



LIZHUANG TEACHING PROGRAM REPORT

Date: 6/11/17 - 19/11/17

Location: Lizhuang Sichuan Province

Volunteers:

1. Anne Wambui Mumbi (Kenya)
2. Fadina Kolade Setondji Justin (Benin,)
3. Joaquim Minusse Tchamo (Mozambique.)

Presented by: Anne Wambui Mumbi

LIZHUANG THROUGH MY EYES!

The trip began on 6th November where the trio Anne Wambui, Justin Kolade and Tchamo Joaquim began the journey of departure headed to Pudong airport. Excited yet anxious on what awaited us. We had an idea of what awaited us but it felt more like the anxiety would disappear once we arrived. All packed up and ready for the journey we left our “home “ready to meet our new home that would be for two weeks. Briefed and well equipped as there had been ample preparation before the D-day arrived. Suited in uniforms with our luggage tailored to suit the aircrafts requirements we were ready for the journey to begin!



We were in uniforms and were keen to carry our flag that served as the official emblem of the programme. Aboard the airplane a quick nap was necessary to savor the energy that was to be dispatched during the programme.

Our arrival

Within no time we arrived received by the timely team that eagerly awaited us on arrival to Lizhuang we were met by a team of lively staff and volunteers who were to be our acquaintances for the remainder of the trip. We were escorted to our beautiful hotel that would be our home for the time.

Walking along the narrow long street of Lizhuang keen to notice the ancient architecture from the buildings that were lined along the street with the famous ancient Chinese architecture up for display and the marvelous stone path well laid in old bricks bringing forth the ancient feeling. We passed by the famed Tongji Street, and Tongji square sites named after the Tongji University. Keen to understand the reason behind the names, we inquired: and our "tour guide" knowledgeably explained the infamous history behind the great relationship between Lizhuang town and Tongji University (in summary; Lizhuang served as a shelter for Tongji University students; during the warring times as they were looking for a place to settle since then it has been



a longtime friendship and relationship that has stood the test of time!) This was a good moment for us to engage in small talk with the volunteers as well as our hosts as we briskly walked to our hotel. Upon check in and room allocation it was time to retire to bed and plan for our day and stay at the place. After the scrumptious delightful dinner that savored our tastes buds with the finest of Lizhuang food.

Our “home” the adage ‘old is gold’ was well upheld to its point here. The rooms were a perfect combination of the old ancient style decor with a moderate touch of modern-day style all bending to one beautiful room just behind the famous Yangtze River leaving a sight to behold. (Everyday I spent 10 minutes) staring at the beautiful view.



EXPLORING LIZHUANG

The next day involved a private tour of the place along with our own tour guide (must add it felt like royalty) we visited the places most famous unique sceneries ranging from the museum that was quite educative to the temples, the old streets as well as the areas pride this all enlightened us on the area. As we understood the history of the area.

Food in Lizhuang

There is the joke we had of local people and among us Justin was local people, Tchamo was 50/50 local people, well you guessed it I was nowhere near local people! The rating scale? You may ask, it was the spice in the food! Lizhuang people are known to eat lots of spicy food and I am not talking your average day spicy food I am talking 100 in a scale of 1-100. The food there is hoooooot literally hot you cry when you eat it, so yes I was not local enough to even dare the spicy food my colleagues on the other hand performed better in this category. To my rescue the

host was kind enough to order less spicy food (to me it was still too hot) and when that failed no spicy food was served.



(A food vendor skillfully cuts the renowned white pork into thin slices)

Fire noodles for breakfast

My typical breakfast is simply hot tea, a fruit, cereal and or bread. Well in Sichuan that is a thought far-fetched, there is the fire noodle that we surprisingly enjoyed well known in the area



(Tchamo and Justin enjoy the fire noodles for breakfast)

Meeting with the teachers

As the plan would be we met with our partners in action personally the music teacher over lunch with whom we went over the details of our plan to my amazement and delight she let me steer the programme as we discussed with her what I had in mind and we agreed on a structure that involved the timings, and classes.

The three whites!

This was over a meal where the previously emphasized signature dishes were served hot for us! the three whites, white cake, white pork and white wine (not to worry the wine was not served at this point -we had an agenda to accomplish) we enjoyed the famous white cake as well as the yellow cakes that were nowhere short of disappointment as they made my taste buds dance in delight .

Meeting the leaders.

News spread like wild fire that there were new guests in town and the leaders did not hesitate to pay us courtesy calls, they came to welcome us. We had the pleasure of meeting the education leaders over fine diner as we enjoyed the pleasantries that were in plenty. I might add we tried the white wine (at this point i would like to add that it's called white for a reason and no it doesn't taste like your normal day wine but it is rather strong and a sip was enough to make me stop taking it. well maybe I do not know much about wine but from the guy sited next to me a "sommelier" said it was the finest wine he had tasted so far)



(Meeting the education leader who paid us a courtesy visit in school at the head teachers office)

Meeting the students

This is a day I think will remain imprinted in me. we were hoping to meet the students for the first time and no sooner had we entered the School gate than the frenzy started ... the school was in one song "hello " students clapping, waving from the balconies in amusement, and very joyful ready for our interaction those brave enough and nit patient could not wait anymore and came to meet us and greeted us joyfully. As we went up the staircase to the English corner a group of students followed us up the stairs shouting and cheering in amusement. (You know one of those superstar moments where everything feels like it's on slow motion and all eyes are on you.) that is how the moment felt, as if that was not enough the lucky selected few who could fit the huge classroom clapped and went wild as we entered the class room (I might add again -the slow motion feeling came in again) the students stared in amusement, and even rushed to hug us when we smiled back it was like a mirror a set of teeth from young cute faces met us back. After introducing ourselves and briefly interacting with the students the rushed in to ask for signatures and autographs on their books, cups, t-shirts, etc. The whole experience was surreal.





Signing the students books after they met us for the first time

TEACHING MUSIC

I was in charge of Music: I do not have the vocals of Beyoncé or Justin Bieber but with the unique voice I have I can sing and deliver music fundamentals. As the music teacher for the two weeks, we majorly focused on teaching elements of African music that involved the instruments, types of African Music genres, famous African musicians as well as the famous African clock dance that we ended up dancing. Music classes were scheduled for forty minutes where we had classes every Thursday and Friday every from 3.20 pm -4.00 pm, 4.10 pm -5.00 pm and 11.20 am -12.00, respectively. English corner sessions were every day from 5.00 pm to 6.00 pm in the schools music room. Later on the music club students took the initiative to extend the class in the music room. I had my first serenade by one talented young man who dedicated a song to me as he played the piano as we all listened. The tunes were well coordinated to produce magnificent music that was melody to our ears, with a well displayed amount of talent that was with no doubt out of this world.









Joint Lectures

During our stay we delivered joint lectures to the students; it involved showing the students our local and our home countries all in an effort to appreciate diversity as well as enlighten them on our home towns. This was followed by a Q&A section that involved the students asking questions about the presentation as well as other general questions. This was scheduled in two parts: (Middle school and high school- tailored differently to suit the audience) A memorable moment was when one of the student asked about the heat levels in Africa. Contrary to popular imagination and belief Africa is not all hot as some countries especially around the equator tend to enjoy perfect weather. This among other biases were discussed leaving the students more enlightened.





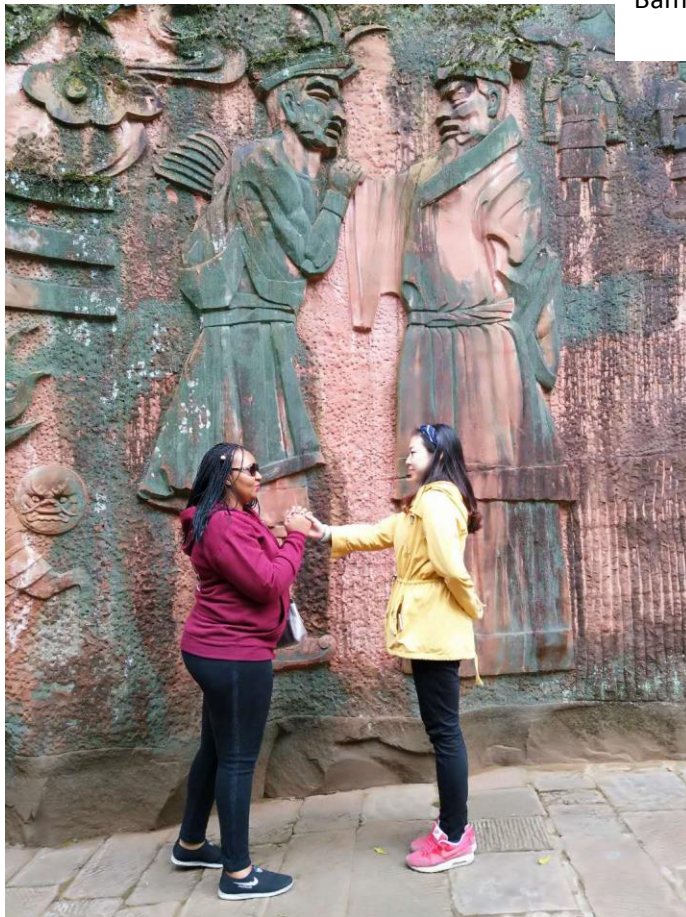


Teacher's day out

Lizhuang is located in Sichuan province a very big province. After we had seen all that Lizhuang town had to offer we had a trip to the Shunan bamboo sea where we spent the whole afternoon enjoying what Mother Nature had to offer. From the vast bamboos that formed an arch along the curvy road up the mountain, forming a dense forest full of long thin bamboo sticks that were a sight to behold and awed us as the driver tactfully meandered through the zig zag road up the mountain area. We took long walks deep in the bamboo forest as we appreciated the scenic panoramic view that were out for display. Our counterparts quite nourished with the Chinese culture took it upon themselves to explain the ancient Chinese history of the dynasties tales that were curved along the rocks and caves as we explored. Quite memorable was a tactic of fleeing from the enemy where a large rock was tactfully curved showing a group of people fleeing on their horses and our “guides “ explained that in the case of a war where the enemy is strong and you do not stand a fighting chance fleeing is the better option. Upon vising the area we also had a chance to practice our rowing tactics as we rowed a boat along the area to explore the area on the bamboo made floating boat. All these then left us with no energy as we retreated to enjoy the areas food before we went back “home”



Bamboos form an arch along the road



Imitating the leaders sculpted on the walls.
(Summer and Anne)

Bamboo is highly used in the area and you can imagine our amusement when we saw it used to create a baby carrier that was quite popular in the area.





Some photos of the trip we had exploring the area.

Lunch time nap!

You can imagine my awe when I was taken around the dormitories and found the students taking afternoon naps. Okay let me break it down for you, all my life I have known that hard work pays but when it involves studying until midnight to wake up at 6a.m well that left me filled with wonder. The study system here is different students will break at lunch hour for a quick meal followed by a nice afternoon rest for about two hours then resume classes, only to reunite with their beds a midnight and get up at 6am. This explained a lot in my mind as mostly I would find

my Chinese counterparts take longer lunch breaks and some even confess to having come from sleeping when we met after lunch.

Words are better said in writing!

Sadly whatever has a beginning has an end. The pleasant stay was coming to an end, and we had to say our goodbyes to what had become our family. This was followed by a photo session in both the schools. It was a teary affair as some students were emotional and did not could not believe we were leaving. It was time to say good bye. To my surprise the student took time to write letters and even attached some gifts to the letters. Upon reading the letters I must add that they were quite expressive and touching. The last day involved a group dinner where the educational leader took time to see us off as we again enjoyed the delicious specialties in a hot



pot set up that left us fully satisfied. We were picked and dropped to the airport as we were gifted some of Sichuan's delicacies for us to take home and enjoy as well as share with our friends



(The students present us letters and gifts the made; quite a special moment)

Lizhuang Sick!

As mentioned earlier I had a majestic view of the Yangtze River from my room, something I appreciated every morning as I had my cup of tea just staring at the priceless gift Mother Nature had bestowed upon us. You can imagine my disappointment after waking up in Shanghai, with only old trees swinging their large branches around as the old group of women sang their usual morning song. There was no more joyful chatters and cheers from the beautiful souls in

Lizhuang welcoming me wherever I went, no more signing autographs and the royal treatment was gone.

The experience was invaluable, it left a mark in my heart as I have fond memories of affection that I shall cherish and forever hold dear.



(A photo with some of the students whom Justin taught football lessons in junior school)

Recommendation for the programme

Throughout the two weeks we had a great time and in my opinion this is a programme that should definitely be continued. If possible making the programme longer would be necessary; maybe up to three months to make it more comprehensive. A goal for the programme would also be necessary in this case where the month programme would be aiming to achieve a specific goal and objective with measurable results. Lizhuang is a beautiful peaceful place full of peace and serenity that should definitely be a must visit area for anyone willing to experience a Chinese culture.



To the amazing teachers of Lizhuang middle school and High school, the various leaders who took the time to visit us, the volunteers who took their time to guide us and assist us, the cooks who made sure we had enough and delicious food, the teachers whom we assisted and of course Tongji university my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of this amazing programme.