

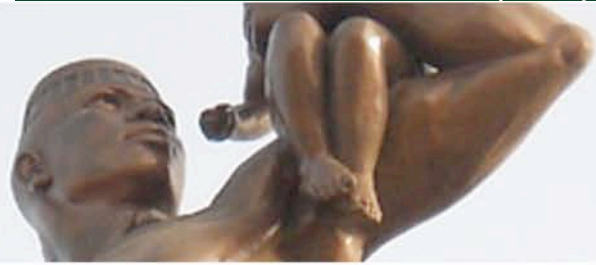
Le *Saint-Louisien*
Projects Abroad Senegal Newsletter

Projects Abroad

**Barney Eliot talks
about the Music
Project**



**SENEGAL:
51 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE**



Editor's Notes

Hello Everyone:

After a big break we are very excited to start again bringing you updates of our placements and social activities over here.

But first at all, I would like to introduce myself:

My name is Jorge Aguayo, I'm 25 years old and I am the new Social Manager here in Senegal. I was born and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico

I joined the Projects Abroad Mexico Team in 2008 as an Assistant Manager, and recently arrived to Senegal to perform the Social Manager duties. During the next months I'll be keeping you informed about everything related to Projects Abroad Senegal.

A huge thanks to everyone who contributed to the newsletter this month. Special thanks go to:

- Barney Eliot for his article regarding his experience at the Music Project.

I want to invite you to join us in our Facebook Official Group. Find us by searching Projects Abroad Senegal – The Official Group.

Feel free to join us in our Facebook group and do not forget to add me so we can be in touch, before, during and after your trip to Senegal! My Facebook name is Jorge-Projects Abroad.

Or if you are a Twitter fan, you can also follow the latest news here; our name is Proj_AbroadSN

Best wishes from Senegal!



Le Saint-Louisien
Projects Abroad Senegal Newsletter

On the cover
'African Renaissance Monument'

Jorge Aguayo
Social Manager
Projects Abroad Senegal



Volunteer Story

Two months ago, my destination was Dakar, Senegal, transferring in Morocco, and then to continue immediately to Saint Louis, in the North Western corner of the country. I knew that the journey would take me into the unknown and unnerving well before the sprawling, sand strewn labyrinth of Saint Louis, as self reliance and total independence many miles from home were both concepts new to me. They were, however, things I could prepare for mentally. The thrill of the unimaginable was brought thunderously to life in a clearly definable moment, when the wheels of my 747 roared against the asphalt of the Airport Mohammed 5th in Casablanca. As I gazed at the static glow of the terminal in the pitch dark early hours, even with such a paltry glimpse, Morocco was suddenly no longer 'the unexplored'. I thought to myself that, by proportion, two months in the city of Saint Louis would be about enough to establish a second life.



On arrival at Dakar airport at 5:00am, I was picked up as promised by a Projects Abroad operative, and fell immediately asleep in the back of the taxi. When I awoke, we had stopped for coffee on a stretch of the desert road lined by corrugated

iron shacks and the shrubs and bushels of an otherwise arid landscape. It was still cool, and the twilight had not yet transformed into the bright heat of the day. The massive silence, the dust cloud that hung over the road for several minutes with every car, and the eyes of curious children peering through the gaps of my embroidered sun screens at the mysterious cargo, making me feel like some ridiculous Imperial figure being ferried through the wilderness,



assured me that I was a long way from South London.

I had the same feeling as I sat down for my first meal with my host family with the women sat on the floor, 'la chef de la famille' and I on stools, with pieces of fish thrown to our sections of the plate. The faltering French conversation was accompanied by the soundtrack of Saint Louis- the incessant baying of goats, the patter of distant djembes, the meandering tones of Koranic chanting, and of course, five times a day, the bellowing call to prayer.

I would recommend to anyone that they volunteer themselves here; the city is lively, vibrant, and embarrassingly welcoming. People here are quick to help you and feed you, and friendships are effortlessly made. My project was under the vague title of Music, and, as I was the first Projects Abroad volunteer to take this opportunity, the organisation and implementation of the project was largely touch and go.

However, Alioune Mbow, the Manager of Mama Sadio's backing band with whom Projects Abroad had been in touch came to the fore, and took me under his wing and into his capable hands with such wonderful care and generosity as I could not have wished for.

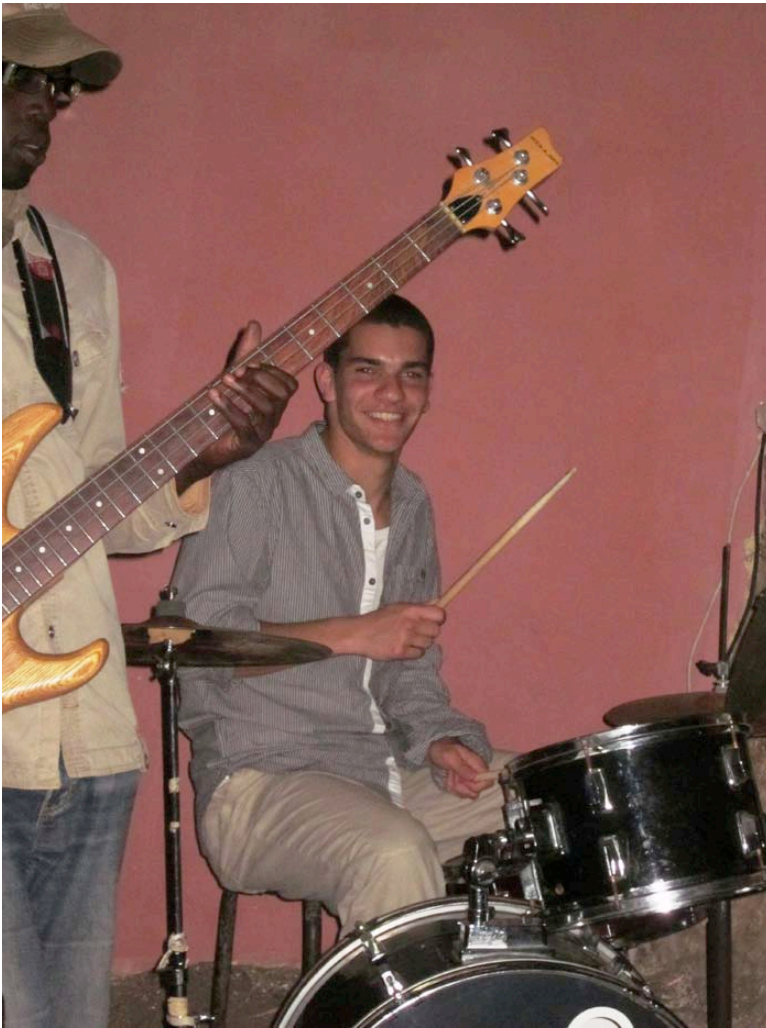
I was soon attending band rehearsals, learning the art of djembe with the MS percussionist, eating at chez Mama everyday and being introduced as a fully fledged band member to the packed audiences of the shows in town, at which I was performing within a couple of weeks. Under the stars and overhanging leaves in the gardens of Mikabox, La Taverne, Chez Agnes and L'institute Francaise, improvising, jamming and soloing with those who automatically became my tight knit circle of friends, I could not have been happier.





Should you decide to come and play with a band here, you will undoubtedly feel the same surreal contentment as you round off a number and swagger through the sweating, breathless crowds of soon to be familiar faces to buy a well deserved Flag, or Gazelle – perhaps the major dichotomy in Senegal- or a Fanta if you're feeling professional.

You should however be aware of some cultural elements of the country that prevent it from being a carefree 'beach bum' paradise. Besides the unmasked poverty and the reactions to a white skin ranging from fascination, excitement and congenial interest to occasional antipathy, there appears to be a latent struggle between those trying to liberalise the country's sometimes-oppressive society, with those austere maintaining the current behavioural and philosophical code.



Barney Eliot, Music Project

However I would not let this put you off coming, as it would be impossible to avoid a little moralistic cultural friction wherever you go, and though life may not be too short to brandish your views and wear your principles on your sleeve, I would suggest that you do as they do in Rome.

In short, I would recommend the informative and profoundly valuable experience of life and work in a foreign country to everyone, undergraduates and normal people alike.



Independence of Senegal

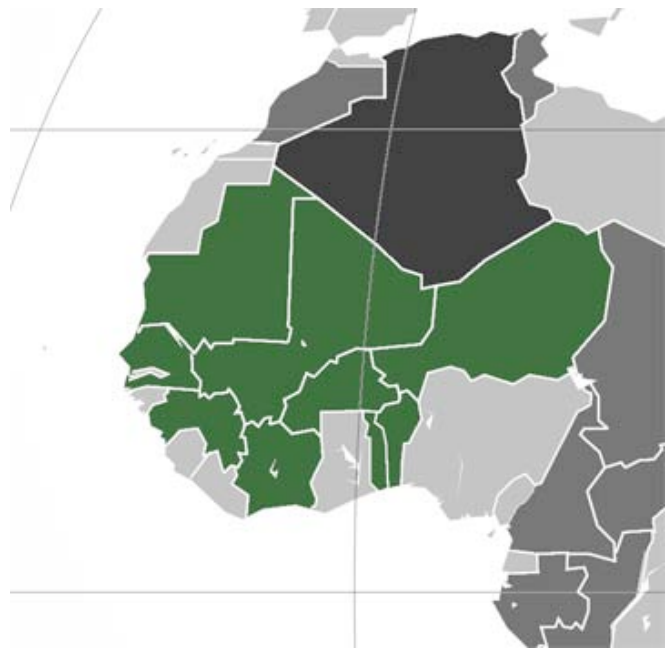
The French established a post at the mouth of Senegal in 1638 and in 1659 founded Saint-Louis on an island there. In 1677, the French captured Gorée from the Dutch, and it was, for a time, the main French naval base in West Africa.

André Brüe, who was Director of the Royal Company of Senegal from 1697 to 1720, extended French influence far into the interior, increased the export of slaves, ivory, and gum Arabic, and encouraged with little success the cultivation of cotton and cacao. Later the French companies active in Senegal had competition from Fulani and Mande merchants.

By 1815, the French presence was limited to Saint-Louis, Gorée, and Rufisque, and during the first half of the 19th century there was little contact with the interior, whose trade was oriented to the north and east.

As part of a French policy of assimilation, inhabitants of Saint-Louis and Gorée elected a Deputy to the National Assembly in Paris from 1848 to 1852 and (joined by the inhabitants of Rufisque and Dakar) from 1871 to independence in 1960.

During the period from 1854 to 1865, Capt. Louis Faidherbe was governor of Senegal, and he extended French influence up the Senegal and along the Casamance and conquered Walo and Cayor.





Faidherbe established schools for the Africans and halted the westward expansion of al-Hajj Umar, the Tukolor leader of the Tijaniyya brotherhood, who waged a large-scale holy war from a base in, what is now, Guinea beginning in the early 1850s.

In 1895, Senegal was made a French colony, with its capital at Saint-Louis; it was part of French West Africa, headquartered from 1902 at Dakar.

Under the French, Senegal's trade was reoriented toward the coast, its output of peanuts increased dramatically, and railroads were built.

In 1946, Senegal, together with the rest of French West Africa, became part of the

French Union, and French citizenship was extended to all Senegalese.

Politics in Senegal were led by its two deputies in the French national assembly, Lamine Gueye (Left), whose base was in the coastal cities, and Léopold Sédar Senghor (Right) whose political strength was derived from the rural areas of the interior.



In 1948, Senghor founded the Senegalese Democratic Bloc, which dominated politics in Senegal in the 1950s. In 1956, a national assembly was set up in Senegal.

In late 1958, Senegal became an autonomous republic within the French community, later, in 1959 joined with the Sudanese Republic (the former French Sudan) to form the Mali Federation, which became fully independent on 20 June 1960, as a result of the independence and the transfer of power agreement signed with France on 4 April 1960.



Centre pour Jeunes de Projects Abroad

Located in the area of Sor, and around 25 minutes from the downtown of St. Louis is located the 'Centre pour Jeunes de Projects Abroad' where volunteers work alongside the local staff organising activities for the Talibé kids (children with low resources).



The first person that we meet during our visit was the Programme Supervisor Lamine Tall, which explained us about the objectives, activities and the role of the volunteers in this centre.



'The programme aims to provide Talibés daily socio-educational support and care at the centre and directly into their own environment (school and home). This programme is beneficial for the talibés as it considerably participates in the improvement of their living conditions through a series of varied activities'.



When a new volunteer arrives, they have a meeting with the coordinator in order to know more about their skills and interests, and together find the activities who fits better with each volunteer. Volunteers will work alongside qualified staff (a nurse, a teacher and a social worker) who will helped them understand the work field and get used to the local operational procedures.

Volunteers can do environmental and healthcare activities such as hygiene prevention. The range of activities during the work days can be to provide first aids to the talibé kids, either at the centre or going directly to the 'Daaras' (where the kids live). Also, volunteers help telling the kids how to brush their teeth or how to wash their clothes as well to supervise when they take the shower.

Other activities where volunteers get involved is in the educational field, like teaching French or Maths, due to most of the kids not having been educated properly and some of them just speak their native languages, this activities are very important because the support that they receive here will be fundamental for achieve a better quality in their lives and prepare them to have more opportunities in the life.



Regarding the leisure time, volunteers usually organise different games and activities for the kids such as Painting, Arts and Crafts, very important as well to help them learn how to relate themselves with other kids



Besides helping with the day – to – day tasks, volunteers are always able to plan their own activities where children can get involved to keep them amused and occupied, which means that usually they have the flexibility to plan the activities and games, because of this volunteers always should show initiative and enthusiasm to immerse themselves into the job.

A great placement if you want to develop your ideas about activities and ways to teach language to the kids, be sure that local staff will appreciate and extra pair of hands.



Destination: TOUBA

The holy city of Touba is located around 220km south east of Saint Louis, one of the biggest religious centres in Senegal.

Founded in 1887, Touba (in arabic 'Felicity') is the holy city of Mouridism (Islamic brotherhood) and the resting place of its founder, Cheikh Amadou Bamba (Right), who is buried in the giant mosque that dominates the town and the surrounding plains.

The city is the most important religious centre in Senegal. During the last decades, Touba had grown very fast until become in the second largest city in the country, just after Dakar.

Every year, lots of pilgrims come to Touba at any time, but the high point of the year is a mass pilgrimage called Grand Magal, which celebrates Bamba's return from exile in 1907 after being vanished for 20 years by the French authorities.

Due to its religious vocation Touba has strict rules of behaviour. Forbidden in the holy city are all illicit and frivolous pursuits, such as the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, the playing of games, music and dancing.



At the heart of the city lies its Great Mosque. Opened in 1936 and closed in 1963 and since then it has been continuously enlarged and embellished. The Mosque is the Mecca style and its size is overwhelming.



Amadou Bamba, founder of the Mouride brotherhood, lies buried. The mosque's 87-metre (285 ft.) high central minaret, called *Lamp Fall*, is one of Senegal's most famous monuments.

The various stages of construction add an extra dimension and an exhibition of photos in the library show the many phases of construction.

Non-Muslims can visit the Mosque outside prayer hours but it's inappropriate to enter without a guide.



Quiz night: What was the name of...

With this question our quiz night started last Wednesday in the weekly event over here.

Every week volunteers and members of the staff gather to have our quiz night; the way it works is quite simple: the team who had least points on the previous quiz night, is in charge to do the one for the next week.



Divided by teams, volunteers made their best to win this competition, the reason: 10, 000 CFAs (25 US dollars) for the winner; money that will be used to make a donation to one of the different projects where volunteers work.

20 questions later we had a winning team: Andrea, Naomi, Tim and Victor (picture) got the 10, 000 CFAs, money that they are going to use to buy toothbrushes for the kids at the Talibe Centre (low resources children).





It was a very good night to see each other and support a good cause and we are waiting for the next one. In the meantime, I have to go to write the next quiz; unfortunately our team lost but we will win the next one! Want to join us? Stay tuned for the result of our next quiz night!!! I am pretty sure it will be more positive for my team!



Recipe of the Month - Ceebu Jen

(Senegalese fish with rice and vegetables)

Ceebu jen (cheh-boo jen) is one of the most popular dishes in Senegal, especially along the coast. A Wolof term meaning "rice and fish," *ceebu jen* is a tomato mix of fish, rice and cooked vegetables that shows a strong resemblance to Spanish paella and Creole jambalaya.

A wide variety of vegetables and fish can be used, making *Ceebu Jen* an extremely versatile dish. Also spelled *thieboudienne*, *tiéboudienne*, *thiep bou dien*, *cep bu jën*.



Ingredients (4 to 6 servings)

- Whole fish (or fillets, see variations), cleaned -- about 2 pounds
- Parsley, finely chopped -- 1/4 cup
- Hot chilli peppers, finely chopped -- 2 or 3
- Garlic, minced -- 2 or 3 cloves
- Salt and pepper -- to season
- Peanut or vegetable oil -- 1/4 cup
- Onions, chopped -- 2
- Tomato paste -- 1/4 cup
- Stock or water -- 5 cups
- Carrots, cut into rounds - 3
- Cabbage, cut into wedges -- 1/2 head
- Pumpkin or winter squash, peeled and cubed -- 1/2 pound
- Eggplant, cubed -- 1
- Rice -- 2 cups
- Lemons, cut into wedges -- 3



Preparation

1. Rinse the fish inside and out with cool water and pat dry. Cut three diagonal slashes about 1/2 inch deep in each side of the fish. Mix the chopped parsley, chilli peppers, garlic, salt and pepper and stuff the mixture (called *roff*) into the slashes on the fish.
2. Heat the oil in a large, deep pot over a medium-high flame. Brown the fish on both sides in the hot oil and remove to a plate.
3. Add the chopped onions to the hot oil and sauté until cooked through and just beginning to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and about 1/4 cup of water and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Stir in the stock or water, carrots, cabbage, pumpkin and eggplant and simmer over medium heat for 35 to 45 minutes, or until the vegetables are cooked through and tender. Add the browned fish and simmer for another 15 minutes or so. Remove the fish and vegetables and about 1 cup of the broth to a platter, cover and set in a warm oven.
5. Strain the remaining broth, discarding the solids. Add enough water to the broth to make 4 cups and return to heat. Bring the broth to a boil, stir in the rice and season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for 20 minutes, or until the rice is cooked through and tender.
6. Spread the cooked rice in a large serving platter, including any crispy bits (the *xooñ*) sticking to the bottom of the pan. Spread the vegetables over the centre of the rice and top with the fish. Finally, pour the reserved broth over all. Serve with lemon wedges. *Ceebu jen* is traditionally eaten with the hands from a common serving dish.



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Each month we will be featuring a photo from Senegal in the newsletter, elected by our Senegal Office Staff. If you are a former volunteer your photos are also welcome.

Show everyone your best shots!!

Send your pictures to:

jorgeaguayo@projects-abroad.org

