

Youth and Students for Peace Summer Camp in Sao Tome and Príncipe

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September 2019



Most of the people who came for this project are YSP leaders in their own country or UPA cadets and people who have done a lot in leadership positions or taken on responsibilities in our church. In total we had twenty-two different nationalities from Europe, Asia, South America, Central America, America and Africa.

The first three days after we arrived, we made preparations for the summer camp. We held a workshop for a hundred and fifty students from different districts of São Tomé. We divided them into different teams together with YSP volunteers for ten days. We were preparing the food and the lectures on character education and then printing the materials we would give to the summer campers, and the full schedule including the activities we will do during that time. Our lodging was in schools and other public spaces that we are going to repair or help to reconstruct. Everything we did was with the support of the local assembly (town hall) of each district. Since the volunteers from STF Europe divided themselves up in various places, I have included their reports on the projects.

Mathias Mussy (Austria)

"We started our summer camp project in Lembá (São Tomé and Príncipe) with our twenty-five students (twelve–eighteen years old) including six soldiers, four boy scouts and eight volunteers (staff members). Our volunteers were from Brazil, Japan, the Philippines, Congo, Angola and Austria (me). On the first day when we arrived in Lembá, we had an opening ceremony with the local president at the City Hall. The president welcomed us, and we had a chance to explain about YSP and our summer camp project.

Our schedule consisted of Hoon Dok Hae from True Father's autobiography, character education lectures, service projects (we are now collecting trash from around the school and on the beach) Tong-Il Moo-Do training and sports and games. The lectures were based on the Divine Principle and I could see from their taking notes and asking a lot of questions that the students and helpers have a lot of interest in the teachings.

I could also see how that here the people's hearts compel them to help without being asked and that they are trusting. They have respect other's belongings and take care of them as well.

I can see a big future for the people here in São Tomé. I'm happy to be here and to be a part of the foundation for the coming of True Mother."

Andre Rivas (Colombia) and Junka Alves Ogawa (Venezuela)

This summer camp started on July 18 in the District of Cantagalo, São Tomé Island. We are eight people on the staff from Japan, Brazil, Nigeria, the Philippines, Venezuela, Angola and Colombia. We opened the camp with a ceremony in the Cantagalo government chamber, listening to the president of the chamber. When we finished, we went to the school and there the director welcomed us.

In the mornings, we have service projects. One of them is to build a wall in the back of the school that will stop delinquency in the place; usually people from outside the school enter and disturb the classes and activities. With the help of professionals in that area and people from the school, we are also building a fence. We pick up the trash, fix the classroom tables, clean the water tanks take care of the grounds.

On the July 22, we helped the community clean the debris left from a fire that happened the previous night in the building just in front and across the road from the school. I feel as if we were protected, so it didn't occur here in the school. No people were inside the building that where the fire occurred and only some injuries occurred when helping to put out the fire. That night, the soldier volunteers especially, and about half the staff and some students directly helped with the problem.

That we had the chance to work today together today was helpful to the neighbors and to the students. When we started cleaning, some families came out and joined us. Because few others were eager to help it was difficult, but our team unity made it possible to solve the problem fast and harmoniously.

The participants are excited and open minded during the lectures that are about topics such as, sustainable peace, love between brothers and sisters, preparation for marriage and the meaning of being a good person mean. The environment is extremely comfortable because they can express themselves, ask questions and express their opinions.

They often the sentence "Everything is about living for the sake of others," and gave feedback, such as "I'm going to become the future of my nation," "I will spread this information to others when I go home" and "I will not do what I used to before coming here." We learned a happy dance to perform on the last day with all the volunteers.

Each day we are becoming closer. I can feel that they are learning so much about new things, also they are teaching us so many things each day. Many said that they feel at home and as a family, so as staff we are working on creating a space where they can really relate as True Brothers and Sisters and feel a lot of love from us.



Stefany Obando (Ecuador)

On July 18, we started the Global Summer Camp in Vista Alegre, with the participation of twenty-three students, a boy scout, six soldiers and seven volunteers from Japan, Brazil, Angola, Ghana, the Philippines and Ecuador, all of whom were welcome by the authorities in the government chamber of Me-Zochi (a district in São Tomé) and by the community as well.

At the beginning, we gave an orientation about YSP and all the activities that we are going to do in these days so they can know the purpose of the camp and YSP. We have the support of the authorities to bring water and trash cans for the students who are happy and enthusiastic. They interact well with the community and with the other volunteers with whom they have some cultural exchange, learning the dances and songs of previously unfamiliar cultures. They are also learning English through some lessons we provide.

Through character education, they learn how to practice living for the sake of others every day, so they voluntarily serve food every day and help cleaning without my asking them. The students and the community are open to change their minds and hearts, so I have great hope that they will receive True

Mother in the best way possible and also they will transform São Tomé into God's country.

Karina Sampaio (Brazil)

I gave two lectures so far, one on "What does it mean to be good?" and the other on "Brothers and sister love," which were good; they students deeply interacted with me. I showed some videos and they had great interest in both subjects. I did some translating, because I need Portuguese to communicate with the students here.

They are interested in the texts we use as materials to explain things to them, especially the Hoon Dok Hae from True Father's autobiography. After reading, we made teams and make a space for them to express what they thought or to ask questions. On many occasions we went over the allotted Hoon Dok Hae time because they enjoyed discussing it.

My goal was that embody the idea, "I'm a pillar," which I felt connected to. Many people there, depended on me, so I needed to be unchanging, always trying to be centering on Heavenly Parent and True Parents. I often asked myself what am I doing here and for whom am I here? My answer: for Heavenly Parent and True Parents, to support True Mother, for this community and for myself, for my own growth as well to be someone that can offer something better to others in the future.

This experience was a good training for when I am back home. It is a good opportunity for me to see each point I should still improve to be stronger internally in this environment. This experience was not what I expected, but I felt grateful! I will always do my best.



The closing ceremony

On the evening of Sunday, July 28th, the closing ceremony of the global summer camp took place at the national assembly of São Tomé and Príncipe. Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) had organized camps in six districts of this peaceful country.

The occasion was graced with the presence of the Prime Minister Jorge Bom Jesus, the Minister of Education and Sports and the Minister of Culture. More than three hundred young people of all races from twenty- four nations formed familial bonds with one another as a sign of their commitment to building a peaceful global family under God.

The chair of YSP Africa, Mr. Philbert Seka, took this opportunity to present to the guests the results of the projects undertaken by the international volunteers of YSP, the youth and students of São Tomé and Príncipe, as well as respective community members during the ten days of the camp.

Some of the flagship programs of YSP include Character Education, Peace Designer programs, Tong Il Moo Do, as explained by Mr. Koji Matsuda, international vice president of YSP.

Through these initiatives, the organization aims to educate and nurture young conscientious citizens and leaders to address the challenges of the society and create a world of peace. To ensure security throughout the course of the summer camp, the government provided military men to guard the camp sites day and night. Additionally, through the ministries of Youth and Sports, and Education, the government has continued to extend its support to YSP, thus expressing its satisfaction and full commitment to the vision and programs of YSP.

"The Youth have energy, courage and creativity. However, these qualities need to be aligned with good character and personality in order to serve a good cause instead of an evil one," -- Prime Minister, Mr. Jorge Bom Jesus. The prime minister further encouraged YSP to increase its activities in the country in this era of globalization.