

# Final report



**Participant:** Veronika Uhlířová

**Place of internship:** Senegal, Kaolack, region of Kaolack(1); Senegal, Toubakouta, region of Sine-Saloum(2)

**Title of internship:** Théâtre comme vecteur de développement (n°of internship:C300105123)(1); Initiative Plante la vie!(2)

**Period of internship:** July 2011- October 2011

**Hosting organizations:** GINDI Association(1); NEBEDAY Association(2)

**Sending organization:** INEX-SDA, o.p.s.

## Summary

This text summarizes my participation in GLEN cycle 2012, giving some attention to my experience with entire cycle, however stressing the phase of internship itself.

My motivations to participate in GLEN cycle were several, among them personal interest in region of internship or necessity to develop my theoretical studies of Ethnology and Territorial studies in more practical way. During the preparatory seminars, I hoped to better understand the content of global education and learn its methodology, and this will was basically fulfilled.

During my internship in Senegal, I got into trouble with my NGO and decided to move to another NGO for the last month of my stay. First project was situated in urban environment, in the city of Kaolack. After some initial trouble we effectuated an evaluation of the Championship in school theater, organized by GINDI, association we worked for, for three past years. Outcomes of this evaluation were used as a tool for fundraising of next editions and for networking of GINDI.

For last month of my stay I moved to rural area of Sine-Saloum Delta, where i joined activities of NEBEDAY association. Our activities consisted of promotion of tree planting. In particular, the tree Moringa Oleifera (Nebeday) was planted and presented in surrounding villages.

Entire cycle proved as being influential for my personal and professional life and I am motivated to continue with global education activities in future.

## Shrnutí

Tento text je reflexí mé účasti v cyklu GLEN 2012. Shrnuje mou zkušenost s cyklem jako celkem, přičemž nejvíce prostoru věnuje samotné stáži v zahraničí.

Motivací pro přihlášení k účasti v GLENU bylo několik, mezi nimi obzvláště můj osobní zájem o region konání stáže, ale i potřeba doplnit mé teoretické studium etnologie a teritoriálních studií o praktickou zkušenost. Od přípravných seminářů jsem očekávala lepší pochopení obsahu pojmu globálního rozvojového vzdělávání, stejně jako osvojení jeho metodiky. Obojí bylo více méně splněno.

Začátek mé stáže v Senegal byl trochu problematický, a i přesto, že jsme se pokoušely najít cestu, jak v rámci hostitelské organizace pracovat, naše spolupráce neprobíhala nejlépe. Z tohoto důvodu jsem se rozhodla po dvou měsících stáže organizaci změnit.

První část stáže jsme konaly v urbánním prostředí města Kaolack, kde jsme uskutečnily evaluaci Šampionátu ve školním divadle. Tento šampionát je už tři roky organizován GINDI, naší hostitelskou organizací.

Výstupy z evaluace byly použity především pro fundraising dalšího ročníku šampionátu, ale i jako prostředek k zasíťování GINDI mezi organizace podobného charakteru.

Poslední měsíc svého pobytu jsem strávila v rurálním prostředí delty Siné-Saloum. Zde jsem se podílela na aktivitách asociace NBEDAY, především na výsadbě nových stromků a osvětové činnosti týkající se stromu Moringa Oleifera (Nebeday).

Účast v cyklu byla významnou pro můj osobní i profesní život a motivovala mě k dalšímu zapojení do aktivit spojených s globálním rozvojovým vzděláním.

## **Introduction**

This report should serve as a tool to summarize and evaluate my GLEN experience. To be as complex as possible, I would like to dedicate a brief remark to every of three parts composing participation in GLEN: preparatory phase, internship and the phase after return from the internship. All three parts will be reflected from my personal point of view, taking into account what I learned, as well as what I missed/would improve. In the very end, I will try to summarize the main reasons why I consider my participation in this cycle as being highly valuable for my personal and professional future life.

## **I. Preparatory phase**

As every longer stay abroad organized on international level, even participation on GLEN requires quite a long period of preparations, including administrative issues, selective process and two weeks of training before departure to the country of internship. In my case, this preparatory phase started a bit more than half a year before the departure itself.

### **1. Motivation**

Since long time ago, I was developing my interest in different cultures and global issues. On european level, I joined several short term voluntary projects and became deeply interested in idea of active citizenship and voluntarism. At the same time I started my universtity studies in the field of Ethnology and Territorial studies (Middle East studies) and after gaining a bachelor degree, I extended my interest to the area of Africa when continuing my studies with one year master programme in African studies. My interest in issues of international cooperation, the ethique and methods of this cooperation, and my will to possible participation on longer project in the area of my interest, deepened day by day. I got a good theoretical base thanks to my studies, but I felt that my formation can't be completed without having some practical experience.

Then suddenly I found my project. Since the connection between Czech Republic and West Africa (which is currently in the centre of my main interst) is really low, almost non-existing, I welcomed a project in Senegal offered by GLEN as unexpected, but perfectly fitting to my profile and interst.

The project was supposed to encompass, among others widely described activities, participation, preparation and evaluation of Forum theatre workshops organized by small Senegalese NGO. Since I got some experience in theatre before, I considered this project as a perfect way to examine this community based developmental technique in praxis, learn how it may work within West African community, as well as to have a perfect opportunity to really get in touch with local people (which is, for me as an ethnologue, highly valuable) and learn more about Senegalese culture which I knew only threw some expatriate friends living in Europe and, especially, through the eye of scholars.

### **2. Seminars**

One of the most important part of GLEN cycle is a participation on two preparatory seminars bringing together all participans from network member countries. In fact, GLEN network is divided into two separate parts, one covering english-speaking projects taking place in Asia and english-speaking Africa, and second, geathering projects located in West, french-speaking Africa. Those two parts of the network organize their preparatory seminars separately and every each foccuses on a specific problematics of the area they specialize in.

Since Senegal is, due to its colonial history, a french-speaking country, I participated on seminars organized by francophone branch of the network, GLEN GeCo.

There are several reasons for organizing those seminars, among them get to know a tandem or

trinom for the internship, get ready for a stay and work in a culturally different country, but as well, to learn more about concept of global education and its methodology.

Basically I have to admit that the majority of above mentioned was more or less fulfilled, however, unfortunately, not as deeply as I expected. I hoped to better understand what the global education (GE) is but, as well, to become familiar with some GE techniques. Unfortunately, the time was scarce and the problematics itself was not that accentuated during seminars. In fact we got some methodological base which we can develop by ourselves, if willing to.

## II. Internship

As sometimes happens, the reality we found in Senegal showed as being slightly different from what written in the project description. The primarily shock was replaced by an own initiative and, even everything was not 'perfect', we managed to do a piece of work for our association. Since after my tandem's departure I still had a month of stay left, I organized myself and found another NGO to join for the last part of my stay in Senegal. Even my decision to quit our first organization might be criticised by someones, I don't regret. I think I contributed to both NGOs as much as I, in given conditions, could. What is more, this change of organization and my relocation offered me to explore Senegalese reality, its culture, ways of thinking and ways to approach work, in much deeper and complex way.

### Project 1: GINDI

#### Project and its environment

GINDI is a small organization based in the city of Kaolack, second economical centre of the country. Since several decades ago, this city undergoes rapid, uncontroled growth what leads to several serious problems.

High immigration rate leads to construction of new neighbourhoods among which many of them grow in areas suffering from high soil salinity or extreme flads danger, so in areas which are not convenient nor recommended for construction of dwellings. Since the salinity and pollution of area surrounding the city is really high, the issue of access to drinkable water is present in daily life of the majority of inhabitants of the city as well.



Spontaneous urban development leads to emergence of inconvenient sanitary system which makes the city suffering especially during the wet season, when the majority of dusty streets fill by rain water.

Except all problems this city faces, Kaolack is also well known as one of the main religious sites of the country, hosting a centre of Tidjan, Niassia Sufi Islam brotherhood. High prestige of a big mosque and connection with Peninsula Islam brings to the city some investments, however, bringing profit exclusively to the neighbourhoods religiously close to the Big Mosque.

The city of Kaolack is situated on important trade crossroad connecting inland and seaside, southern and northern part of the country, as well as entire Senegal and its neighbouring countries. This specific condition, combined with historical prerequisites (the base for French trade with peanuts during the colonial

period), makes the city traditional, multinational marketing center.

Since the living conditions in Kaolack are not very good, European, Asiatic or American aspect of this multiculturalism is practically missing. Even the city is estimated to have a bit less than half million inhabitants, there are just few signs of international development cooperation. Currently there are some international NGOs developing diverse projects, only few of them, however, have their fix office in the city at the moment.

Lack of international development projects encourages a rich activity of local associations and NGOs, however unfortunately without any higher-level coordination or central planning. Activities of many associations are replicated and, though, a bit monothematic. In contrary, some issues (ex. scrap collecting) are fully neglected.

GINDI is a small artistic association, publically presenting itself as a promoter of active citizenship, equality and sensibilization about diverse issues. The tool they use to achieve their goal is a technique of Forum theatre. This is at least the rhetorics which GINDI uses for its promotion. In the end, we spent with the association two months (out of expected three) and we never witnessed GINDI working with this technique. It is possible that this was due to the fact we were present during the time of summer holiday, wet season and month of ramadan at the same time, though during the period which is in general a bit specific and often essentially changes entire working schedule and activities.

What we know about the association is the fact they tend to be active agent promoting cultural life in the city, trying to establish tradition in what they do and connect their work with other similar actors and NGOs, create a network and work in favour of the association itself, but with the same intensity for good of the citizens of the city.

Since there is no official state financial support for such an associations, GINDI is working with very limited resources. In fact, they don't have any kind of office or other space, where would the association have its base. It is a bit difficult for a newcomer though, to become integrated into the association, since the only time its members meet is usually dedicated to the theater plays rehearsals.

There is approximately a dozen of members in the association. Except General Administrator, all members are actors, some of them involved in the leadership of the organism (accountant, general secretary,...).

## **Tasks**

At the beginning of our stay it was slightly difficult to find our position within the association as well as any kind of tasks for us. We were a bit disappointed when we finally understood that the permanent postponing of the beginning of our work is, in fact, the way to let us understand that the proposed project is actually not existing. Even the proposal description was very vast, we constructed certain picture about our role in the association, which suddenly fall down.

Imagining our stay in Senegal would consist of kind of administrative work serving for no big reasons, we decided to develop one of previously proposed activities by ourselves. With a help of extra-organization university professor and support of General Administrator of GINDI, we decided to evaluate the project of Championship in School Theater, taking place in Kaolack during last three years (this project was initiated, supported and co-organized by GINDI). The outcomes of this evaluation should serve mainly as: a) a feedback for GINDI as an organizer; b) as a suggestion for changes to do in next years; c) as a prerequisite for further fundraising and research of partners for next years.

As already mentioned, the internship took place during the summer holiday. At the beginning this lead to several complications while trying to get in touch with teachers (who often live in Kaolack only during the school year) and further even with pupils, who were basically contacted by their teachers. This lead to the fact we didn't manage to interview all the intended sample but, on

the other hand, we managed to collect satisfactory amount of information serving as a good base for further evaluation.



The outcome of this evaluation served as a basic tool used for presentation of the project while continuing with second part of our work for GINDI: research of new partners for organization and fundraising of next edition of the championship. We got in touch with some local and international NGOs having their bias in the city with an aim to negotiate their participation on project. Few of them directly promised a coloboration, others got to know the project (and its inconveniences they might help to elimine) and negotiated their possible support directly with GINDI.

### **Outcomes for the local community**

Our work was not organised in a way which could directly have some impact for a local community. We hope, that the papers we evoluted (Evaluation of the project of Championship in School theater and Concept Note) might serve as a tool for GINDI, showing them which parts of the project need improvement (ex. To increase impact on local population, to choose certains topics which would be more close to children's real life, etc.). We tried not just to evaluate but as well, to bring some ideas which might help to GINDI to make this project really valuable and acessible for as large part of population of Kaolack as possible. Unfortunately, our task was not to intrduce those adjustment by ourselves and it is GINDI who decides how to work with them, and in its consequence, how our work influence local community.

Trying to find funds and partners, we hopefully managed to ensure next edition of Championship, but mainly, we made entire project more visible even for those who never got in touch with.

To this 'virtual' outcomes of the internship I superordinate our stay within the community, cohabitation with local people which, even encompassing just small group of people, let them to have a small insight into the life of Euraopeans, life which is not necesarilly the same as the life of 'white' people in crap soap operas emited by Senegalese TV stations. In our everyday life, we tried to deconstruct some stereotypes about how Europeans and their lives are.

### **Personal outcomes**

It comes naturally that I can much easier distinguish outcomes this experience had, and stil has, on myself. What I learned is to be more relaxed, to accept other ways of dealing with work and every day life. From my personal point of view, I learned a lot about the city where I lived, not only through my personal experience of living the city but as well, through my further interest in the

problematics of migration, urbanization and other issues connected with the region of Kaolack (without doubt, interest initiated by my stay in the city). What is really important for me is that I had an opportunity to really live with local people, in the same conditions as they do. This experience will be probably the strongest personal outcome I got from my internship.

Concerning my professional development, this internship helped me to be more independent while working. Since all the work we did we organized by ourselves, I learned to plan, and reach certain aims. Very enriching for me was even an experience to work within international, French-Czech tandem, because, even being both from Europe, our working culture is different, what led to confrontations, but in the end, to the bipolar enrichment. In the end, I appreciate the fact I had an opportunity to design our own project and be responsible for the way it will be led.

## **Project 2: NEBEDAY**

### **Project and its environment**

NEBEDAY is a newly established association, coming from the initiative of Jean Goepf, one of the most important and significant personages of Senegalese ecology and non-profit sector in general. The basic philosophy of the organisation is built on the assumption that the most proficient method to deal with ecological and natural threats is an introduction of participatory management of natural resources, effectuated by and for local people. It means that the two main objectives are to protect natural resources, but also to value them (community forests, protected marine areas), help local communities to find a way to effectively profit from them in a sustainable way. The implementation of various beneficial reuse of natural resources (moringa oleifera leaf powder, baobab fruit, hibiscus, honey, shellfish,...) can raise awareness about the need for sustainable resource management and may act positively in a process of development of local economy. Reflecting Senegalese socio-cultural context, NEBEDAY relies particularly on women and children.

During my stay in Senegal, the association was passing the phase of establishing itself in several geographical areas, among them even in the region of Toubaouta. Village of Toubaouta is situated in the region of Sine-Saloum delta, flourishing area full of mangroves and protected forests. The Delta with mangroves and autochthonous fish species was just recently inscribed in a list of UNESCO natural heritage areas.



Beauty of this area attracts many tourists and Toubaouta is well known as a touristic resort with several 'campements' (specific form of hotels which try to interconnect European comfort with 'romantic' local-style construction of the buildings). At the same time, the area is still characteristic by its remote, almost 'untouched' villages, living their daily lives without any dependence on the tourism industry, which slowly enters the Delta.

Area is ethnically heterogeneous and, being close to the border with Gambia, villages are often mixed, composed of at least two ethnic groups, one of them usually Peul (partially settled nomads, inhabitants of the majority of west African countries), the other often Serer (one of the largest ethnic groups in Senegal) or Malinke (majority of population in Gambia). This ethnical composition gives a specific shape to every single village in the area, concerning not only social aspects but as well the village economy and the strategy of management of resources.

In comparison with Kaolack, Delta is an attractive target for the activities of numerous NGOs (local and international), aiming to preserve local unic biosphere as well as to encourage local communities.

### Tasks

Since I joined a French volunteer who had been running the project for already one month before my arrival to Delta, I directly joined the activities which were planned and, in contrary to my stay in Kaolack, didn't have to do all the planification by myself. At the beginning of my stay in Toubacouta we organized a short plenary meeting where we met our local partners and together decided about work priorities for ending rainy period.

Our main aim became to profit from the rain and humidity in the soil and plant as many trees as possible in order to give them an opportunity to become stronger before the dry period starts and the chance for newly planted plants to survive becomes really low. Having this aim in our heads, we established a seed-plot where we regularly nursed a seeds of Moringa Oleifera, Nebeday. In the end, we were supposed to have some 3 000 of plants to be ready to be transported into villages where to be planted by their inhabitants. Unfortunately, there were no more than one month of rainy seesson left and, meeting some problems with inapt soil and insect attacs together with the time demanded for soil searching and 'mining' as well as for filling the nursery sacks, we got to the difficulties to reach our desired 3 000 plants. In the time of my



departure, we, in a group of four, prepared around 2 000 trees to be planted.

There are several reasons which lead us to the decision to plant Nebeday and I would like to list at least few of them. Firstly, in entire Senegal there is an alarming deforestation taking place since many years ago. Looking at the profile of landscape, there are practically no young trees in the savannah and the only trees which can be observed are baobabs or other solitary growing autochtonous

trees. This situation is caused by complex sequence of reasons. Among them, one of the most threatening is permanent tree cutting caused by demand for wood, used or directly as a fuel for cooking, or indirectly, for further transformation into coal. This activity lasts permanently since many decades, the demand is growing, the cutting is more and more intensive, however there is no an intentionally lead planting of new trees.

In addition to this, many people believe that planting new trees is a thread for water resources, since trees take water from the ground. Especially during the dry season (which lasts the majority of the year), water is scarce and the fear that trees might cause its lack is wide spread. One of our aims was to decompose this myth and together with people discuss the fact trees presence actually acts in contrary and helps to stop the desertification.

As already mentioned, when encouraging plantation of new trees, we put a special efort on the plantation of one specific tree, Moringa Oleifera. While organizing workshops in different remote villages, we spoke with people about benefits of planting this tree, among them especially about its modest cultivation (tree grows easily in all areas where the temperature doesn't fall under 16

degrees). Our main stress was, however, on an encouragement of the use of leafs of this tree, in different African countries usually called Nebeday (derived from English 'never die'). Dry leafs of this tree may be used as an effective dietary supplement, easily accessible and fully natural, being of any harm for the environment.

Organizing workshop in a team of three, we presented all the information in French, but, since the comprehension of French is not obvious every time, we tried to work in vernaculars. For this fact the composition of our group was essential. In fact we worked in trinom, where one of us was Senegalese. I consider the presence of our local colleague as an essential, his language skills, as well as his knowledge of local realities and ways to approach different village chiefs proved to be a base of successful cooperation with villages we worked with.



All the meetings were organized on the similar structure: at the beginning we met selected local authorities, who introduced us to the village. Then we organised a workshop, where the participants were usually mixed, males and females. At the beginning we approached the topic theoretically, explaining all the positive characteristics of the leafs and presenting the way they should be transformed in order to preserve the highest possible amount of all its vitamins and minerals. After this introduction, we usually interactively exchanged with people about their own experience with use of the leafs: sometimes they already used the leaves as a natural medicine stabilising high blood pressure or asthma. After this phase we usually continued the discussion and non-violently approached even other possible uses of leafs, stressing especially its potential to become a natural way to fight against children malnutrition, efficient and in contrary to other medicaments proposed in hospitals, accessible for free. Then the practical phase of the workshop started. Together with women we tried to transform leaves into powder and then implement the powder into the cuisine. All together we prepared traditional recipes slightly modified by added Moringa powder. Our aim was to

demonstrate that the meal with Moringa is very tasty and that the powder addition doesn't significantly change the taste of the dish. Another purpose of those workshops was to explicitly show how to use the powder and when exactly should be added in order to conserve all the nutrients it contains.

We presented our workshop in 7 villages surrounding Toubakouta (radius aprox.10 km), hoping the workshops being a start point of our cooperation with those villages. Initially, we offered to representants of every of those villages our support with planting new trees and we actually asked them if they plan to plant some of them. After some time we demaded their decision and in case they gave us exact number of plants they are able to plant, we co-organized transportation of the nurselings from our nursery to every village.

In phase which follows, the aim of NEBEDAY is to make a monitoring of new planted trees and effects their plantation brought to the villages. In addition, NEBEDAY would like to continue working with those villages in other domains of nature preservation (especially finding a way to act together in order to preserve a protected forest) and raws transformation (mangrove honey,...).

## Outcomes for the local community

In case of our work with NEBEDAY, outcomes brought to the community are easier to be visible than in case of the previous project. The plantation of new trees and appropriation of new theoretical and practical knowledge is what we did and evolved in collaboration with local communities and for this reason we strongly hope in its sustainability.

At the same time, the establishment of network of communes started and in the period of my departure, it seemed like the work on diverse projects with NEBEDAY will continue since people liked the approach NEBEDAY uses while working with them.

The positive aspect is even the fact that my French and Senegalese colleague stay in Toubakouta for much longer period than me. This allows them to follow what we started as well as to deepen the relations with every single village and figure out which kind of activities should NEBEDAY target and which domains to center its attention. In further perspective, local communities might be enforced and supported in activities which are convenient with their previous knowledge. Those practices should be then developed in sustainable way, recognizing a necessity to act sensitively to the environment.

## Personal outcomes

I appreciated an experience of work within NEBEDAY for many reasons. Because of my personal and study interest, I was glad for an opportunity to move from the city to the rural environment, since it gave me a possibility to understand the country and its society in larger complexity. As the important personal outcome I consider this experience of living the rural Senegal, share the same life conditions with local people. The fact we were moving from village to village taught me about the cultural diversity and richness of this region, about the specificity of every village.

From professional perspective, I learned to planify workshops and be very flexible when putting them into praxis. Through my colleagues and talk with local people I learned a lot about Senegalese natural heritage and the ways it might be preserved or revitalised. Since we lived in the forest, I had an opportunity to really touch all the plants and learn about their use in local medicine. Last but not least, I deepened my knowledge about the activities of 'groupements des femmes' and their importance in the life and development of this country.

I might list many and many things I learned during my stay in and around Toubakouta, concerning some negative aspects of European presence in the area, turistic or developmental. In general, however, I learned a lot about myself and appreciated an opportunity to work with a local person, which gave to entire project a direct reflection and stopped our inappropriate 'europeanising' tendencies, which would lead to the problems in putting our tasks into praxis.



## Conclusion

As mentioned in the initial part of this report, I would like to dedicate few words to the reflection and post-returinal phase. I consider those topics as very important, since they often don't appear into the thoughts earlier than some time after the arrival back home. This is why i would like to introduce them in this very end, in conclusion of this report.

Looking back to my internship, I have to admit that the 'learning phase' was not everytime easy

to pass. When being asked about how was my stay in Senegal, now, few months after my return, I usually answer that for me, this internship ment one of the strongest experieces I have experienced until now, and I found myself tending to highlight its positive aspects. In fact, however, my internship was much more than working stay abroad. Very often, I passed through crisis comming from certain segregation, the fact people treat me diferently than locals or frustration comming from the fact people ascribed me many characteristics I don't ascribe to myself, just because of the color of my skin, because of my European origin. Even though there were really many critical moments during my stay, in retrospective point of view I concider all of them being useful actors constructing my experience and now, with a time distance, I see their real importance.

While recalling memories and analysing them again, I feel more and more motivated to transform them into something what might be applicable here in Europe. My stay in Senegal and entire cycle gave me a will to actively continue with activities of global education and preparation of people who are getting ready for their departure to the countries of 'global south', and that's why I already joined few organizations dealing with those issues. Since I am very new in the field, I actually continue the learning phase which strated through GLEN, hoping to learn to share at least some transmissible part of my experience.

Without any doubts, GLEN broaden my horizons and gave me a perfect opportunity to develop personally as well as professionally, and I strongly hope, that my stay brought some enrichment even to people I met during my stay, without importance if being of personal or professional character.



**Attached pictures:**

**(p.1)** Fisherman boats, Joal, Senegal.

**(p.4)** Sara neighbourhood during the rainy season, Kaolack, Senegal.

**(p.6)** Painting on the school walls, school Same II, Kaolack, Senegal.

**(p.7)** Young mangroves in protected area, Toubacouta, Senegal.

**(p.8)** Nebeday seed-plot established behind our house, Toubacouta, Senegal.

**(p.9)** Wooden mortar after transformation of Nebeday leaves into powder, Toubacouta, Senegal.

**(p.10)** Nebeday leaves drying-preparation for workshop, Toubacouta, Senegal.

**(p.11)** Baye fall religious painting, Ile-de Goree, Dakar, Senegal.