

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAM – THE GAMBIA

Program Objective

The overall objective of the program is to bring young American under graduate/ graduate students as need be to the Gambia in West Africa to gain a complete understanding of African Culture, rural community programs in an African setting combined with an academic frame work geared towards cultural exploration / International Development. The program perspective will focus on the realities of achieving the millennium development goals in a developing country like the Gambia; it shall also involve community service learning programs geared towards environmental related issues. It also covers visits to historical sites like Juffureh Village / James Island in the Gambia and Goree Island in neighboring Senegal.

Students are expected to gain credit for their work which will be done involve lectures some at the University of the Gambia, and other cross cultural lectures that will be put together by the site coordinator as shown in the program outline(also the programs can be customized to suit the objective of the visiting institutions / organization needs). The program can vary from two weeks to a month or a complete semester session (fall, spring or summer). It should be noted that the Gambia has two seasons namely a dry season between late September to April / May and a short rainy season from around June to early September. However due to various global climatic changes sometimes you sparingly rain fall when you least expect it.

It is expected that the proposed outlined can be streamlined and set up accordingly with proposed collaborations between the visiting institutions / organizations and Host Site Coordinator. Flights to Gambia can be via Brussels through any Major American Airline or via London using Gambia Experience Airline from London Gatwick to the Gambia.

Country Profile

The Gambia is a very peaceful country, the American Peace Corps established to send young Americans overseas for voluntary service by the Late President J F Kennedy has been in the Gambia since the 60's so it shows how stable the Gambia is, over 60 American volunteers through the Peace Corps are regularly in the Gambia and serve for a period of 2 years some more in Education, ICT, Health and the agro forestry sector.

The Gambia YMCA which shall be an operational base of the program regularly host volunteers from Europe and the USA through our various YMCA partners in Sweden, Finland, England and Go Global of the International YMCA of New York.

It also collaborates presently with two American universities who send students every year for exchange programs in the Gambia at the University of the Gambia, these students use the YMCA facility for email and also serve as interns at the YMCA Computer Training Centre and digital studio, namely from Juanita College in Pennsylvania and St Mary's College in Maryland.

The Gambia YMCA is also widely involved in youth exchange programs with YMCA The International YMCA of New York, Global Teens program, Hove YMCA, Hove, United Kingdom and the YMCA of Finland

The Gambia receives over 100,000 tourist mainly from Europe between October to April Winter season this shows how stable it is, over 400 NGO's and International organizations are present in the Gambia including all main United Nations agencies namely UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, WFP, FAO etc operate too in the Gambia, and The African Union Human Rights head office is the Gambia and also the numerous Human Rights institutes operate from here. Notably the Institute of Human Rights and Development in Africa.

The Gambia presently has four main tertiary institutions namely

1. Namely the Gambia College (responsible for teacher Training at Primary Teacher Certificate Level and Higher Teachers Certificate Level).
2. Gambia Technical Training Institute (responsible for Training Engineering, constructions engineers, some accounting programs and ICT program up to Higher Diploma programs, and in some cases a BSC in Construction and Design engineering via a university in Canada.
3. The Management Development Institute (set up primarily to train government personnel on various management courses, offers numerous courses in management, gender studies and accounting to young people and organizations.
4. The University of the Gambia, which is less than ten years old has a strong history program, and offers studies with credit to visiting exchange students already from St Mary's College Maryland and Juanita College.

The country also has other non governmental organizations, like Concern Universal, Action Aid who support various millennium development goals related projects country wide

The country is regarded as one of the most politically stable and peaceful in Africa. Known for the warmth of its citizenry to visitors visiting the Gambia. The Gambia dalasis has over the months continuously appreciated against the United States dollars it is approximately 18.50 GMD(Gambian Dalasis) to 1.00USD (United States Dollars)

Brief Background Information of the Gambia YMCAs

The Gambia YMCAs since 1979 has been involved of youth related and development activities since its existence in the Gambia since 1979. The overall aim of the Gambia YMCAs is to continue to help develop the potentials of our youths so that they will be empowered with the necessary skill to be able to live and operate in a global context underlining the total emphasis of our mission.

The Gambia YMCA is also a member of the Association of Non – Governmental Organization (TANGO), The Gambia, Christian Council, the National Youth Council of the Department of State for Youths, Sports and Culture and the Agency for Non - Governmental Affairs of the Department of State for Lands and Local Government in The Gambia.

It is also a member of the Africa Alliance of YMCAs with Head quarters in Kenya and the World Alliance of YMCAs with Head quarters in Switzerland. It has several partnerships

with sister YMCAs in Europe, the United States and other local partnership with Peace Corps the Gambia and some other International and national agencies operating in country.

The Mission is to advocate for and create opportunities for the development of the potentials of young people and to render services that would enhance the development of their mind, body and spirit, and to bring about an improved quality of life in their faith, make them responsible and productive citizens in their communities and to strive to develop a sustainable and strong financial base, with a broad membership involving people, irrespective of their faith, age, sex, race and social conditions.

The Gambia YMCAs Program of Activities includes the following:-

- ❑ Computer Training Centre & Digital Studio/ School of Business & Management Studies
- ❑ Vocational Education / Junior School
- ❑ Adolescent Reproductive Health Unit
- ❑ Youth Enterprise Project (Funded project by the British Lottery Fund in collaboration with Y Care International, England.)
- ❑ Community / Gender Development
- ❑ Sports (Basketball)
- ❑ Hostel / Canteen Facilities
- ❑ Branches
- ❑ Projects with partnering YMCAs and other agencies

The Gambia YMCA offers tertiary training to diploma level in Business and Information Communication Technology through the Cambridge International Examinations (www.cie.org.uk). It also offers customized IT related training to teachers through the World Links program, other IT and project management training to governmental agencies, organization like the Medical Research Council field offices in the Gambia, and other sister NGO's. The Gambia YMCA is also involved in Skill development programs for unskilled youths through a funding from the British Lottery Fund, whereby disadvantaged youths all over the country are been provided skills.

Profile Educational / Cultural Program Site Coordinator the Gambia

Poncelet O. Ileleji MBCS is the Site Coordinator for the program, A Computer Scientist by profession he has over 13 years experience in International Development as Coordinator for the Gambia YMCA Computer Training Centre, Digital Studio and School of Business and Management Studies. His role in the Gambia YMCA also sees him coordinating all International internship and volunteer programs of visiting interns and volunteers from abroad and the Gambia YMCA sports program. He served as an International Coordinator in 2005 for The International YMCA of New York, Camp Counselors program, and regularly organizers youth International exchange programs for visiting youths from the YMCA of Hove, Finnish YMCA and The Global Teens program of the International YMCA of New York. He has attended several conferences and presented several papers on ICT and development issues focusing on sub – Saharan Africa.

Some of his activities he is involved include the following:-

- ♦ Country Coordinator, The World Links Program in the Gambia (www.world-links.org)
- ♦ He is a member of the Gambian Peace Corps Education Project Advisory Group
- ♦ Country Coordinator: School Net Africa in Gambia (www.schoolnetafrika.org) and also their flag ship programs (Global Teenage project and Mandan Afrika pogram).

- ♦ Visiting Lecturer on Programming and Information Processing at THE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE – THE GAMBIA (MDI)

- ♦ Visiting Lecturer: Jollof Tutors, the Gambia – On Internet System Development and Managing System Change.

- ♦ World Summit Award Expert panel for Gambia: - <http://www.wsis-award.org/content/expertpanel.htm>

- ♦ Founding Member: Information Technology Association of the Gambia (www.itag.gm)
- ♦ Member British Computer Society (www.bcs.org.uk)

Educational / Cultural Program activity outline

The last page contains a brief program activity outline; this program outline excludes academic programs activity or symposiums / welcome and send off dinners.

It basically contains essentials components that will take place during the International Cultural Exchange program with ideas of prices per person.

Other important components to note:

1. A Semester at the University of the Gambia for International Students cost about USD2000, the university is non residential and students move around various facilities for classes. Courses students are expected to take include History and International Development and a proposed course outline on African Human Rights can be added too.
2. Local daily transport cost about USD2 a day.
3. In cases where we have to rent a bus for a day for road trips, it is approximately USD50 to USD150 per day depending on distance being covered etc.
4. Meals cost from USD2 to USD25 depending on where you eat.
5. Site Coordination fee is not included, as this will depend on duration of program.
6. Other contingencies / logistics can be discussed in detail as this is basically a draft program itinerary of possibilities.

Program activity outline and cost

Item	Description	Cost per Unit (USD)	Total Cost (USD)
Accommodation	Students / Supervisors can stay in the Friendship Hostel which is owned by the Gambia Stadium management, it has a Swimming, Lawn Tennis Court and Gym and other sporting infrastructure. They can also stay at the Gambia YMCA Hostel which is self contained too. Supervisors might wish stay in hotels also.	Price range for the Friendship Hostel is approximately USD30 a day per person B&B, YMCA Hostel approximately USD20 B&B per person. Hotel prices range from USD40 to USD120 for places like the Sheraton	1620.00
Cultural Orientation (five days), two hours daily	This program shall last for one week, and seasoned Peace Corps Languages trainers in Wolof and Mandinka will be used	USD30 per person per language that is either Wolof or Mandinka	
Djembe Drumming Lessons(7 days))	Two hour sessions of learning the traditional Djembe Drum	USD40 per person	
Boat Trip	A boat trip James Island and Juffureh (Home of Roots), meals / drinks included on boat	2000.00	2000.00
Community Service	Equipment purchase for community service project	500.00	500.00
Community Service	Located in Foni-Bullock, it covers accommodation/feeding for 3 days/nights, cultural and community service in an Eco tourism location on the banks of the River Gambia surrounded by mangroves	Approximately USD100 per person including accommodation, meals etc.	
Visit to Rural Based Community agricultural centre	Njawara Agricultural training Centre is based in the North Bank region of the Gambia, close to the border with Senegal, it has a community based agricultural centre that is community driven with some support from Concern Universal	This trip can be two days or a day trip, for, projects can be worked on here too, site has accommodation and over night stay plus meals about USD40 per person	
Lessons in Tye / Dye / Batik making (2 days)	This covers teaching the students how to make the local Tye and Dye Batik cloth, it involving a training session	Cost of Training per person USD40	
Trip to Goree Island in Senegal (3 days)	This will cover a three day visit to the historical Island of Goree in Senegal it involves accommodation/ meals.	Due to it being swarmed with tourist, an average for the three days including transport is about USD 800	

Host Site Coordinator Contact

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