

## Message Number 1

The first report on our work takes up various aspects of our everyday life.

Working at the school is a lot of fun and the school is open when it comes to education. We have heard from other schools that children are beaten a lot. However, we have not yet noticed this, much at this school. Although there is still a lot of work with hierarchies at the CEG Gbetagbo, for example, food is bought by the students from the local women and brought to us, the wiping from the blackboard is done by students and students carry things into the workroom. Supervisors and school uniforms are also integrated, but not as strong as in other schools. Nevertheless, the mood in the teaching staff towards us is distant. The teachers rarely approach you on their own, but those who approach us are friendly and show a lot of interest in the German language. The view of education at CEG Gbetagbo is very teacher-dependent and strongly linked to hierarchy, but the students have become accustomed to this. Apart from that, the students are very grateful for education, and in some cases, there is also less commitment in class, but these are often students who sit at the back of the room. This seating arrangement reminds us very much of the schools in Germany. Here, however, there is a negative reaction to school-free days and there is generally a very high participation in lessons. In relation to us, the students are very curious and open. They seek increased physical contact and ask us many questions outside of class. We were given gifts, and we are regularly asked for German songs. The students' respect for us is not as high as the respect for the teachers and the supervisor. However, it is not expected of us to this extent, because from our point of view everyone should be treated the same. Surprisingly, the lack of respect is not reflected in a lack of willingness to learn. In general, we are a change in everyday school life for many students. For the next few years, some students have already told us that they will choose German instead of Spanish.

Big differences that we noticed compared to Germany: 1. In Germany there is no/less gratitude towards education. 2. There are smaller classes in Germany and thus a better learning environment. 3. There is almost no violence in Germany. 4. Better buildings and more modern technology. In Germany, there is also not so much frontal teaching. In the CEG Gbetagbo, the lessons are almost without exception frontal. With the class size, it is unfortunately hardly possible to arrange the lessons differently. We have a class of 19 students in the 4ème. Due to her size, the class understands and learns much faster than the other classes with around 50 students. In the larger classes, the number of three teachers makes it possible to have more control over the learning behaviour of individual pupils. For example, we can better support students who have been left behind or students with weaker learning behavior. In our opinion, we should try to promote creativity more and place more emphasis on individual support and realization.

Our relationship with Parfait is very good. Parfait is very friendly and heart-warming to us. He always helps us when we have questions and supports us in working on our tasks. Some days we can do many tasks for him, but other days we just sit there and listen to his lessons. We are mainly involved in the lessons, for example answering questions from students or doing exercises with them. The aspect of interculturality is less often in focus. Intercultural exchange is difficult to incorporate into lessons. In the German club, the exchange works better. In the German Club, we have been able to convey various aspects of German culture or culture practiced in Germany. Among other things, we made school cones with the students, played games such as "Der Plumpssack geht um", played games to promote creativity from

German lessons and celebrated Halloween. In the next step, we want to deal more with German history in the German Club by having the students give lectures. In general, the students are very interested in the German Club. There is a few truants, but the rush remains large.

2.

In the office of the "Actions of Solidarité" we work on Mondays and sometimes also on Thursday mornings. There we prepare the upcoming German Club, or deal with the topic of the charity run. Most of the time, however, we have very little to do. But now we have to sit down more with the charity run and generally find a better division of work. Since the employees in the office are very interested in learning English, we help out there as best we can. Most recently, we practiced and translated English fairy tales and stories together. In the office, the atmosphere is very funny and communicative. If there are any questions, everyone is very helpful and learning English or other things together, such as Excel, is a lot of fun. We find the construction site visits particularly interesting. In Golo-Djigbé, the construction of the school and the associated development can be observed well for us. We are also very interested in the awareness-raising projects and look forward to helping when things continue again. Especially to see how school gardens are created.

3.

In general, life in Benin is wonderful after a short period of settling in. The food tastes very good, but is often too spicy for us. Christian, the chauffeur, takes very good care of us (especially with the food, that it's not too spicy). Nevertheless, you can immediately find your favorite dishes. For Lia Atassi and Wanzu and for Benedikt Ablo. Surprisingly, you can buy food at any time in many places, which makes us very happy. The understanding of vegetarian nutrition is less present, but after asking with what believes you grew up, they respect your decision. You are always treated very friendly by the people and experience great respect, e.g. you are always immediately assigned a seat. This gives you the feeling that you are special to them. You are served very quickly and in general there is great hospitality to experience. In general, there is a kind of "racism" here, because it is believed that white people are always rich and very intelligent. This belief is also very deeply rooted. So you always pay more than the locals at the market and in other places and are often asked for money. Otherwise, you are always greeted very warmly on the street and you are always offered something, asked about the day and how we are doing. Children often call out "Yovo" after you, or you are addressed as "Bonsoir Yovo". We both learn a little Fon, which leads to great joy. We think it is a form of integration that is very welcome. Many young, but also older men are very pushy towards Lia. Countless marriage proposals are made to her, as well as things are shouted after her. She feels very uncomfortable in some situations because of it.

The clothes worn here suggest that many people are religious. Individual symbols, such as the cross or burqa, can often be seen. In contrast to Germany, little skin is shown. In addition, there are many more beautiful patterns, more work is done with colors and many soccer jerseys are worn.

As far as voodoo is concerned, we have hardly had any contact yet. There is a temple at the school that we really want to see. In general, we want to deal more with the topic. The things you have already seen, e.g. offerings, statues etc. were very impressive. Otherwise, there are a lot of Christians and Muslims who also go to church very regularly. The church days are more

frequent here than in Germany, where people usually only go to church on Sunday. If you are asked about your religion, everything is tolerated. You are neither discriminated against nor excluded because of your religion.

The people here work very hard and often have a lot of jobs. Often the men also work as Zem drivers. They do this to provide for their families, to build a house and to be able to buy status symbols. Status symbols, such as a car, clothes or the house are very important. The working days here are very long and usually for very little pay. Everything is done for the family. Along with work, the ideas of life are still very traditional. Work, wife, house, family have priority. Polyamory, i.e. the relationship with several women at the same time, is normality here. Therefore, a father often has many children. In the families, education is often made possible for as many as possible, but cannot be guaranteed for everyone. Women are often only at home. They sometimes have their own stand at the front door. Women work is not considered bad, e.g. there are many women in leadership positions. Only physical work is not welcome by women.

Shopping at the market is sometimes very stressful. You are talked to all the time, you still have to get to know the prices, you have to negotiate all the time and it is very time-consuming. Nevertheless, there is actually everything you would get on the market in Germany. The supermarket is also in no way inferior to the German supermarkets. Over time, you get better and better at negotiating, you put up with less and you can say no better. These are definitely qualities that you need in life.

The party life in Cotonou is very funny, but after the first time you know half of all the people who are out and about. There are mainly international, privileged or rich Beninese on the move. They are very open, like to involve you in conversation and in general people like to dance and sing in the whole culture, which must be practiced more in Europe. But being alone as a woman at night would be very scary. You are often approached, you don't know the paths so well and you have to do everything more carefully, all this is still a bit difficult.

Otherwise, we find Benin's cleaning culture very impressive. The disease malaria was not as bad as one had imagined, but not to be trifled with either. You learn how important it is to stay healthy in life and to eat healthy.