



Unifying Neighbors Through Education and Development

**Marion L. – 2014 & 2015 – France**

**UNiTED Health Education, Social Map & HardtHaven Children's Home**

I volunteered with UNiTED in Summer 2014 for two months. I lived in the children's home. My time was divided between the mornings when I would work on a specific project, and the afternoons during which I did tutoring to help out the kids for homework and exams, like most other volunteers. The day would start around 7. In the mornings, I chose to work on the social map project. A social map is a map that gathers and displays information of all the organizations and institutions that exist in a region and their location. Concretely, I biked around in surrounding villages to detect and record the different organizations existing. Afterwards, I would go in for an interview with the director, asking for instance whether they lacked materials and/or funds, or whether they would need volunteers to help them out. This way, the NGO had an organized and collective data about the whole regional district. I really enjoyed working on such a project, because it gave me the opportunity to bike around and discover the region by myself, and to really bond with members of the local community. At 12 we would have lunch with all the other volunteers. People were coming from everywhere and doing all kinds of things to help out UNiTED. I loved getting to know people from very different backgrounds, but still all sharing this desire to help out in Kpando. At 3:30, the children would come back from school, and tutoring would start. Each volunteer would be assigned a group of kids, and tutor them on the topic of the day (English, Sciences, Ewe...). At 6:00 dinner would be served, and then it would be time for my favorite time of the day. During the time I was there, the Football World Cup was happening. Every night, a TV would be displayed, and the whole neighborhood would watch the matches together. During the week-ends, we could either spend more time with the children, or take a WE off, and travel to waterfalls or Afadjato. I learned a lot from my time with UNiTED, not only from Ghanaian culture, but also from the inspiring people I have met there. It was such a great and unforgettable experience!