

GLEN Internship Report

by Petr Nuska

Project:

***Empowering Young People Through Filmmaking
and Photography***



July - September 2016 // Nairobi (Kenya)

Host Organisation: *Mathare Youth Sport Association*

GLEN sending organization: *INEX-SDA (Czech Republic)*

Summary

This short report summarises Petr Nuska's GLEN internship carried out in the project Shootback run by Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) in Nairobi (Kenya) between July and September 2016. It consists of three sections: 1) Our work and involvement (consisting mostly of the information about MYSA, Shootback and about the work on the project and organisation of the internship); 2) Life in Nairobi (practical information about Nairobi); 3) Evaluation and Reflection (summing up the role of the internship in the process of personal global-learning). The report was structured as a short dictionary of the most crucial keywords in hope that it will be useful for the participants coming to the same place and/or a similar position.

Shrnutí

Tento report sumarizuje stáž Petra Nusky programu GLEN, která se odehrála mezi červencem a zářím 2016 v organizaci Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) v Nairobi na projektu Shootback. Report se skládá ze tří sekcí – 1) Our work and involvement, v níž je popsáno jak vypadala práce na projektu a organizace stáže, 2) Life in Nairobi, která obsahuje praktické informace o Nairobi a 3) Evaluation and Reflection, kde je shrnuta role stáže v procesu osobnostního růstu z perspektivy global learning. Report byl koncipován jako krátký slovník zásadních klíčových slov v naději, že bude užitečný pro účastníky stejného nebo podobného programu.

Introduction

Having read some GLEN reports for inspiration, I decided to structure my final report in a little different way - with more paragraphs and fewer words, almost as a vocabulary. I also decided not to mention facts and figures which are easy to find on the Internet; I will focus more on my personal experience. I hope that a report structure and content will be useful and accessible to those people who would potentially be interested in a similar internship or an internship in MYSA, in Nairobi or elsewhere in Kenya. I divided the report into three sections:

- 1) *Our Work and Involvement*
- 2) *Life in Nairobi*
- 3) *Evaluation and Reflection*

If you are seeking for the information about *Mathare United Sports Association (MYSA)*, about *Shootback*, about the content of my work, the organisational form of my internship, see especially the **section one**.

If you are seeking rather for the practical information and pieces of advice which will guide you through the most typical situation you may encounter in Nairobi, see the **section two**. I need to outline from the outset that this information is based upon my relatively short experience and its intention is not to write a touristic guide but rather a few notes from the perspective of a Nairobi-based internee which may help someone who is likely to go through similar situations.

Useful links:

If you are searching for the information about GLEN (*Global Education Network*), MTC (*Multipliers Training Cycle*) and its organisation, see the following links:

<http://glen-europe.org/>
<http://glen-europe.org/global-education/what-is-global-education/>
<http://glen-europe.org/about-glen/what-is-glen/>
<http://glen-europe.org/multipliers-training-cycle/how-to-apply-2/>

If you are searching for the information about MYSA, Shootback and MYFF, see the following links:

<http://www.mysakenya.org/>
<http://www.shootbackproject.org/about/>
<https://www.facebook.com/MYFFfilmfest/>

For more information about the Czech coordinator of the GLEN Internships, see the following link:

<https://www.inexsda.cz/cs/projekt/glen>

Section 1 – Our work and involvement

MYSA

From the organisational point of view, MYSA was well-prepared for the exchange in which I was participating. They have a long tradition in organising similar exchanges, not only with GLEN but also with several Norwegian youth associations. MYSA runs many projects with a huge impact (estimated to 40,000 youths every year), therefore, the organisation has a solid organisational basis and a strong management. During all our internship, I felt always warmly welcomed in the organisation. I also appreciated the fact that being a ↗**Muzungu** in MYSA is not that rare as in the rest of Nairobi, therefore, we did not catch so much attention which kept us focused on our tasks. Although MYSA focuses on sports activities and engagement of youth, it also runs several other projects, such as crime prevention, HIV prevention, youth-employability etc. ↗**Shootback**, which was a subject of our internship, is another example of such a project.

Shootback

The aim of Shootback project is to spread knowledge about photography, video-making, filmmaking and other skills related to audio-visual communication among youths and teach them how to use them in their lives, both for community-empowerment and professional work. The secondary aim of Shootback is to help MYSA with audio-visual part of public relation. In the time of my internship (i.e 2016), the project performed very well in both mentioned parts. The educational part had a form of regular workshops which were catching wide interest among youth around MYSA, therefore, it had a significant social impact in this field. Unfortunately, the continuation of the GLEN internship within Shootback ceased because of some personal issues of the Shootback management with MYSA management. Moreover, after the end of our internship, the Shootback manager Peter Ndolo resigned and decided to carry on with the activities under the umbrella of MYFF (i.e. Mathare International Film Festival). Altogether with him, many members of the Shootback moved towards MYFF. The continuity of the project itself seemed to me rather uncertain.

Our work and involvement

We (i.e. GLEN participants 2016, Petr Nuska and Kasia Rodacka) were dealing with the exact work which was proposed and defined in the internship proposal. Twice a week, we were organising workshops in *Mathare library* for a group of people (whose number of participants fluctuated from 7 to 15), once a week, we were doing a workshop in *MYSA headquarter in Komarock* (with approximately same number of participants) and once a week, we were doing a workshop for younger participants (i.e. 9-12 years-old) in *Mathare-North Library* (the group had between 20-30 participants). Occasionally, we were helping MYSA with taking photos for PR purposes (e.g. during football tournaments) or videos promoting MYSA projects. In our contract, our exact office time was stated, nevertheless, we were allowed to work as freelancers with fluid work time. We were also allowed to take some holiday (which I did not use at the end). As we

lived altogether with Shootback manager Peter Ndolo, we could prepare our work at home as well as discuss it quickly with Peter, which brought many advantages and made our work very effective. MYSA did not push us much into too much work and they gave us relatively a great amount of creative freedom which we finally use creatively, for instance, for brand-new project called **➤ Cinemanenoz.**

Cinemanenoz

The aim of the project was to create an online series of educational videos which would introduce to the audience basics of video making and filmmaking in Swahili (with additional English subtitles). We carried this out as our activity, independently on MYSA schedule. MYSA, nevertheless, contributed to this project with providing space and, later, with travel reimbursement for participants. I'm providing some basic information about the project as it was proposed to MYSA:

=> Project proposal

- **Summary of the proposal** - *Thanks to recent technical development in the area of digital video and film, availability of film equipment has stopped being a privilege of the commercial sphere and become affordable for everyone. Therefore, the film language has been democratised, liberalised and, among others, broadly used for empowerment of youth all around the world. It has been shown that young people after a basics course of digital filmmaking can create impressive documentaries, feature films, activist and educational films, music videos and so on; despite not having any previous background in filmmaking. In Kenya as well as other Swahili-speaking countries, however, a consistent introduction into the world of digital cinema, which would help to young people with the interest in video/filmmaking, has yet to come. The proposed project aims to fill this gap and create an introductory course which will give a basic overview for anyone who is interested in video/film with as few barriers as possible. That is the main reason why the language of the course will be Swahili.*
- **Target group** - *Young people between 15-29 years with interests in photography, video, film, media and communication, regardless their financial conditions. No previous background in the field is needed.*
- **Focus of the course** - *Course will be specifically organised with special regards on the affordability of the film equipment. The course will have a concentric structure, that is, with the first proposed series (see below) will be covered a basic line of the entire process of film production. If the project becomes successful, the continuation will be supplied through additional episodes, which will deepen the topics outlined in the first series. The course will focus especially on knowledge about:*
 - *Basic photography and cinematography skill (exposition, focal length, focal ratio, focusing, composition, framerate, lights etc.)*
 - *Specifics of digital imaging (resolution, compression, dynamic range, picture profiles etc.)*

- *Basic knowledge about digital sound*
- *Introduction into film production*
- *Introduction into film post-production*
- *Introduction into film distribution*
- *Ethical issues concerning video/filmmaking*

- ***Sustainability of the course*** - *The entire first series will be published by the end of September 2016. The production team will consist mainly of participants of the Shootback project so that various experience, age and gender will be cast in balance. The team will be supervised by GLEN Interns (Petr Nuska and Kasia Rodacka). Their task will be to educate a self-sufficient and sustainable team of people that can carry on with the project once the GLEN internship will be over. If this aim will be fulfilled, the team and the format can also be used for the popularisation of other MYSA projects and activities.*

- ***Contribution to MYSA*** - *MYSA can benefit from following aspects of the project.*
 - *The course might have a significant impact not just in Nairobi, but also in other parts of Kenya and, possibly, in other Swahili-speaking countries. As the course will be produced under the umbrella of MYSA-Shootback, it will contribute to general knowledge about MYSA and its perception in the eyes of general public.*
 - *MYSA will contribute to the empowerment of youth not just as a creating an innovative free-time activity, but also to general emancipation of youth which can lead to raising their voices and, consequently, enforce their impact on social change.*
 - *The course can also be a great educational material for the members of MYSA, in particular to members of the Communication department, the participants in Shootback workshop etc. It will also simplify the organisation of upcoming workshop (for instance, these people who miss a beginning of a course can be easily co-educated through the proposed course.*
 - *This course can also establish a new educational platform which can, if this project will be successful, become a new way of distributing knowledge about other MYSA projects.*
 - *The project might be evaluated as ambitious enough to get an additional external funding. This can help Communication department of MYSA with budgeting.*
 - *It can also have an impact on running the international projects and various exchange opportunities in the field of media and communication.*

=> Evaluation of the project – the realisation phase went smoothly and, by the end of our internship, the first episode was released altogether with websites, active Facebook profile, YouTube channel etc. (for more information, see <http://cinemanenoz.woreshack.cz>). It was also promised by MYSA representatives and Shootback members that they would try their best to carry on with the project. Nevertheless, due to personal changes in Shootback

(mentioned above), the continuity of the project did not go as smoothly as it was planned. I still hope for the best in the future but it seems to me that the project did not get sufficient amount of attention which it deserved. However, 10 episodes of Cinemanenoz was shot during our internship and the material is saved so I hope for using it later once the personal and conceptual situation in Shootback (or MYFF) will be stabilised.

Section 2 - Life in Nairobi

This section consists of the information which I found helpful for potential internee based in Nairobi. I wanted to stress out especially such information which were not present in touristic and other guides and which I, after all, found worth mentioning. I also need to say that all the information are based upon my relatively short experience of staying in Nairobi and, therefore, may contain some simplification or factual errors. I would be very happy if you let me know about these on e-mail, written at the end of the report.

Mzungu

Whether you like it or not, you are quite different from a usual inhabitant of Nairobi. You are a *mzungu* (Kiswahili – *a white, pl. Wazungu*) and you will hear this word really often. In the periphery and in the slums, where our job took place, it brings some specifics as well as some risks (see ↗ **Safety**).

“Safari-centrism”

You may be surprised how much Kenya (and especially Nairobi) differs from what you can read in touristic guides. For instance, in Nairobi, they do not accept dollars as they write in guides. They write that you can hardly be infected by malaria in Nairobi, but in fact, you can certainly be infected. Last but not least, you can eat for the prices mentioned in the guides, but you can also enjoy delicious meals for prices about ten times lower. This is caused by the *safari-centrism*, i.e. the fact, that vast majority of *wazungu* go to Kenya to see safari. There is nothing wrong with that, just be aware of the fact that information you read in the guides may differ from the reality.

Safety

Do not underestimate the question of your own safety. Especially for a ↗ **Mzungu**, there are certain specifics which should be constantly taken into account while you are in Nairobi. First of all, it is not advisable to walk on your own during the night time (which begin with the first dark – i.e. around 6 pm). For a longer distance at night, it's better to take a ↗ **Matatu**. It's also convenient to have a phone number to a taxi driver who you know and to whom you trust. If you still need to walk through Nairobi at night, avoid the dark and narrow street (even in the city centre). There are zones which are dangerous even during the daylight (Kayole, Korogocho, Kibera) and where there's better to avoid or (if necessary) to move around with a bigger group of Nairobi inhabitants. If you are unlucky, you may face up armed robbery. In this case, there's no room for playing a hero – simply give everything which you are asked for. Even the locals do so. In the city centre, you are likely to meet with a pocket thieves. Those I saw were young and wearing clothes as young gangsters. They love attacking in the crowd (which is not so rare in the city centre during rush hours) and as a *mzungu*, you are a very wanted target. The best advice is not to put any valuables into the top pocket of backpacks and always be aware of what is happening behind your back. If you are taking a camera along with you, put it into your backpack. If you are stacked in a traffic jam inside a *matatu*, be sure that your window is closed and rather do not show your phone. If you go to a

club, never stop watching your drink. Putting drugs into drinks is not rare and as a muzungu, you are more likely to be a target. Last but not least, keep asking the locals about the safety issue and never do things which they find dangerous themselves. They can certainly evaluate the situation better than you.

Finance and ATMs

As paying by card in Nairobi is still quite a rare option, the best way how to deal with finance is to withdraw cash from ATMs. They allow to withdraw up to 40,000 KSh. Always use the international ATMs. You can find these ATMs around big banks (e.g. Lloyd). If you are not sure about a particular ATM, ask the people around (there are very often members of bank-staff around the ATM). Also, try to hide your PIN code as you are typing as there are gangs in Nairobi which steals the information about debit cards. If you go to Nairobi with cash (e.g. in dollars) to be exchanged, check the current policy about exchanging notes. They may refuse to exchange notes older than 10 years etc. As soon as you leave the ATM with thousand notes, start changing your money. The Kenyan shilling is an interesting currency – especially in a way that its value change as you move throughout Nairobi. This brings an important need – always have a change, possibly of all values. Thousand notes can be changed just in the supermarkets and big shops. For ↗**Matatu**, even 200 KSh can be sometimes too much. So my advice is: always have as many different notes and coins as you can. It will make your life easier. There is also a cool thing called *MPesa*, which is a unique system for money-managing through cell-phones. You can pay by mPesa in shops, you can make small transactions etc., everything almost with no charge, without a need of having a bank account and debit card. All you need is your phone. It can have much practical use. For instance, imagine that you went for a trip to Mombasa and you lost all your money. For going back you need some cash. Luckily, there's mPesa, so you can just find a person you can trust and contact your host organisation. The money can be sent instantly over the phones and you can go ahead.

Matatu

Public transport in Nairobi does not work as the European are used to. No time schedules, no bus stops, just an ever-changing network of *matatus*. My first ride with a matatu made me sad because I got a feeling that I will not ever be able to travel through Nairobi independently on my own. There were too many companies and numbers driving to too many directions (sometimes being changed in the course of driving) and too few seats. I'm giving some pieces of advice which may help you for the beginning. First of all, have some change (see ↗**Finance and ATMs**). Also, be aware of the fact that fare-collector might be tempted by seeing a ↗**Muzungu** and try to play around with muzungu prices. In most cases, it's better to pay less at the beginning as the fare-collector will always ask you for adding more if necessary. On the other hand, if you pay more, you are taking a risk the he (rarely she) will be willing to "forget" to give your change back. Matatu drivers are typical Sheng speakers (see ↗**Sheng and other spoken languages**) so they might struggle with English. Therefore, it's handy to get know some basic Swahili phrases ("*Nashuka hapa!* – I'm getting of here. "*Unaenda Koma?*" – Are you heading to Komarock? "*Ni bei gani?*" – How much does it cost... etc.). Definitely, do learn local names of the places (they often differ

from the official names, they are abbreviated etc.). Try to avoid travelling at night as it might be dangerous (though it's ways safer than travelling on foot). Also, if there's any sign of rain coming, try to get on a matatu as soon as possible. During the rain, a journey which takes 45 minutes might take 4 hours. But don't worry, if you love loud music, party atmosphere and you don't mind a lack of space, you will enjoy even these 4 hours.

Sheng and other spoken languages

At the beginning of my internship, I took as a personal challenge to learn some basics of **Swahili**. Unfortunately, one would need more time to master it as it's a language with a very complicated structure (i.a. 13 noun-classes which determine agreements in verbs, adjectives, pronouns, numbers and other parts of a sentence). Though I honestly recommend learning Swahili as a free time activity which keeps your brain fresh and helps you to be more part of the context, you might be surprised that many Kenyans struggle with Kiswahili as you do. As far as I know, it's the least favourite subject in schools in which many pupils fail. That's because the **Sheng** is the actual language spoken in Nairobi. It is an ever-changing mix of **Swahili**, **English** and other ethnic African languages (Luo, Kikuyu etc.). It's also the language spoken by people around MUSA and the language that other people would speak to keep you in dark about what is the conversation about. You do not have to be stressed about that as there are many situations in which even Kenyans are not able to understand each other. The level of **English** is generally very high, I would say even higher than in central Europe. Children at the age around 10 who attend school can communicate so well that they can participate in educational workshops. People in their teens can already communicate in an advanced level of English so they understand even a more complicated content of workshops. In most of the communication situation in Nairobi, you can rely on English. Nevertheless, I strongly recommend learning a bit of Swahili as it allows you to be more in the context of Kenya.

Food and drinks

During your preparation, you may likely encounter comments such as "Oh, what are you gonna eat in Africa? You'll be starving!" Be aware of the fact that you will likely to face a different problem, i.e. how to eat and not to gain some weight. Nairobi is full of opportunities to get amazing food for very reasonable prices. In the city centre, you can choose from the broad selection of Kenyan (as well as Ethiopian, Somali and other) cuisine for the prices ranging from 250-500KSh. In the eastern parts of Nairobi, you will have an amazing dish for prices around 100KSh, in slums even around 40KSh (which is also delicious). I recommend traditional *omena* with *ugali*, *green grass* with *chapatti*, *pilau* with *masala spices*, sourdough-risen flatbread called *injera* from Ethiopian restaurants, camel meat from Somali restaurant and, last but not least, dense *soup bones* made exclusively from bones. Be careful with your teeth because some Kenyan dishes contain secretly hidden bones. As for the drinks, although Kenya is one of the biggest exporters of tea in the world, you will be surprised by the absence of *green tea* in Nairobi. You will find it on the shelves with luxurious goods in hypermarkets, moreover, being incredibly pricey. There's a similar situation with *coffee* (which is not that rare but it's super-pricey). If you are addicted to one of those things, you would better consider taking your own from home. Nevertheless, if you are a

lover of the *black tea*, Kenya is the country to be. You can find a 0.5kg of delicious and super-fine black tea for about 100 KSh. I also recommend *masala tea* which is very traditional in Kenya. If you invite your Kenyan friend for a cup of tea, don't forget to have some sugar at home.

Communication

Quality of the broad-band Internet connection in Nairobi very much depends on the particular provider. The connection in **MYSA** was very slow and unstable, on the other hand, there were certain places where one could rely on a good and stable connection. Probably the most reliable (though not the fastest) is the mobile Internet provided by Safaricom. It's used very widely and for very affordable prices. For instance, *Whatsapp* is extremely popular in Kenya. It's a convenient way of communicating with your students as well as managing creative projects and sharing the results of the work. Do not count much on Facebook as it did not have such a response [in 2016] amidst young people. Google drive and Google docs were not known at all. Also, count with the phenomenon of "*Hakuna umeme*" (meaning "*No electricity*"). Sometimes, it's a matter of few minutes which affect one locality but you may encounter all-country blackout which can even all day long. It's better to be aware of this and be as independent on the electricity as possible.

Section 3 – Evaluation and reflection

Luckily for the reader (as I would need to write hundred of pages more)), the report concerns only the evaluation of the internship, not the evaluation of the cycle itself, therefore, I will not reflect the whole educational cycle but just the role of the internship in it.

I need to admit that when I was joining GLEN, I did not have many ideas about Global Education and Global learning. I was caught by the topic of my internship rather than the GLEN itself. During the process of Multipliers cycle, however, I have got involved in the principles of GLEN and some months after my internship, I decided to apply for a position of a tutor within the GLEN Anglo group in order to continue with the process of my own global learning. From this perspective, the internship played a crucial role; as if it was a lure which caught my attention and raised curiosity about GLEN and global education itself. Despite the fact that I still have many concerns about the structural position of the internship and preparedness of participants to the internship after 2 MTS, I found the role of internship in my learning process as crucial as it helped me to see global interdependencies and power-structures on my own eyes. It also raised many questions which lead to the decision to become a tutor and continue with self-education within the global-educational frame. Though GLEN MTC would make sense even without the internship, I am glad that my MTC was enriched with the internship phase and helped me to complete my learning process.

Acknowledgement

Here, I would love to thank you to the team of MTS' organisers which did their best to prepare me for this task, to INEX-SDA which always provided me with amazing support with organisational and administration part of my internship and, last but not least, to my great tandem partner Kasia Rodacka with whom I was able to share all my concerns and joy throughout the cycle. Thank you.

Contact information

Please, do not hesitate to contact for more information related to the internship.

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