Togo

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

English and Gender Education

Since 1961.

Program: English and Gender Education

Job Title: English and Gender Education Teacher

Dates of Service: August 28, 2016 – August 27, 2018

Staging Dates: June 9-10, 2016
(in the USA)

Pre-Service Training
(in Togo): June 12, 2016 – August 28, 2016

*dates subject to change

AA171 = 3445BR

This document is intended to give an overview of the project you are invited to work on in the Peace Corps. For more detailed information about Togo and living there, please read the Welcome Book via the link included with your invitation and check out the related Web sites referenced in the Welcome Book.

For further information about serving as an English and Gender Education Teacher in Togo, call the Country Desk Officer for Togo at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C., (9AM to 5PM, EDT):

Toll-free: 1-855-855-1961, press 1, then extension 2873,
or directly at (202) 692-2873;
or via email at Togo@peacecorps.gov.

A NOTE FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

Congratulations on your decision to serve as an English and Gender Education (EGE) Volunteer in Togo, West Africa! You are selected because we believe that you have the skills and education to assist in the project as well as the flexibility, maturity, and resourcefulness to handle the challenges of living in a developing country. Our main job is to provide you with the support necessary for you to function in your assigned role as an English and Gender Education Volunteer at a Togolese middle school. We are here to help you with all your job-related matters, language, cross cultural and technical issues and/or personal concerns.

The 25 current English and Gender Volunteers and I look forward to welcoming you as one of our team members. You will be part of the fourth group of volunteers serving in the English and Gender Education program. You might replace a Peace Corps Volunteer who will be completing their two years of service or be the first EGE Volunteer at your site. Peace Corps can be the experience of a lifetime. You will make new friends, learn new languages, explore an exciting and vibrant culture and participate in life in Togo at a very dynamic time.

Before swearing in as a Volunteer, you will receive eleven (11) weeks of language, cross-culture, and technical training. This training will take place in a community setting. As part of the training experience, you will live with a host family with whom you will communicate in French or in a local language. While you will have the opportunity to improve your French during the training, it is important to study French prior to arrival. In Togo, there are many local languages, and the more French you know, the easier it will be for you to learn a local language.

We are looking forward to welcoming you in Togo!

Rose Kpomblekou-Nabine
Program Manager
English & Gender Education

OVERVIEW OF PEACE CORPS TOGO AND EGE

The first group of Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Togo in 1962, the year after John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps. Over the course of 53 years, more than 2,800 volunteers have served in Togo. Peace Corps Togo is very proud to be one of only 10 Peace Corps posts in the world with a record of continuous and uninterrupted service. Even during challenging periods in the history of Togo when many international organizations were withdrawing personnel and resources from Togo, Peace Corps remained in country working at the grass-roots level with community members and counterparts.

At the request of the Togolese Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Peace Corps Togo has worked in the education sector for over five decades. In consultation with governmental and other education stakeholders, the focus of our education program has changed over time to reflect educational priorities within Togo.

The EGE program's current goals are:

1. Students increase academic success and develop critical thinking skills.
2. Teachers teach with more confidence and effectiveness.
3. School community members and the broader community will actively participate in their school and support gender equality and student learning.

The EGE program's current anchor activities are:

- English teaching;
- Promoting gender equity, especially through "Men As Partners" (MAP) trainings; and
- Professional development of teachers by providing training on interactive and participatory teaching methods that support the creation of a "student-friendly schools" environment.

YOUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to note the words "English" and "gender" in the context of this program. As an EGE Volunteer, you will be engaged in two types of education. One is English teaching in a traditional classroom setting. Another is gender education both formally and informally taught through trainings and extracurricular activities. You will engage teachers, parents, educational officials, and students in conscious-raising activities dealing with gender issues prevalent in Togolese society. Such gender issues include an imbalance of responsibilities between girls and

boys, sexual harassment, child trafficking, early or unwanted pregnancy, and low school completion rates.

As an EGE Volunteer, you will be assigned to mid-sized town or rural villages. With capacity-building being the focus of all Togo's programs, you should be prepared and excited about providing on-the-job support and training to school communities (students, parents, teachers, and education officials). All Volunteers need to be self-starters, self-motivated, and patient. It is important that you have a strong desire to work in rural areas under sometimes difficult conditions. Experience or interest in organizational development is highly desirable.

EGE Program Responsibilities:

Your specific tasks an EGE Volunteer include: Introduce yourself to the host community and to the school principals, establish work relationships with the school director and teachers, teach English to your assigned classes, meet with teachers once a week/twice a month to discuss best practices of teaching, co-plan lessons and team teach with your counterpart teacher, set up a gender promotion committee at your assigned school, organize teacher training in new techniques of teaching, hold Men As Partners training for partners, organize extracurricular activities with your local partners for the students, and organize follow-up plans for your completed activities.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation: One of the exciting parts of your professional work is to participate in the Peace Corps monitoring, reporting, and evaluation (MRE) process. All Volunteers receive training on the Peace Corps MRE tracking and reporting system. Each Volunteer regularly reports MRE information and this information is summarized to describe overall progress of programs and initiatives. The MRE system helps Peace Corps improve its programming reports and more effectively illustrate its accomplishments. The opportunity to learn and practice professional monitoring and evaluation skills is one of the many valued benefits of Peace Corps service.

Peace Corps Togo Cross-Sector Responsibilities for All Volunteers:

Active Participation in the "Stomping Out Malaria in Africa" Initiative

The Africa Region of Peace Corps has a regional goal of 100 percent Volunteer participation in the fight against malaria – not just for public health Volunteers in Africa, but for all Volunteers in Africa. This is especially important in Togo where malaria is still the highest cause of mortality and where approximately 34 percent of health consultations and hospitalizations of more than five days in duration are related to malaria. Although approximately 60 percent of malaria cases occur during the rainy season lasting from June – September, malaria remains a public health concern year-round. The physical, social, and economic impacts of malaria touch every village, town, and city in Togo. Regardless of whether a Volunteer is working in the public

health, education, or environmental awareness and food security sector, malaria and its consequences plays a significant role in the personal and professional lives of community members with whom Volunteers live and work. All Volunteers will be trained on how to conduct Grassroots Soccer activities and will be expected to conduct a variety of malaria prevention trainings in their assigned community throughout their service. As a Volunteer in Togo, your skills, energy, creativity, and well-established presence and acceptance in your communities will enable you to help members of your community combat this disease so they can live longer and healthier lives.

Active Participation in the "Let Girls Learn" Initiative

Peace Corps Togo is one of 13 posts participating in an important agency initiative promoting gender awareness along with girls' education and empowerment. The collaboration between the Office of the First Lady and Peace Corps seeks to address the fact that globally 62 million girls are not in school. Only 69 percent of Togolese adolescent females complete primary school. All Volunteers in Togo – not just English and Gender Education Volunteers – will receive training on incorporating methods of gender analysis into community assessment and development efforts. All Volunteers are encouraged to find culturally appropriate ways to incorporate gender awareness and the promotion of youth, especially girls, into their work and daily living and report on these efforts and their impact. Volunteers will learn more about this initiative during their staging event as well as during pre-service training.

Active Participation in Addressing Food Security Issues in Togo

Food security is a basic human right that guarantees equal access to nutritious and safe food while promoting cultural, environmental, and economic sustainability. In Togo, food production is mainly based on small family-type farms with an average area of 0.5 hectares. The Gross National Product (GNP) per capita is estimated at $1,100 (672,000 XOF) and 62 percent of the population cannot cover their basic needs due to their low income level. Peace Corps Togo is one of 10 Peace Corps countries working with USAID/West Africa in the implementation of the West Africa Food Security Partnership. This program enables Peace Corps Volunteers to build grass-roots capacity to increase food security in West Africa through interventions concerning improved natural resource management, agroforestry, improved agricultural production, gardening, small animal husbandry, nutrition education, economic development projects, food processing and conservation, and income generating activities. Because food security impacts the health of all community members – all Volunteers, not just Environmental Awareness and Food Security volunteers – will be trained on the benefits of planting moringa (West African Ben tree) trees and transforming moringa leaves into a nutritional supplement powder, as well as on intensive gardening (permagardening) techniques that can be introduced at health clinics, schools, and within family residences.

You should note that the activities you become involved in will not be and cannot be yours alone. They must be built upon the needs and interests of your host community and counterparts. The success of your assignment is not measured in terms of your projects or individual accomplishments, but by the impact that you have on the skills, attitudes, and knowledge of the people with whom you live and work.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECONDARY/ COMMUNITY PROJECTS

While your primary assignment is to serve as an EGE Volunteer and meet the cross-sector responsibilities of all Peace Corps Togo Volunteers, you will almost certainly want to get involved with other aspects of life in your community. Peace Corps service is a full-time commitment – 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Most Volunteers get very involved in their communities through a variety of projects that extend beyond their primary assignment. These may be as diverse as promoting environmental awareness, playing sports, or working on projects related to income generation and capacity building.

WORKING CONDITIONS

As teachers, EGE Volunteers are often asked to do a lot with limited resources. The vast majority of classrooms are constructed from cement and have tin roofing, others have open walls and thatch roofing. Each classroom is equipped with chalkboards and desks. The school administration typically supplies chalk and pens for grading, however, the availability of English textbooks varies greatly by site. Typically students are asked to purchase textbooks themselves, but are unable to do so for a myriad of reasons. Instead many volunteers opt to make photocopies of the textbook for their classes, sometimes with financial support from the school administration, students, or the Parent Teacher Association.

Available Reference Resources:

To assist you in carrying out your professional responsibilities training, educational, and other work-related materials developed by Peace Corps and other organizations that will be made available to you. Some materials will be available in hard copy through Peace Corps Togo's In-Country Resource Center (IRC) or during pre-service training, others will be provided to Volunteers in an electronic format or Volunteers will be directed to appropriate websites to download materials.

Location of Job:

Although your Regional Education Inspection Office will be in one of the five regional capitals, you will be posted to a small town or large village in which there is at least one middle school. This school will be your assigned community where you will teach English, co-teach, and promote gender equality.

Working Hours:

Volunteers represent the Peace Corps and thus work 24 hours a day/7 days a week, which addresses the second and third goals of teaching and learning about Togo and the United States. Work also includes learning and improving your language skills, integrating into the community, learning about Togolese culture and practices, sharing U.S. culture and practices as well as maintaining your physical and mental health.

In terms of your primary job assignment, you will be required to teach an average of twelve (12) hours per week (this does not include lesson planning, grading, or teacher meetings) and conduct, in collaboration with the Gender Promotion Committee, an extracurricular activity such an English club, tutoring classes, gender equality club, or income generating activities once a week.

Cultural Attitudes and Customs in the Workplace:

Togo is a less industrialized country. In general, things are likely to work at a pace that is much slower than that to which you are accustomed. There may be a more casual attitude toward appointments, deadlines, work responsibilities, and timelines and it takes far longer to get even simple things done. You may experience more bureaucracy and a greater concern for hierarchy and status. You will be expected to develop a working relationship with key individuals and organizations in your work zone. Volunteers who do this successfully feel that these local counterparts add greatly to their credibility and to the sustainability of their work.

Cross-culturally adept Volunteers recognize that Togolese place a high value on personal relationships. These Volunteers give priority to building and nurturing personal relationships and alliances to marshal support for projects rather than appealing to purely project goal-oriented interests. In Togo, cultural sensitivity and interpersonal social skills are necessary to be able to effectively use one's technical skills in order to be able to achieve project goals and objectives.

In general, Volunteers are appreciated and respected in Togo for their easy integration into Togolese communities. You will make friends among your professional counterparts and within the community. While you will find some counterparts and some villagers immediately motivated to work with you, you will need cross-cultural understanding skills, patience, and the ability to motivate partners in to work effectively with others.

Dress Code:

Dress and appearance is of great importance in the West African concept of professionalism. People's appearance indicates their own status and demonstrates their level of respect for those they encounter. The normal attire is fairly conservative. This includes slacks and collared shirts for men and modest dresses/skirts with a nice blouse for women. Slacks are rarely worn by women, but are seen in bigger cities. Once you are here and get to your site, you will be able to see what your counterparts normally wear. You can also have appropriate Togolese-style clothing made at reasonable prices. You will be required to dress appropriately and respectfully for training as well.

Peace Corps Togo has a dress code. For example, spaghetti straps and sleeveless shirts, shorter skirts, showing one's midriff, and wearing flip-flops and shorts are not appropriate for work settings in Togo. Wearing less modest clothing can diminish the respect community members have for you and can make your work much more challenging and ultimately ineffective.

TRAINING FOR YOUR JOB

Community-based pre-service training (PST) will last for approximately eleven weeks. It will begin with an orientation in Lomé and continue in a village approximately 80 kilometers from Lomé. Throughout the course of PST, you will live with a Togolese family. You will learn the skills you will need to be a productive EAFS Volunteer through some theoretical and some practical learning sessions designed to help you adjust to your new environment. The training sessions are designed to integrate language, cross-cultural, health and safety, and technical competencies. During training, you will also have the opportunity to spend two weeks visiting your future work site in order to familiarize yourself with your work environment and enhance your integration into your new community.

Good communication and superior cross-cultural skills and sensitivity are the most important tools a Volunteer can bring to the field. Being able to communicate can make the difference between being an active member of a community or a passive observer. Volunteers also need technical skills adapted to the culture and needs of their communities. You will not be assigned definitively to a site without attaining an adequate level (Intermediate High) of French language skills and demonstrating appropriate cross-cultural attitudes and technical skills to confirm your readiness to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer.

To assist with your language acquisition and consequently your effectiveness as a Volunteer, we strongly recommend that you begin learning French prior to your arrival in country.

During your two-year service as a Volunteer, you will also have the opportunity to attend in-service training (IST) sessions with your counterparts. Topics for these trainings focus on Volunteer health, safety, and well-being, as well as program-specific and cross-sector technical skills.

LIVING CONDITIONS

You will receive a monthly living allowance sufficient to live at a modest level in your community, as well as a settling-in allowance to defray the initial costs of setting up a household.

Accommodation

Most Volunteers live in two-to-three-room houses within a Togolese family compound. Sanitation amenities will be modest, but adequate. Some Volunteer houses have tin roofs; a few have straw roofs. You will probably have no running water, electricity, or cooking gas. Water sources in villages could be traditional wells, a bore hole equipped with a pump, cisterns, or natural water sources, including rivers. Whatever your source of drinking water, you will have to filter and bleach it or filter and boil it. Peace Corps Togo will provide you with a water filter and provide training on use and maintenance of the filter.

Food

Your diet will consist of locally grown foods or a combination of local and imported packaged foods. A typical Togolese meal is corn or millet 'pâte' (paste), accompanied by a hot, spicy sauce. Rice and beans, usually eaten for breakfast, is another common meal. Meat is available throughout Togo although for fresh meat you will likely need to purchase, kill, and butcher the animal yourself or ask a neighbor or counterpart to do so for you. Dried fish is available throughout the country, but fresh fish is only available in larger towns. Fruits and vegetables are seasonal, limiting the diversity of a strictly vegetarian diet at certain times of year, especially in more remote areas. However, tofu (soy) is available throughout the country. Volunteers are encouraged to plant vegetable gardens to supplement their diet. Most of your food will be purchased at the weekly market in your community, or during monthly visits to your regional capital.

Transportation

Distance between villages and regional capitals vary, but can be as far as sixty kilometers. Some Volunteers like biking these distances, others prefer local public transportation (bush taxis) to the nearest mail point, bank, and shopping locations. You will be provided with funds to purchase a bicycle to facilitate work and enable you to have greater access to nearby villages and towns. Alternatively, as a Volunteer you will be able to ride as a passenger on the back of a motorcycle on certain prescribed roads provided that you comply with the Peace Corps Togo

helmet policy and wear a pre-approved DOT motorcycle helmet (with full face mask) any time you are riding on a motorcycle. Peace Corps Togo will provide you with a helmet.

Communication

Volunteers are encouraged to rent their own mail box at their local post office in order to receive mail from family members and friends during their service. For communication between staff and Volunteers or between Volunteers, Peace Corps Togo uses an Express Mail Service (EMS) run by the national Post Office between Lomé and mail points throughout the country. Medical supplies leave the office weekly. All other EMS mail leaves the office twice a month on the first and third Thursdays of the month.

Regional capitals and some larger towns in Togo have internet connections (though these connections are often very slow). The large majority of EGE posts are villages without electricity, and therefore do not have such luxuries. You will, however, have access to internet at least once a month when you travel to your regional capital to do banking. Most Volunteers bring small laptop computers and many Volunteers purchase internet keys. Periodic access to the internet has greatly influenced Volunteer life by allowing limited technical research and contact with friends and family, as well as with the Peace Corps office in Lomé.

Cell phones are operational in most parts of the country.

Medical Facilities:

Peace Corps Togo has its own medical unit, staffed by two Peace Corps Medical Officers who are the primary care providers for all Volunteers. Medical conditions that cannot be handled by the staff are referred either to specialists in Lomé or to one of two excellent missionary-run hospitals – one located in the southern part of the country (Adeta), the other in the northern part (Sansanne-Mango). Services are limited in the interior of the country.

However, in cases that require further evaluation, or in those that cannot be managed adequately in-country, including emergency situations, Volunteers are evacuated to a regional medical facility in South Africa. In some cases, evacuations to the United States for medical care are necessary. Each case for medical evacuation is reviewed by the Peace Corps Medical Officer in conjunction with the Office of Medical Services in Washington, DC.

Many illnesses and injuries are preventable. The Peace Corps firmly believes that prevention of illness is a better approach to health than curing an illness. The medical staff expects each Volunteer to take primary responsibility for his/her health and well-being by employing preventive health care practices such as maintaining a healthy diet, taking all prescribed medications, including anti-malarial medication, drinking adequate amounts of water, and seeking early advice for medical concerns. If, however, a Volunteer becomes ill, the medical staff is ready to provide the necessary treatment and support.

Safety and Security:

Your safety and security are a top priority to Peace Corps. During your training you will receive information on safety issues specific to your home, your community, and travel within country. In addition, safety details pertinent to the national capital and larger cities will also be provided. Although there are no guarantees of complete safety in any country or city in the world, we feel that the more you are aware, the greater the likelihood that you will be able to avoid unpleasant or dangerous situations. As Americans, Peace Corps Volunteers are often viewed as wealthy, and are thus often the targets of crime. Living with a family helps to reduce security risks.

Peace Corps Volunteers have not been immune to the robberies, muggings, and other violent crimes, which seem to be on the upswing in so many societies. In Togo, incidents of home burglaries, robberies, assaults, and sexual harassment are not unknown, especially in large cities. You will need to be vigilant to reduce, as much as possible, your vulnerability to such incidents.

Volunteers are regularly updated on security issues during training, site visits, and through communications from staff members. In Togo, we advise you to do what you would do if you moved to a new location in the United States: be cautious, check things out, ask lots of questions, learn your neighborhood, find out where the more risky locations are, avoid displaying expensive articles in public, and use common sense. In doing so, you can minimize your vulnerability and make your stay in Togo safer and more enjoyable.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES & REWARDS

Please reference the Welcome Book for more detailed information regarding diversity, cross-cultural issues, and safety and security in the Peace Corps.

You will face obstacles while living and working in Togo; obstacles that stem from differences in the way Americans and Togolese approach time management and job performance issues, tasks, and responsibilities, as well as approaches to problem solving. Peace Corps is invited to serve in Togo by the Togolese government. As a Volunteer, you are a guest in Togo, and you must learn to become effective within the Togolese system. You will inevitably face frustrations, especially in the beginning, include: an inability to communicate fluently in French or in the local language, isolation, lack of progress, community members' occasional disinterest or lack of understanding of what you are trying to achieve, feelings of lack of accomplishment, and misunderstanding of your role by others. These are frustrations felt by PCVs all over the world.

Diversity:

Historically, Peace Corps and the Togolese people have benefited from the skills and experiences of persons from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Volunteers from every sort of background, of all ages have served and benefited from their service in Togo. Unconsciously, many Togolese expect that Volunteers will be white. Minorities serving as Volunteers have experiences in Togo that differ in some degree from those of non-minorities, as do those of women from men and older from younger Volunteers. Although these differences may present additional challenges, they can also facilitate and enrich cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Togolese are, in general, wonderfully generous, warm, and hospitable people. No matter who you are, if you make the effort necessary to transcend the natural cultural and language barriers, you will have a rewarding and fruitful stay in Togo.

Volunteers working in Togo face cultural adjustments in understanding and addressing prejudices and stereotypes about them. Some stereotypes about American women may, at times, prompt unwanted advances from aggressive Togolese men. In addition, female Volunteers, in some instances, may not receive the same amount of respect as male Volunteers due to cultural attitudes toward women. Education of women is not a priority to many Togolese and opinions of women, especially Togolese, are often ignored. Stereotypes concerning the affluence of Americans often cause Volunteers to be seen as a possible source of funding. You will frequently be asked to give money. With patience and understanding, PCVs learn to deal with these misconceptions in a constructive, positive manner.

A Volunteer's personal safety and ability to be received as a professional are dependent upon being mindful and respectful of cultural traditions and standards. Homosexuality is illegal in Togo and many Togolese disapprove of homosexuality. Sexual orientations and gender identities are a taboo topic in parts of the society and there are no laws that provide protections for sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Therefore, sexual orientation and nonconforming gender identities should not be discussed openly and the Lesbian, Gay. Bisexual, Transsexual and Queer (LGBTQ) community may be stigmatized. Many LGBTQ Volunteers have chosen to be discreet about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity within their host communities. However, Peace Corps Togo provides an open and supportive atmosphere for LGBTQ Volunteers through its Peer Support Network (PSN) and many LGBTQ Volunteers have served successfully in Togo.

Peace Corps is looking for mature, committed volunteers who are willing to devote two years of their lives to helping the people of Togo help themselves. Peace Corps Togo has an excellent reputation, and we make every effort to maintain this through the professionalism of our Volunteers and staff. Once you arrive in Togo, you share in that privilege and responsibility. Always remember that you are, once you accept this invitation, a development professional.

COMMENTS FROM VOLUNTEERS

Catie Murray
PCV, EGE (2014-2016)
Guerin-Kouka, Kara Region

My name is Catie Murray and I'm an EGE Volunteer in Guerin-Kouka, in the northwest region of Kara. Guerin-Kouka is a town of about 15,000 people. I teach English at the middle school level at a combination middle school/high school. I have two classes with about 90 students each, which seemed intimidating at first but you'd be surprised how quickly I got used to it. My classroom does not have walls or enough desks and textbooks, so I have to get creative! We sing a lot of songs and play games, and it's thrilling to watch my students grow, not just in their language skill, but also in themselves. With my counterpart, I run an English Club for our middle school students. At the high school level, we've just started an English Language Debate Club focused on topics of gender equity. We also set up the Guerin-Kouka English Teachers' Association. We meet every other week with all the English Teachers in my community to discuss current events and culture, to share pedagogical techniques, and of course to speak English! We also have a lot of fun together. Gender equity is also a huge part of my work in Guerin-Kouka. My counterpart and I are in the midst of planning a "Men as Partners" workshop with the high school teachers in my community. I also help run a "Foyer des Filles" (Girls' Dorm) that was set up by a PCV a few years ago to provide a safe home for girls from faraway villages so that they can continue their education, especially high school! I run a Girls' Club every Friday night and it is such a joy and a privilege to mentor such motivated young ladies. I also work on cross-sector projects with the other Volunteers in my cluster or region, with projects about malaria prevention, nutrition, and water sanitation. Guerin-Kouka has truly become my home and I'm looking forward to my second year of service!

Olivia Nesbit
PCV, EGE (2014-2016)
Tabligbo, Maritime Region

I am an English and Gender Education (EGE) Volunteer in Tabligbo, my village. Tabligbo is located about an hour and a half from Tsevie and 2 hours and thirty minutes from Lomé in the Maritime Region. Tabligbo is much larger than most other posts here in Togo, which means I have a lot of amenities that others don't have, along with a much larger school. A typical day here includes me going to my school, which is about a 15-minute walk from my house. I teach two classes of 6eme, which is the lowest grade in middle school. It's equivalent to 6th grade in

the U.S. There are roughly 90 students in each of my classes, which was overwhelming at first, but you get used to it and I have developed some successful strategies for classroom management.

As of now, I officially teach two hours every day, but use free periods to do make-up classes and/or plan my lessons and talk with other teachers at school. When class finishes at 12 p.m., there is a break in the middle of the day until about 2:30 p.m., when everyone returns home to eat lunch and rest. After the break, I usually go back to the school to teach make-up classes or run my English Club on Tuesday afternoons. The English Club meets every week; we work on activities to develop creativity and play games to practice English language skills outside of the classroom setting. I also created "English Lovers' Night" with several PCVs who live close to me. Every month we meet informally with English teachers from around Tabligbo to practice speaking English and discuss teaching and learning strategies. The teachers really enjoy having the chance to ask us questions about American culture.

Gender equity is also part of my work in EGE. I am currently working to start a Young Women's Leadership Club at my school, for motivated girls to teach them about Life Skills and professional opportunities in Togo. We are also planning a "Men as Partners" training/workshop for the teachers at my school and several other schools in my village. There are many opportunities to work outside of the EGE framework in the domains of health and food security as well. In addition to my work at the school, I work with a Women's Group and have done nutrition and hygiene trainings with them. We have plenty of opportunities to work with other volunteers on projects that deal with malaria prevention, food security, gardening, water and sanitation, etc. Teaching can be difficult, but I really love my students. It is so inspiring to see their enthusiasm and desire to learn. There are always new challenges, but I'm eager to work on my upcoming projects and can't wait to see what my second year of service holds!

Scott Robinson
PCV, EGE (2013-2015)
Kalangha, Kara Region

In Kalangha there is no shortage of work for an English and Gender Education Volunteer. My village is a small canton of 2,000 people approximately 10 kilometers from the town of Bassar, located in the region of Kara. Our middle school was opened to provide secondary education to students from seven different primary schools in the surrounding villages. The school is in its third year of operation and my primary work focuses on teaching and co-teaching English, collaborating with government officials on the promotion of the English language, facilitating

school clubs, building a school library, promoting the importance of education within the community, and overseeing an English Teachers' Association in my regional prefecture. Currently, I am collaborating with an NGO that is finishing the construction of our first school building that will be ready to use in early April. There is never a dull moment in Kalangha.

Peace Corps service is not always easy. The biggest challenge throughout my service has been motivating the community to understand the importance of education for our youth. Our village is comprised of predominately farmers, meaning that they do not truly understand why education is a necessity and a right for the girls and boys of Kalangha. EGE Volunteers are lucky. We are placed into motivated school communities where there are several people eager to work with us right from the beginning. We have students who are motivated to learn in classes, clubs, and tutoring sessions. Whenever I approach a teacher with a project idea there is always someone available to help see it through. Being a teacher in America isn't easy and therefore it is impossible to say that teaching here in Togo comes without any difficult moments. Teaching more than 70 students in one class where the chalkboard is falling down and the floor reminds me of walking at the beach isn't easy, but at the end of every day I feel like I am making a difference in the lives of the children with whom I work.