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Letter from the Editor

October is undoubtedly the month of change and greatness.

Changes that start on a small scale, but are able to change a life as they bring smiles; like the idea to give a proper meal to the talibes of the ASF Care Centre; an initiative of Anne Marie Plat, a Care volunteer from Holland.

But also change that brings hope, as the big donation from Franchesca, a former Sports volunteer, to the Basketball Academy Centre of Saint-Louis did. We will discover the progress of an action that took her a whole year of fight in the name of sport and solidarity.

Change as a hand that touches a heart with tenderness and humility and leaves a forever lasting mark that we discover through Lorella Brignardello's testimony. She wrote some lines to make the world know what she experienced on "that part of the world so fascinating, so human, so authentic called Africa".

Change also as I am the new Information Manager for Senegal and that I will be from now on the one responsible for keeping you close no matter where you are! I will be in charge of the newsletters and I will do my best to share with you every important event in Senegal!

And finally, greatness of every volunteer that is doing a great job no matter how hard adapting and adjusting to the Senegalese weather is, as the heat never prevents the volunteers from doing a great job.

Have a good read!





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 Arame 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.

Arame



Food and clothes distribution of at the ASF Care Centre: an initiative of Anne Marie Plat, Care volunteer



Before she travelled to Senegal, Anne-Marie from Holland used to attend seminars about volunteering overseas. She wanted to spend her volunteering time in Senegal in order to help the talibes (street children) in Saint-Louis. She learned a lot about what her stay would be like, and more importantly she learned what faced the street children. Certain that sometimes to change things money is needed; she started to collect money in her family and in her two workplaces. First at her office work, TVG, she achieved to sensitize people about the living conditions of the street children. And second at the sport club, FC Volendam where she works during her weekends she succeeds to collect an important amount of money for the street children.

Once in Senegal, she observed the situation of the talibes as she volunteered at the ASF Care centre. The ASF Care Centre is a place



where the talibes come to benefit from volunteers assistance and help. Anne-Marie is involved in healthcare, so she cleans wounds at the centre as well as at the Darras.

She decides to buy clothes and shoes for them. And since at the centre the volunteers hang out snacks once a week to the talibes, she asks to replace it with a proper meal (rice and meat) and to give them fruits. She bought 4 boxes of bananas and apples, 35 kilos of rice and 2 sheep.



Together with the other volunteers and the nurse of the centre they cooked a big lunch for the talibes. The talibes received new shoes, new clothes and had an opportunity to savor fruits, yogurt and a good meal!

Anne-Marie is planning to repeat the action three times before the end of her stay. She warmly thanks everybody in Holland who participated in this action, her family, friends and colleagues (TVG and



FC VOLENDAM).



Flor Senegal: Donation in the name of sport and solidarity



Francesca D'Erasmus (29), from Italy has a great love for the basketball and a heart as big as the universe!

Former basketball player in first division, she is currently an instructor at Florence Basket. She decided to volunteer through Projects Abroad in Senegal for two weeks in July 2012. In Africa, during summer, on the playground the conditions are tough, but when Francesca talks about her experience with the young Senegalese basketball players her eyes light up. She talks about their love of the game and

their enthusiasm: "They are incredible, the lack of means and the harsh conditions never stop them!" said Francesca.

However, it is their capacity of forming a team and fighting that really deeply affected her.





The logo : a basket ball in purple and yellow

Fancesca really wants to help them, she is ambitious, and she has a dream: a twinning to give to the young Senegalese the opportunity to benefit from an internship in Italy. But also for the Italian basketball players, it could be an opportunity to discover their sport in less

comfortable conditions next to passionate and persevering Senegalese players.

Back to Florence, Francesca speeds up and with the support of the president of her team, M. Paolo Ricci, she launches a campaign to collect basketball equipment to send to the Basketball Academy Centre in Saint-Louis. Then she creates a name: "Flor Senegal" that comes from the combination of Senegal and Florence Basket, the team where Francesca plays and that helped and supported her since the beginning of her project.

Then she prints out calendars made out with her best photos taken during her stay in Saint-Louis that she sells to finance the dispatch of the equipment.



Francesca created a Facebook page "Flor Senegal", the evolution of the campaign is visible and in Italy articles are published in several Italian newspapers such as *La Nazione*, *La Provincia* and even some singers support her action!





Here are some links on which they talked about “Flor Senegal”.

http://www.gonews.it/articolo_154141_Florence-ragazze-campionesse-di-solidariet-due-progetti-per-disabili-per-il-Senegal.html;

<http://met.provincia.fi.it/news.aspx?n=126318>;

<http://blog.giovanisi.it/2012/09/26/flor-senegal-la-florence-basket-per-il-sociale/>; <http://www.fortitudobologna.it/>



Five boxes containing basketball shoes, jerseys, socks, lots of equipment, and also school equipment came to Senegal!

Francesca would've liked to send everything for Christmas but there are many things left to do.

In April, everything is ready to go, but there is still a step: the bureaucratic approach. Finally on August everything takes the sea for



Senegal thanks to the great help of Cheikh(Volunteer Coordinator) and Moctar (Country Director FOR Senegal).

On October 22nd, the five boxes arrived and the basketball players of the Academy can finally discover all that has been prepared for over a year.



For me, a former volunteer, meeting Francesca was a revelation...even though I never touched a ball, her sport and human values as well as her strength cannot then be a source of inspiration to progress. Her actions teach us to dare having a dream, to share to be stronger, to ask for help...because "all together we are unbeatable". On the Facebook page of Flor Senegal, you can see that everyone's action contributed to

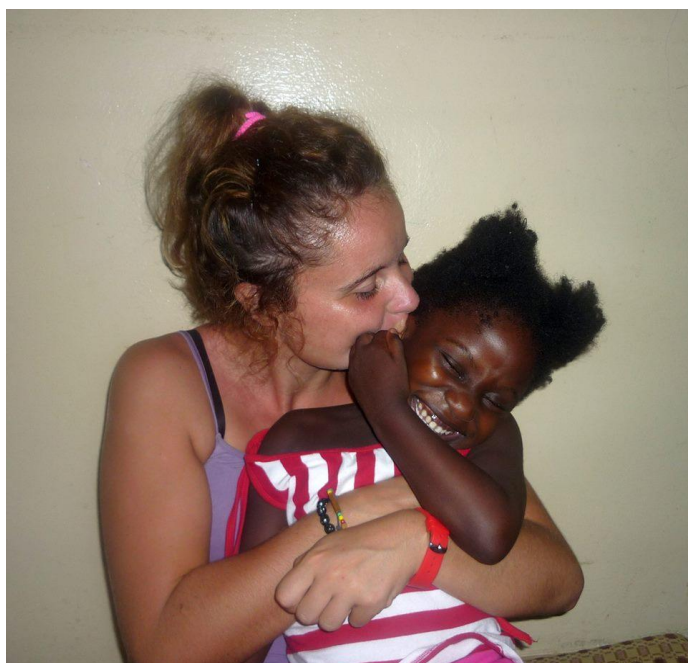


realize this project of sport solidarity; the action of Francesca, Paolo Ricci and Florence Basket, but also of everybody that bought a t-shirt or a calendar or who brought equipments.

Written by Lara Bosco, former Care volunteer

Translated into English by Arame

Testimony of an Italian former care volunteer



Sometimes the emotions are so strong and beautiful that it's hard to find the words to describe them, but I will try to do it because now that I'm back in Italy, my greatest desire is that all people know what's going on in that part of the world so fascinating, so human, so authentic called Africa. We know this because it increases their awareness of being only a small part of a large universe

and arises because in them the desire to discover by yourself, to help, to live in Africa especially Senegal, more precisely Saint-Louis, where I spent three weeks. Saint-Louis is the place where the ordinary becomes extraordinary, where every action is never a repetition, but it's always something new, where everyone can be appreciated simply for them, with the certainty that a smile will be paid with other thousand smiles, where everything is special, nothing is trivial.

It was the first time that I faced an intercontinental journey alone and I left with determination and with some fear, which disappeared as soon as I arrived at the airport in Dakar and I met Cheikh, wonderful volunteer coordinator of the local staff, ready to welcome and to accompany me to



St-Louis. Got in the car, we started chatting cheerfully, as we knew each other for a long time and after a stop for breakfast we continued. A few moments with him and have breathed air of a family, security and trust: the Senegalese have this wonderful gift of being able to welcome people and put them at ease. Air that I breathed also when I just arrived in my family, that consisted of two adults and three wonderful children that are like brothers to me and so I am to them. It was nice to come home from work and see the two kids running to hug me.



I worked in the A.S.F center situated at about 15 minutes' walk from my house; in the morning I did healthcare with local staff visiting the various "daaras" units throughout the country. I shall digress on daaras: dwellings inhabited by many children who are entrusted by

parents to the "marabout" - the person who is responsible to teach them the Koran. Families must pay the fees but often because of poverty they cannot afford it so they leave the children in the hands of the Marabout. In those very small houses many children live in severe hygienic conditions and very often with pets. The children there are of different ages, despite their conditions they are happy, with a great desire to work, help and be helped.



During the afternoon I did the education with Doudou, a wonderful teacher that I was very lucky to know and that I will always have in the heart: when kids see him, their eyes light up and when they call him the tone of their voice is incredibly sweet. I tried to teach English and I was



incredibly impressed by the desire of those kids to learn new things, discover, explore without ever being tired, ever being bored or sad. The problem of the Talibe is a serious social plague of Senegal, there are several improvements to be done; but the eyes of the children give the invite and the strength to move forward, step by step because it's worthy.

What about the local staff of Project Abroad? Beauty, friendship and love are the main values. The handshakes, smiles, glances, hugs, smiles are everyday language. And in case of need, are available 24 hours a day: I remember that I called Cheikh one morning, at 5am and at the second ring I heard his voice: "hello Lorella!" I will never forget the slogan that Habib and Cheikh always repeated to me: "Do not worry my friend!" Astonishing, when life gives you these meetings, you cannot help but feel immensely lucky, life is a gift and you understand when you meet people who can give you their soul and welcome you, as the most beautiful gift.



Now I'm back in Italy and my heart is filled with joy and a part remains in St Louis. In addition to my Italian family, I have another family composed by the staff of Projects Abroad and by the staff of ASF. The experience is not over ... it is not a goodbye, but a see you soon. Forever in my heart!

Lorella Brignardello



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 on our YouTube Channel!

Sports Football Project :

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

Care Project :

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

Music and Culture Project :

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

Microfinance Project :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaP4GakDTkk>

Stay In Touch With Us! 😊

Read our monthly newsletter

<http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/senegal/newsletters-from-senegal/>

Want to contribute in our newsletter?

Each month we will be featuring a photo from Senegal in the newsletter. If you are a former volunteer your photos are also welcome. Show off your best shots!!

Send your pictures to: habibdiaw@projects-abroad.org,
finasenghor@projects-abroad.org

