenig ins Gespräch kommen zu können, weil ich die Sprache nicht beherrsche, die Musik öffnet aber Wege, die selbst perfekte Sprachkenntnisse nicht gefunden hätten

## Have a look at our Photos album :

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.senegal/photos/>

## Have a look at the videos taken in our projects!

Sports Football Project :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtWkkV5HLs4>

Care Project :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwIfgrOVsEY>

Music and Culture Project :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUzWh2eSXmk>

## Stay In Touch With Us! ☺



Projects Abroad Senegal – The Official Group

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.senegal>

Projects Abroad Blog – Senegal

[http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group\\_blogs.php?gl=true&group\\_guid=2985](http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=2985)





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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 off your best shots!!

Send your pictures to: [habibdiaw@projects-abroad.org](mailto:habibdiaw@projects-abroad.org), [finasenghor@projects-abroad.org](mailto:finasenghor@projects-abroad.org)

