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As I stepped off the plane in the Ghanaian capital city of Accra, I knew right away that I was in for an adventure. I had entered a completely different world, one where traffic laws rarely exist, women carry goods from the markets in large bags on their heads, and chickens and goats roam the streets freely. After a couple days exploring all that Accra has to offer, I started getting used to this brand new world. However, my journey did not fully begin until a few days later, when I arrived in the village of Sokode-Etoe in the Volta Region, about two hours north of Accra. This place would be my home for the next two months, and I had no idea what to expect. All I knew was that I was excited to get started.

Getting used to village life was difficult at first. I had to adjust very quickly to certain “perks” of living in a Ghanaian village, such as waking up to the roosters’ crows at five thirty in the morning, taking cold showers, and dealing with constant heat and humidity. It took a few weeks to get used to all the differences, but soon enough I started to see all the wonderful things about this new culture. Everyone in Sokode was so incredibly friendly and hospitable, and I soon began to feel very comfortable in my new home. I refused to let the culture shock cripple me, and as a result, I was able to open my mind up to this incredible new world. Furthermore, the Volta Region is one of the most beautiful places in the world, in my opinion. When I had free time on the weekends, I made sure to travel around and visit as many places in Ghana as I could.

My primary work while I was in Ghana was teaching English to junior high school students at the local Sokode Elementary and J.H. School. I had expected to have 3-5 days of observing at the school before I taught, but Dan, the headmaster of the school, wanted me to start right away. Thus, after only observing one class being taught, I began teaching an entire class of

45 Ghanaian junior high students myself. I was admittedly a little terrified standing in front of these students, feeling very vulnerable and out of my comfort zone. That being said, this is what I came to Ghana to do, so I jumped right in and began teaching English.

The students had a textbook that they had been using throughout the year, so I figured I would use the lessons from the book as the curriculum for the class. However, I soon realized that the English ability of many of my students was sub-par and thus I had to improvise my teaching methods a little bit. I spent the first couple weeks re-teaching some basic English skills before I felt comfortable enough to move onto broader concepts. I really had to be on my toes and adapt in order to be a successful teacher to these students.

The other major challenge that I ran into while teaching was the language barrier. Although English is the national language of Ghana, most people speak local languages. In Ghana's Volta Region, the people there communicate with a language called Ewe, which is nothing like English. Therefore, I was really teaching a foreign language, which added another level of difficulty to my job. What helped me get through these challenges was meeting with the kids after school and talking with them (in very limited English) about Ghana and America, all the while realizing that these students were not all that different from American kids.

Around the third or fourth week in July, the Junior High School at Sokode vacated for the rest of the summer until September. Therefore, I started working with an NGO in Ho for the remaining three weeks of my internship. The NGO was called Progressive Youth and Community Development (PROYCOD), and they worked in the field of agribusiness, helping local farmers in the Volta Region become more business-minded with their farming.

For three weeks, I got to observe the inner workings of an NGO. I would travel with Susan, the PROYCOD project manager, on multiple occasions to visit with various groups of

rural farmers across the Volta Region. Susan would teach these farmers basic lessons in economics as well as develop relationships between the farmers and the various businesses willing to buy their crops. All this was done in order to teach the farmers that farming can be an industry rather than a job to simply sustain their village. It was so rewarding to see firsthand how this NGO is able to help real people.

The one challenge with which I was faced the most while working with PROYCOD was “Ghana time.” Most Ghanaians do not follow a strict schedule; rather, they do things when they can. It is not considered rude at all to show up somewhere two hours late. This happened all the time with PROYCOD. It would have bothered me, but after being in Ghana for over six weeks at that point, I had learned all about “Ghana time.” Teachers at the school in Sokode would start class late, run their classes over the designated time period, or simply show up to school late or not at all. I learned quickly to always have a book with me, because sometime during the course of the day, I was bound to be waiting for someone.

Nevertheless, the experience with PROYCOD was incredible. I started off knowing nothing about NGOs or about agribusiness, and I now have much more appreciation for economics and business. I only wish I had more time to work with PROYCOD, that way, I could have probably done some more work rather than just observing. Overall, however, I have no regrets about my time spent in Ghana. Through my work as an English teacher as well as observing an agribusiness NGO, I learned so much not only about this fascinating country but also about myself in the process. There were many difficult challenges I had to face while living and working in rural Ghana, but I have come to realize that the difficulties were, in fact, the most rewarding parts of this experience.