

A GHANAIAN EDUCATION

This issue, **Adizah Tejani** explains the importance of educational development in Africa after spending ten weeks volunteering and teaching English in Ghana.

Platform 2 is a government-sponsored volunteer scheme. It allows young people from the ages of 18-25 to spend ten weeks in a 'developing' country. The destinations are Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Peru, Nepal and India. Flights, medical bills and insurance are all covered, so the main thing I had to do was apply, pack and go!

I joined Platform 2 in order to gain a deeper perspective of Ghanaian culture and to view the way of life of some Ghanaians. The project was based in Kasapin which is located in the Bronafo Region in Ghana, West Africa. It is about 150km away from Kumasi, which is Ghana's second city. The main language is Twi and English is widely spoken. I worked as a volunteer in Kasapin for ten weeks, helping to build a community centre and also working in the schools, as well as the health care clinics.

Adult Education in Ghana is a concept held in high regard in the large cities such as Accra and Kumasi. During my time as a Platform 2 volunteer I chose to begin a class of my own during my free time. I chose to fund the class myself so that there would be no cost for the students.

Starting the class was a challenge, as issues arose over who should be involved, dates and times. The class finally began on the 25th of September, almost two weeks before our departure date. The target group had to be narrowed down to women, as I already knew women from the local mosque and they were ideal participants.

After starting, the students wanted me to teach every day until I left; however, I managed to do eight classes in 14 days. I conducted

the classes at 7pm and was helped by Jamie Lee Walkie; this was an ideal time for us as our organised Platform 2 activities were over and this also allowed the women to finish any business they had.

I taught basic English and focused on conversational skills. Though the phrases seem simple to native speakers, they were hard to grasp for the women, but they were determined to learn. I had a translator named Rabi, a 20-year-old local trader. Her English was



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good and she also spoke the common Ghanaian language Twi, which allowed her to translate. Repetition and roleplay were used in order to help the students remember. There were about six enrolled students but three regular students, Sahora, 45, a waki (rice) seller, Hajira Abdullah, 30, a cocoa seller and farmer and Hajjar Osman, a bean seller. Sahora was my best student. Her determined mindset made her encourage the others to come to the class. Having never gone to school before, she has

still been able to become a trader. Her travels to Togo for trade helped her understand the importance of language and she believes that learning English will help her trade in other towns outside of Kasapin.

During the lessons a teacher named Frank, from Danak School, offered to continue the class after I left. This meant that the women could continue to learn English. I arranged with my Platform 2 supervisor, Knox, to meet Frank in order to allow the next group of volunteers



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to also get involved if they wished and for him to help me follow the progress of the class.

During the weekends we were able to travel around Ghana to see some of the great sights. The Ashanti Palace in Kumasi representing the Kingdom of Gold, Kintampo Waterfalls, a site of natural beauty and Lake Bosumtwi where we were lucky enough to go on a speed boat! Ghana is a beautiful and growing country and rich with culture, humour and people who want to be part of moving their country forward.

Having experienced education while teaching at Danak School and LA School, I understood the importance that education has for everyone. It allows people to help to help themselves. Since being back from my Platform 2 experience I have done talks for the Vinolved team of Norfolk at a volunteer event, and at City College, Norwich. These make young people aware of opportunities such as Platform 2. Going on the scheme has also encouraged me to support Yaarah Schools, an initiative set up in order to help further the prospects of education in countries such as Ghana. Yaarah Schools aim to raise funds for books, chairs, tables and also a building for the children to learn in: things we take for granted.

Overall my experience in Kasapin was memorable. It helped me gain a deeper insight into the lives of others and also showed me how easy it was to help others help themselves. I would like to return to Kasapin in order support the progress happening in such a vibrant and loving community.

Links

www.yaarahschools.org/

www.adizahtejani.wordpress.com/

www.myplatform2.com/

There is a cake and African jewellery sale 12-3pm on Thursday 3rd December in the Hive. Come along and buy some Christmas gifts that you will not be able to find in the shops! Help kids gain more this Christmas!

PHOTO KEY

1. Women at the mosque.
2. Fresh cocoa.
3. Dried cocoa, soon to be the chocolate that we all love!
4. Amina - a great help to my class.
5. Building site 7am-11am!
6. Yaarah Schools: project welcome.
7. Chilled out boy.
8. Yaarah Schools: distribution of items
9. Kasapin Chief.
10. A basic classroom - a vision Yaarah Schools hopes to change with funds raised.
11. Some of my great students and the translator.



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