



## CONTENTS

Message de L'éditeur	Page1
My medical placement in Togo	Page2-3
Moi et l'Afrique	Page3-4
1 sorriso regalato, 1000 sorrisi ricevuti.	Page4
A silent adventure	Page5
Mon travail à CACIT	Page 6

### Message de L'éditeur

Projects Abroad Togo est fier de vous proposer des missions de volontariat et des stages d'une qualité exceptionnelle cette année. Nous avons ajouté à cette longue liste de projets dont nous disposons, les projets musique et danse et basketball. L'école de foot de Projects Abroad Togo ne cesse de conforter sa position dans le classement des meilleures écoles de foot du Togo.

Nous remercions nos volontaires et mettons tout en œuvre pour faire de votre projet un succès pour vous, mais aussi pour les organisations qui vous accueillent. En tant que jeune diplômé, actif ou retraité du secteur social et de l'enfance vous avez la possibilité d'utiliser vos compétences professionnelles dans le cadre de notre dispositif Projects Abroad PRO.

Si vous avez un commentaire ou une suggestion à faire, vous pouvez contacter Rodrigue au +228 90021408 ou lui écrire sur [rodrigueklu@projects-abroad.org](mailto:rodrigueklu@projects-abroad.org).

Bonne lecture à tous.

**Rodrigue**

## My medical placement in Togo

### **Rosie Rand**

Australia 22years Australian Medical Projects

Coming to Africa for the first time and intending to work in the medical field was both daunting and exciting. I had absolutely no idea what to expect...

I started off working in the *Centre de Santé*, where I started off assisting the nurses with screening patients, taking observations, giving injections (primarily malaria treatment). I also worked very hard on improving my medical vocabulary and adjusting to the Togolese French accent! After I had spent a couple of weeks doing this, I moved to the *Petite Chirurgie* where I was introduced to a semi-retired and very experienced older nurse called Monsieur Djako. This was my real initiation into African-style medicine: due to a lack of means and resources, conditions exist that, for us, are shockingly sub-standard. The lack of national health insurance means that patients need to buy everything, from medications to syringes and needles, and even gloves for the nurses. I saw a few people enduring stitches without anaesthetic because they had no money to pay for it! It costs an equivalent of \$2. I soon discovered that the techniques for dressing wounds here are very outdated. I explained to Nurse Djako that saline can be used instead of Betadine to remove dressings but with much less pain and damage to growing skin. He was happy to adopt this new practice, I was thus able to make a small contribution to the improving pain levels of the patients. We struck up a great relationship of mutual education - he taught me how to suture (not on a real person...yet) and under his instruction I've become competent at inserting IVs. I told him about our practices relating to wounds and hygiene. (Unfortunately I was unable to convince him to give up his practice of using actual petrol as a skin disinfectant. He insists that it is cost effective and 'not dangerous if you don't use it too much.') I helped him with his English and he taught me Ewe, the native language.



After spending a month and a half at the Medical Centre I moved to the major hospital of Lomé, *Centre Hospitalier et Universitaire Sylvanus Olympio* (CHU). I spent the first month in *Urgences Chirurgicales*, or 'surgical emergencies' - in other words, the place where all the accidents and traumas arrive by ambulance. This was a real eye-opener. The patients are not treated unless someone has bought all the materials for them from the pharmacy because the hospital itself has no stock whatsoever. If no one arrives to pay for the materials, the patient can not be treated - this applies to children too. I had to hit the ground running, and was soon doing dressings and inserting cannulas by myself (unthinkable back home!). I was amazed and profoundly inspired by the cheerfulness of the staff despite their environment and

dismal wages (\$6 for a 15 hour night shift). I struck up wonderful relationships with the patients who came for regular dressings, and managed to introduce a new type of dressing that improves healing and also lessens pain on removal. Although it was challenging work, seeing the difference this made was hugely rewarding.

After being here for three months, I'm finding it hard to come to terms with the fact that I'll be home in a few days. In a way it feels as if I've been here forever, and everything that happened before I came is a distant memory of a past life. Being exposed to another world and culture brings so many complex emotions, convictions, feelings, reasonings, and questions. To make sense of these while trying to process a new and foreign environment is an incredible task, and one that I imagine will be ongoing long after the return home. Experiencing real fear, frustration, sadness, homesickness, incredulity, wonder, joy, mental fatigue, horror, shock, satisfaction, elation, helplessness - all at a surprising intensity is exhausting. Throughout my whole stay, I have never ceased to be amazed by the people here. Amidst all the pain and suffering, there always remains that insuppressible love of life and inexplicable joy which we 'yovos' have always found mystifying and, above all, inspiring.

I've seen and heard things that I'll never be able to forget, both joyful and heart wrenching.

I feel as though I've lived another lifetime.

## Moi et l'Afrique

**Karin Ernst** 23 ans Italian Care Project

Moi, en effet, je n'ai encore rien compris de l'Afrique.

Pour la comprendre on devrait se dénuder de chaque pensée et préjugé mais ce passage peut avoir besoin de beaucoup de temps, et il se peut aussi qu'une vie entière ne soit pas suffisante.

Ici j'apprends jour après jour à apprécier le plaisir des yeux pour observer et d'une mentalité attentive à ne pas juger.

Ce n'est pas mon monde, ou pour mieux dire, il ne l'était pas. Toutes les choses sont vécues doucement et pleinement tandis que les émotions sont accélérées. Quelques jours ça suffit pour te donner la sensation d'avoir toujours été ici. Ils t'accueillent comme si c'était vraiment comme ça.

Je voudrais écrire beaucoup de choses. Je voudrais écrire tout ce qui se passe ici mais chaque jour ce sont trop les choses qui arrivent. Trop de choses, trop de personnes, trop de paroles. Mais les émotions non, elles ne sont jamais suffisantes. L'Afrique est bouleversante... elle a une certaine



magie qui te fait arrêter de penser à ce que tu n'as pas et elle t'ouvre les yeux sur ces petites choses apparemment pas importantes qui, ici, deviennent indispensable.

Ça c'est l'Afrique, c'est le Togo. Un pays qui vaut la peine d'être vécu jusqu'au fond.

## 1 sorriso regalato, 1000 sorrisi ricevuti

**Karin Ernst** 23 ans Italian Care Project



Arrivata a Lomé sono stata sopraffatta dai rumori, dagli odori e dai colori di questa caotica città ma, armata di sorriso e tanta curiosità mi ci sono immersa completamente.

Per strada le persone hanno voglia di conoscerti, vogliono condividere qualcosa con te o spesso semplicemente parlare. Capisco così che è meglio cominciare a mettere da parte quel mio lato tanto riservato che normalmente adotto nella cara e timida Svizzera e fare spazio alla vitalità e voglia di socializzare. Posso dire che non avrei potuto trovare miglior terapia d'urto se non quella di ritrovarmi nel cortile dell'orfanotrofo Remar.

Ricordo il primo giorno che misi piede nel posto che sarebbe presto diventato la mia seconda casa qui a Lomé. Mi sembrava di vivere una scena da film... una trentina di bambini e ragazzi che mi correvano incontro e volevano abbracciarmi e stringermi la mano. Semplicemente un'emozione indescrivibile. Cosa avrei potuto desiderare di più? Pensavo niente, ma sono stati gli stessi bambini ad avermi dato quel qualcosa di più dandomi la stessa energica e calorosa accoglienza giorno dopo giorno. Non si tratta di abbracci di convenienza, non si tratta solo di curiosità passeggera, quei sorrisi che ogni giorno mi scaldano il cuore sono naturali, autentici e semplicemente bellissimi.



## A silent adventure

**Emilie Worm Hansen** 22 years Danish Teaching project  
**Signe Gunnensen** 22 years Danish Teaching project



The adventure begins just after leaving the airplane. Even at the airport you're met by friendly Togolese people, who want to help you. At the hall we found a familiar t-shirt and a friendly face. The staff of Projects Abroad showed us to our home for the duration of our project. Our host mother had already prepared a meal for us when we arrived, and wow, can she cook!

The first couple of days were extremely tiring; after a day of touring the city, meeting the staff and the first experiences at our project we just wanted to go to sleep at 8 o'clock every night –We still do! Luckily there is plenty of water at our house. At first we found it weird drinking water out of a plastic bag but actually it grows on you. We have named it "The Togo Way of Life" and we like it.

Our project at Ecole Ephphatha is amazing. It's the only school in Togo for children who are deaf and dumb. When we arrived in Togo we didn't know any sign language but the children were happy to teach us. Even though they can't speak they have a lot to tell. Lucky for us there is a teacher who is willing to translate their eager words. The children are always happy and after only a short period of time we were accepted into their everyday life.

To us there is no greater way to start the morning than by seeing the children running towards us to greet us. We've made many little friends and even though we can't learn their names they try to teach us anyway in sign.

When we're not at the school, our spare time is spent with the other volunteers. We meet weekly for a social event and some of us are even planning weekend getaways together. Don't be afraid to travel alone. Most Togolese people are very kind and are often interested in knowing where you are from and what you are doing in Togo. The volunteers don't live far apart. There is always a volunteer willing to meet up for a greatly underestimated milkshake. Just jump on a moto and they'll take you anywhere you want to go.

The Togolese people are almost born on moto's and it didn't take long before going by moto felt like the most natural way to get around.

So far Togo has been nothing but amazing.

## Mon travail à CACIT

**Caroline Musquet** 34 ans Française Human Right Project



J'ai effectué un stage d'un mois du 1<sup>er</sup> au 28 février au sein du CACIT (Collectif des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo). Ce stage s'est très bien passé en tous points.

Ce fut un stage intense avec des horaires très denses : 7h30-12h30/14h-17h30 avec parfois des journées continues compte tenu de l'importance du travail. Ma mission au sein du CACIT consistait à contribuer aux projets de l'association. J'ai été affectée aux actions de communication (plan d'action 2013, plan de communication 2013, interviews pour le bulletin *L'œil du CACIT*, élaboration d'une newsletter) et contribué à l'élaboration de projets (projet de la Francophonie sur la lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes, plan média avec le Haut Commissariat aux Droits de l'Homme sur la lutte contre la torture).

J'ai également bénéficié des séances de formation organisées au sein du CACIT pour le personnel. Ces formations portaient sur la réalisation d'un tableau de bord et une approche du tableau de GANTT dans le but de rationaliser le travail de l'équipe et de renforcer les compétences professionnelles du personnel. Ces outils me seront très utiles également dans ma vie professionnelle.

Enfin, j'ai participé à une séance de monitoring en allant constater sur le terrain les actions menées par des manifestants et par les forces de l'ordre. Cette séance s'est déroulée dans le cadre d'une manifestation de journalistes à Lomé.

En terme d'expérience, d'implication, ce stage a été très enrichissant et m'a permis de côtoyer des univers passionnants comme celui du Haut Commissariat aux Droits de l'Homme, la Commission anticorruption et contre le sabotage économique. Mes relations avec mes collègues ont été excellentes. Je me suis sentie intégrée dès le début dans l'équipe et été sollicitée sur plusieurs projets.

Ce stage a en tout cas contribué à faire de mon séjour au Togo un séjour agréable, riche en rencontres et en expériences. En dehors de la forte chaleur et du vacarme occasionné par la profusion de taxis-motos, Lomé est une ville agréable avec des habitants particulièrement sympathiques et aimables.

## Mots de fin

Nous tenons à remercier infiniment tous les volontaires qui viennent soutenir le Togo à travers leurs différentes actions dans leurs lieux de travail respectifs.

Sachez que votre présence est toujours pour nos placements une occasion d'échange mutuel enrichissant.

Nous voulons également dire merci à tous les volontaires qui ont envoyé leurs articles et photos pour le bulletin de ce mois de Février.

Bien de choses à nos lecteurs pour leur soutien moral. Nous n'oublions pas les bonnes volontés qui de près ou de loin ont apporté leur soutien à la réussite du bulletin de ce mois.