

# A JOURNEY OF A GHANAIAN VOLUNTEER ABROAD

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Volunteering abroad is an exciting experience, giving you the opportunity to learn about the culture of the Country and its people. Germany became the destination to acquire a new skill during a year. I made friends which I call family now and learnt a language most people said was impossible. The turning point was learning how to face and deal with various problems, and as a result, have become more independent and self-confident.

Arriving in Bremen Germany on a cold Sunday morning from a warm Country Ghana was no easy task but the smile on my face still beamed like the morning sun. I was finally here to have a memorable experience like none other.

Settling in did not take much time. I worked in a Home for the elderly during the first few months of my stay in Germany. Challenges sprouted out each day like flowers during Spring. Thinking of home became a routine each morning and evening but I still had a drive to carry on.

The German language which was a medium for communication felt like an enemy impeding my progress to acquiring knowledge and developing my skills. Although I struggled to keep up, it was refreshing to try something new and different from the normal for a long time.

In Ghana attending seminars were not of interest to me because I thought they were always boring with long winding talks. The Volunteer Year changed that perception when I met other Volunteers from South Africa, Indonesia, Togo, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Hong Kong, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Congo, India, Ghana and Philippines. The wide range of Culture accompanied with Transformational Topics by intellectually endowed resource persons gave me a new orientation for my professional life.

Mission an outreach much more than a Building. At the first sight of the building that housed the Norddeutsche Mission (NM) popularly known as Bremen Mission by the E. P Church Ghana, surprised me. This thought was because of the impact NM had made and continue to make in the lives of many Ghanaians and Togolese for years. My expectation was a three (3) Story Building but standing there for minutes became a lesson I will hold onto. I learnt that you should have a bigger Vision for yourself no matter where you are housed in other to impact into lives of people starting from your own neighbors.

Kindergarten a garden for 'Kinder' or a place for finding one's self? An astonishing experience in an unlikely place changed and equipped me. Looking after Children each day doing things on their own without the burden or feeling pressured of what the future holds for them insightful. This helped me to deal with expectations of others by living a life of my own. A child age four (4) called Ole said in German, 'Edem from tomorrow I will learn to speak English in other to communicate with you but you will learn German from me'. This child wanted to move from his comfort zone in other to learn who I was and where I came from. I made a decision that very day

to speak and understand much more German than I could. I spoke a new language and draw better than I did on my own.

There were other challenges but learning how things were done even felt like an art to my **German host mother** who always had a keen interest in everything I did even when cleaning the dishes by hand. Planning with a personal dairy became an integral part of my life since most Germans like to follow planned schedules and appointment.

Adapting to living in a new country is never easy, once the initial homesickness and missing the family has been overcome, learning to fend for yourself certainly makes you a more independent person. My journey abroad helped me grow as a person and I feel I can take up any tasks within my ability in Ghana.

These plain words and testimonies are not enough to explain my journey as a Ghanaian Volunteer abroad but the question now is would you take a step and go through this life-changing journey?