



Gambia

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Project



- For the three weeks I spent out in the Gunjur, Gambia, we worked on a project for the local women. We built a fence around a mango plantation to start a larger project for the women to work at a mango factory. The mango plantation was located a 20 minute walk away from where we were staying. Each day we walked with all our equipment in wheelbarrows.
- The process involved digging out the old rotten posts, collecting wire, digging new holes, replacing poles and redoing the wire.
- During the project we had our ups and downs. On the first day of our project we could not complete a full day as there was a rainstorm which flooded the whole town. This prevented us from finishing our day of work and we were all thoroughly drenched! Near the end of the project after putting all the poles in we found out that we had made a mistake with the distance needed between each pole. This made the team feel very down and a lot of us temporarily lost morale as we had to go round and move poles or dig new holes for new poles in-between the existing ones.
- Some of the best parts about working the project was enjoying the company with the locals and hearing their stories and learning about how they live. The locals we worked with would come back to our compound and hang around with us. They kept us all in a good mood and made us want to work harder. While working we also had mango breaks. The locals would climb the trees and pick us the best mango. They tasted amazing! We ate the mangos "the Gambian way", they showed us how they eat their mangos with their teeth. This was a very messy process!

We finished the project having completed the three sides of the area. After we left the locals kept us updated on the progress and they have completed the fence and have built toilets that woman will be able to use when working.



Accommodation

- For our accommodation we stayed in the local community centre. This was a simple, empty area which had a wooden wall to separate the males and females.
- We all slept on camp beds with our mosquito nets. It was extremely hot during the night so we all teamed together and got a fan which we alternated each night.
- In our compound we had three toilets. Each one was a hole in the ground however two had toilet seats. We would take turns cleaning the toilets and spraying them to try and prevent the amount of mosquitos.



Food

- For the three weeks we stayed in Gambia we had local chefs to cook for us. These were four ladies who were known in the community for their cooking. Our meals were mainly rice, pasta or beans with meat and vegetables (tomatoes, cucumber and yams). We also sometimes were blessed with the cooks homemade chips. These were the teams favourites and didn't last long.
- During our trip we also experienced the local restaurants which all served one meal per night and they were often the same as what the cooks would make but it was nice to experience the town and talk to more people around the town.



Locals

- Throughout the three weeks we met and became friends with lots of the locals. Each night we would spend time with the locals in our compound. They taught us some of their local traditions including how to make attaya tea which is a sweet tea made in the evening. We would make tis every evening and share it around the group.
- We were also lucky enough to go round some of our friends compounds. Each compound they had around 25 people living there. Their fathers would live in the main house with his most recent wife and her children and then the other mothers would live in separate houses with their children. When we went to the compound we played games with the children and they showed us around their compounds.



Clothing

- Most days the locals wear the same type of clothes as we do (jeans and T-shirts) However, they do on special occasions wear their traditional clothing.
- We all had clothes made for us from the local shop. We first chose our fabric from the shop in town and then gave them to the seamstress to make into our chosen items. A lot of us had clothes made as our gifts to take home.
- After we all had our Gambian clothes made all the locals came to our compound in their clothes to show us what theirs looked like.



Baby naming ceremony

- While we were in Gunjur Gambia we were lucky enough to be invited to a baby naming ceremony. This is a celebration for the first born of a couple. Everyone the family knows is invited and they dress up in their best outfits and the women wear lots of make up. At the ceremony the couple announce the name of their child in front of the whole of all their guests and everyone holds and is introduced to the baby. The baby we met was only one week old.

