

Internship report

Christina Lamke, Term 3 2016



It's really hard to write a report about the three months in Namibia, three months which were so full of new experiences, impressions and adventures. Three months in which I got an impression about a different world, where children are happy with the least. I would have never thought that they would become so important for me that it is already difficult to watch the pictures of them. In these months the house of the Izaaks family felt like a home and through them I experienced a totally different culture. But nearly the most important thing was our group of volunteers. We grew together after a short time it felt normal to sleep and live in the same house and to talk about all our concerns, wishes and dreams. Together, we saw all the beautiful places we could reach. We went to the dunes of Sossusvlei, saw lions in Etosha and had an unexpected meeting with a Rhino at a campingplace. So how can I describe the three months which I would say were one of the best of my life?

Maybe I should start with the beginning, my expectations and the first experiences. I came to Namibia without knowing much about the country. I only had a blurry picture of the hot sun, colourful dressed people and exotic people in my mind. And I also didn't think so much about the work with the children before. At the beginning I didn't see anything of the savannah of my dreams. Usakos is very dry and small and only after one month I realized how beautiful it is.

The feeling of being lost, which I had in the big city Windhoek, disappeared after I came to Marianne's house. And right after I saw the children I knew for which reason I came here. After I saw the little Paulus, who was hiding shy behind Marianne. Many children welcomed us with many hugs. This was an experience which I didn't know from Europe. I didn't know children who are searching so directly for love.

Only after a time and especially after our housevisits I understood the children better. Many of them lost a family member in the last years. After I knew their backgrounds I understood why they behave like they do sometimes, why they are fighting so much with each other in order to get some attention. I was so impressed how they smile so much and are happy with the least.

It seems to me that they are making the best of each situation in their own way. The children became more and more important to me, the longer I stayed here. I could maybe even say I fell every day more in love with them. With Hope, our little dramaqueen, who runs screaming away if she doesn't like my worksheet but finishes the day by giving me a little loveletter. Or with Jason, our troublemaker who is searching so much for attention by making trouble and who sits satisfied on my legs if he gets the attention he is longing for.



This doesn't mean that the work with the children was only easy. There were some moments where I counted the days in the centre, because the children were so annoying and exhausting. But even on these days were these situations where you had to laugh. For example when little Richard tried to sing but was so tired that he could hardly open his eyes and especially not the mouth.

I know already how difficult it will be to say good bye to all of them and I would like to take all of them in a little bag to Germany.

In all the time Marianne was our advisor and helper. She welcomed us very warmly in her house. After the first centerday I knew already how important she is for the centre, of course for the children the most, but also for us volunteers. If we had to struggle 15 minutes to get some silence, then it was maybe one minute for her. She helped us when we had some problems with the children and answered us questions about things we couldn't understand in this culture. Even at home we could come with everything to her and ask for her advice. I respect her a lot for what she does for these children. Especially now when I know how much work it is and how much passion you need. I think only a few people have the strength to care about so many children, about their health, their school and family problems. Marianne is like a mother for all of them.

Also outside the centre we experienced a lot. Our whole group travelled nearly every weekend, to see as much of the country as possible. At the beginning of my time here I thought our group is too different to become friends. But after every trip I recognized that we grew closer together. I had so much luck with the people I came here. If I look back I can

only say that we had the perfect group. Together we climbed to the „Big Daddy“, one of the highest dunes in the Namibdesert, which is one of the most beautiful places I ever saw, together we saw elephants in Etosha. But the most important thing in our group was that we helped each other, especially in the centre. The work with the children was only so much fun, because there were some persons who helped me if I needed something or laughed about the same things and experienced the same situations.

I will miss it really much that everytime somebody is around me and I will miss our little livingcommunity.

Right now I can't realize that I will leave everything behind me. Namibia is such a beautiful country and I am really glad that I got to know this country with all the people in it. I thought I would come here to give something to the children, but at the end they gave something to me. They showed me how to be happy with the least, how to smile every day and how to show love. I am very glad that I can share these experiences with other people. Because even if it is really hard to leave, I know that we, the girls in our group, will stay in contact and maybe will return to this beautiful country.