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Volunteer report – Term II 2016



The Final week is about to begin and still it feels like we came here yesterday, time is paradoxical. Especially now when we have been introduced to new way to experiencing it: the Namibian concept of time. These days waiting is not taking on my nerves anymore, Things happen when they happen, people come when they come, but still everything works. That mixed concept of Finnish and Namibian time is one of many souvenirs to take home.

It is so easy to forget the outside world when people are living long periods at the same place, with the same people and sticking with old habits, which begins to be the only way of doing things. I have been living in that bubble for too long in Finland. Spending this summer/winter here showed me, again, that the truth is out there. Usakos experience gave me many new perspectives and developed some of the old ones too.

Primary point of coming here was the children. I wanted to help them and give them courage to affect the direction of their own lives. I am surprised how good is their attitude towards life in spite of their lack in basic needs. The center is really important for them. Some of the children don't have possibilities to get food from home. Center offers it. The children need

love and touch, but parents cannot provide it. Center offers it. I am so happy that I could see how small organizations can really develop the surrounding community's life. We need more operators like UNCSO. They can work efficiently and fast for their goals.

Living together with Izaaks family was working well: Everyone respected each other's personal space, distribution of housework was equitable among volunteers, house was always peaceful place to be and small disagreements between volunteers were easily solved. We were a good team!

There is always something to be improved. One important thing is to develop more open communication between Marianne and the volunteers. At the very beginning I noticed, that the opposite views are not considered here, but successful teamwork must have tolerance to accept different views to keep on going. Open communication is the key to success. The second improvement is linked to equality between different people and cultural backgrounds. I heard many times, when adults complained about Damaras and Damara children to be lazy people. That kind of language usage is creating a gap between different cultures. The language and stereotypes also renews among children and starts forming reality where the object is starting to act according to expectations: "I am Damara, I am lazy". How about empowering the sentence: "you are Damara and you can!"

After all, my time in Usakos has been success. I have seen, tasted and heard a lot. It is always great to spend long time in totally different culture. Usakos experience changed my worldview to more humane direction. I saw that even small help could make a big difference in individual level. I hope everything good and long future for UNCSO and Izaaks Family!