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WorldTeach
Namibia
Summer 2009

I will never forget driving to my village for the first time following my World Teach orientation in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. Orientation was a week filled with chartered bus tours of Namibia, catered dinners, and cultural excursions every day; all based from the comfort of a hotel right in the heart of town. I was now sitting in the back of a government car as we drove three hours through the desert to get to my village, Okombahe. There was nothing except a dirt road and the occasional rock mound as we made our way closer and closer to Okombahe. When we finally got to the village it was nothing at all like I expected. Instead of houses there were small metal shacks with roofs held down by rubber tires. Instead of pick-up trucks there were donkey carts.

We pulled up to the hostel school where I would be teaching computer literacy for the next three months and the teachers and students could not have been more welcoming. They showed me to my housing, a spacious teacher flat with a kitchen, 2 bedrooms, a bathroom and a living room. I was introduced to my roommate, another female teacher with a 2-year-old daughter. Despite everyone being so nice, I still could not help but feel a bit nervous about the upcoming months. I wanted to do a lot of weekend traveling during my time in Namibia, but this seemed almost impossible after seeing the village for the first time. I was told there would be Internet at my school, but the teachers laughed when I asked about this. Going to sleep that first night I had absolutely no idea what to expect about the following months. What would my teaching schedule be? How would I get out of the village? What would I spend my spare time doing?

After meeting with the entire staff (nine teachers, one secretary) the next morning I developed a teaching schedule. I would teach computer literacy classes to the teachers after school from 3-6pm Sunday-Thursday. During the day I would be available to teach private lessons during their break periods. I would teach four computer concepts over the next three months based on a manual distributed by the Namibian Government. These concepts would be: basic computer parts/functions, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Power Point.

When I went to see the computer lab for the first time I was shocked at how nice it was. There were twenty brand new HP computers with flat panel monitors all networked together. The Namibian government had come in and set it up three months ago, and only one or two of the teachers even knew how to turn them on. As someone who has been taking computer classes since the second grade, I definitely took my computer knowledge for granted. During classes I gave them a floppy disk to insert into the computer, and many of them put it in the CD drive. Even the idea of having to keep the mouse on a flat surface was new and took practice.

The progress the teachers made throughout the course was unbelievable. There is not a lot to do in Okombahe, so my computer class broke up the monotony of their week. They were excited to learn about technology and they were proud they could use something as sophisticated as a computer. Not only was class fun and exciting to them, but it was also practical and gave them a whole new way of teaching. They could now use Microsoft Excel to input their grades, which saved them hours and hours of averaging out grades using a calculator. They could now use Power Point to teach their lessons using a projector the government gave the school when it set up the computer lab.

While the computer literacy classes were the main reason for my being in Namibia, I still had a lot of free time during the week and on the weekends. During the days I had time to myself

to read, walk around the village and help teachers in the computer lab. Certain chores took up a lot of time. Laundry usually took a whole day as laundry is done by hand with washing powder in a bucket. Keeping the house clean also took up a lot of time (sweeping, cleaning the bath tub, etc). I made myself breakfast every morning, usually oats with milk/sugar and eggs. The school hostel provided me lunch every day. I became really close with the kitchen staff and they invited me to birthday parties, their homes for tea, and one of the lady's retirement ceremony. Lunch consisted of chicken or beef and a side dish, such as rice, pasta or pumpkin. For dinner I ate with the Vice Principal, Ms. Chaka, every day. Very early on we became friends, so we got into a routine of eating dinner together every day after class. I went over to her flat and we cooked and talked for about two hours every weekday. Dinner consisted of a type of meat such as goat, chicken, beef, Oryx, fish, or kudu, and a side dish.

I was fortunate enough to be able to travel almost every single weekend. I visited fellow World Teach volunteers at their villages/towns and went to many major sites in Namibia including Swakopmund, the Namib Desert, and Etosha National Park for a safari. There was one major holiday while I was there, Day of the African Child, and I used that week to go to Victoria Falls.

I cannot even begin to describe all of the experiences I had this summer in Namibia. I made true friendships with my fellow World Teach volunteers, locals in Namibia, and travelers I met on my weekend trips. I learned so much about Namibian culture through my daily dinner conversations with Ms. Chaka.

While most Americans have never even heard of Namibia, it is an unbelievably diverse, beautiful country with a rich culture. It is one of the safest, cleanest and most developed countries in Africa, and I feel very fortunate to have spent my summer volunteering there.