

LIZHUANG TEACHING PROGRAM - 2017

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

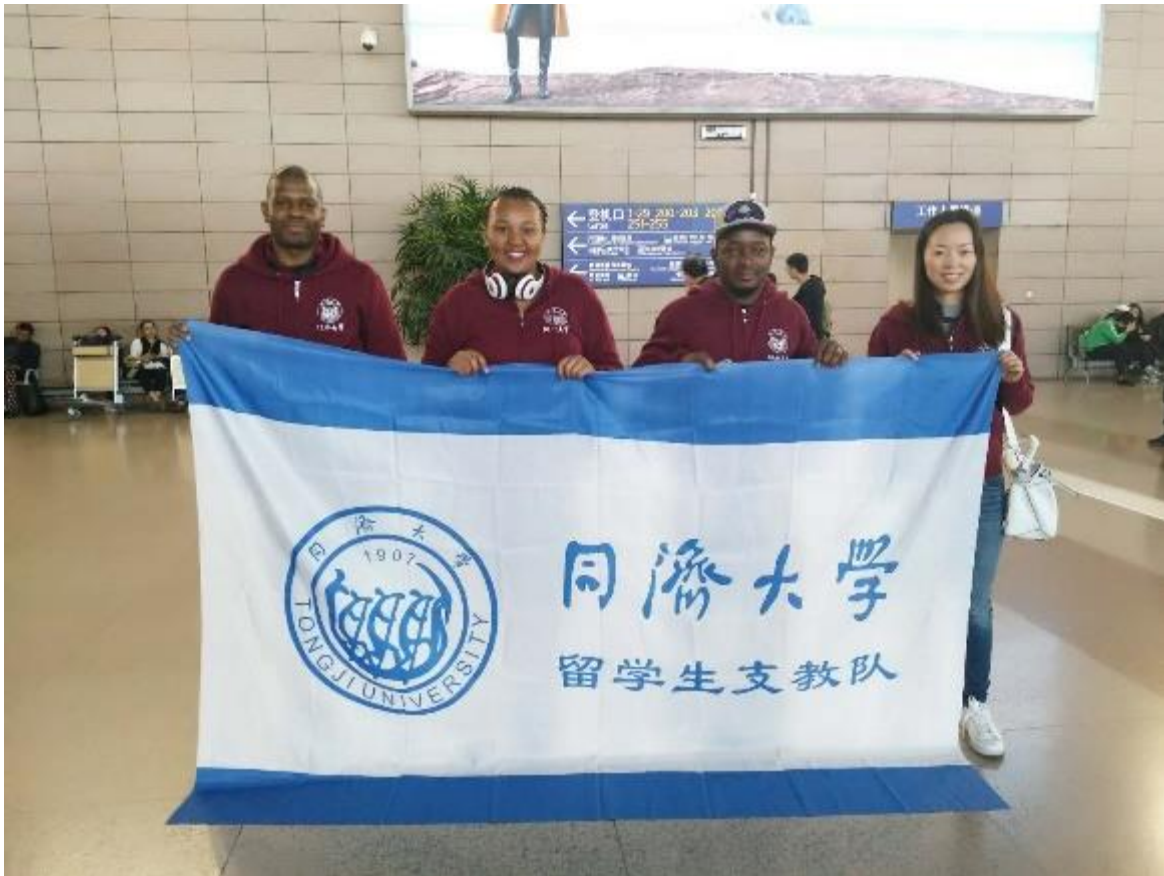
“Alone we are nothing, but together we make the difference. We may not heal the pains that exist in the world but surely we can leave a better world for other people. “

No better sentence can be used to begin this report because this sentence describe exactly the feeling I have experienced recently.

From November 6th to November 19th has elapsed the first long time duration volunteer teaching program to Lizhuang Secondary School conducted by foreign students. The volunteer team was composed by three students. Joaquim Minusse Tchamo from Mozambique, master student of Civil Engineering, Anne Wambui Mumbi from Kenya and Fadina Kolade Setondji Justin from Benin, both master student of Environmental Engineering. We have performed different activities over the two weeks that the program lasted from sports to music class. However this summary focuses on those activities that I have done, the impression I got of the whole program and suggests some ideas to improve the future programs.

The trip going to Lizhuang and the well come reception

The trip from Shanghai to Lizhuang was very pleasant and was a good opportunity to the volunteer team and the program coordinator (that spent few days with us) get connected. A lot of talk and smiles filled out the approximately four 4 hours flying and 45 minutes driving to get in Lizhuang. Arriving there we were greeted with a warm welcome from the local teachers and the volunteers living there. That was the first moment of the many emotions that would still come for the following days.



Accommodation

The accommodation was such experience. During 12 days we could enjoy the wonderful view of the Yangtze River and the mountains throw the window of the hotel. An impressive contrast between the exterior old architecture facade and the interior modern and luxurious hotel caught our attention.





Activities developed

During those days the main activity was to interact with the students teaching and practicing with them the English language. Two modes were used to for this purpose. The first one consisted of the “English Corner”, a 45 minutes open class where a free open conversation between the teacher and the students take place. For this classes I have prepared some basic topics such as: the professions that each student would like to follow in the future, the hobbies of each student, some tips to become a good student and other simple topics. These classes have propitiated a greater approximation between the students and us (foreign volunteer teachers).

Due to the great inflow of the students to this class to in first day, the following classes had to be divided into groups of 20 people in maximum to allow a better communication among us. After few days the result of this activity began to be notorious as some students have already felt free to express their ideas in English without felling shy even though with some difficulty.



The second mode used to teach them consisted in It consisted of attending classes given by their English teachers and making a summary in the last 15 to 20 minutes interacting with students



about the class given. This method showed to be also effective because the students became more talk activity during their normal English class.

In addition to those English classes two joint lectures was given to the students. The first one was





presented by Anne Wambui Mumbi and Fadina Kolade Setondji Justin. It was given to approximately 50 students and it focused on Kenya and Benin culture. The second one given to approximately 200 students was presented by all of us and focused on Kenya, Benin and Mozambique. Although we have prepared the lectures to take no more than 80 minutes the reality was far different. Due to the interest of the students about our countries and our cultures 2 hours were not enough to answer all the questions presented by the audience. There is no doubt that those lectures were some of the most striking points of the program.

The free times

We also had the opportunity to enjoy some free time in Lizhuang. In a trip organized by the Lizhuang Secondary school we spent one day during the first weekend enjoying the wonderful view of the forest of bamboos. Thousands of bamboos planted in the mountains at an altitude of approximately 700 meters gave a touch of magic to our day. A boat ride where we row by ourselves having a lot of funny and a delicious food served in a place among the bamboos were also part of the trip. We really appreciated the trip.





Out of the trip we also spent some of our free time in the hotel, talking and playing games, cooking and eating. Those moments gave us the opportunity to know each other once before the program we did not know each other. Thanks to this program now we established solid relation between people from 4 different countries: Kenya, Benin, Mozambique and China.

Conclusion and recommendations

Analyzing all points mentioned here it should be assumed that the program was a success in the extent that it was possible to achieve all the points defined when planning the program. Yet

through this program it was possible to establish the communication between the secondary students, the foreign volunteer teachers and the local Chinese teachers proportionating the students the opportunity to open a new window in their minds leading them to have more interest about the world overseas, different countries and different cultures. It is important to mention that we also gain a lot with this experience. We have learned a lot about the Lizhuang village preserved up to date with its historic characteristics and cultural aspects. We also learned about the history of Tongji University during the hardy times of the war and the fundamental role played by Lizhuang Secondary School at that time.

Although the success achieved in this program I would like to leave some recommendations to improve the future programs:

- A better programming of all the activities to be developed (in detail) to maximize the time;
- Extension of the time of the lectures to allow more participation of the students, last time limited by time issues;
- Selecting the best period of the year (with no exams) to allow a more effective activity exchange between the students, the foreign volunteer teachers and the local Chinese teachers.

In conclusion I would like to express my most sincere thanks to Tongji University and Lizhuang Secondary School to give us this opportunity to spend such memorable times with those students. Extend further thanks to the Chinese volunteer teachers that gave us a lot of support and finally to the other member of the foreign volunteer teachers for their commitment and effort that culminated with the success of the whole program. To all of them thank you very much.



