

MY LIFE IN TAIWAN AND NTOU

My name is Bintou Dibba. I came from the Gambia to pursue a Masters Degree at National Taiwan Ocean University at the Department of Aquaculture.



Me and with my friends from the Gambia

My life in Taiwan has been a great experience for me. When I reached in Taiwan in the month of August 2009, I saw myself in a totally complete environment from where I came from. When we arrived, we were in NTNU for two weeks orientation during which we went to so many places of interest in Taiwan. Since then, I realized that Taiwan is a country which is rich in diverse culture well respected and observed by everyone. The cultures are also very different from where I came from, some of which we learned during the two weeks orientation. The whole program during this period was not only entertaining but also educative. At the end of the orientation we were sent to our individual schools. I found it very difficult to learn that I was going away from my friends and colleagues. This thought made me emotional and very

sad as I wondered what type of life awaits me where am finally going to be for the rest my stay in Taiwan.

When I reach at NTOU, I was led to my room where I stood on my chair for almost 2 hours unable to load my things from the bag. But thank god the 2nd years that I found on the ground were and are still very helpful. They helped me to adjust to the situations as quickly as possible. It didn't take me long to learn basic places in the university like restaurants stores etc.



With two of the former students during the NTOU

However, as a new student and an African for that matter, I had some little bit problem when I came new. People stare at me so much that I sometimes ask myself if there is anything wrong with me. I always find it difficult when am approaching a group of people because the only thing that first comes to my mine is, they will stare at me. Another problem was food but it didn't take me long to adjust to that too, although I sometimes cook when I miss my country food.



Me eating in a restaurant with TK and his wife

I said to myself that I must not worry much about those problems which later became minor for me when I started feeling the hospitability from everyone in the campus especially the division of international affairs who where always there for me during those days when I needed so much support to adjust.

As an international student, I do most of my course in English but I still have a bit problem because I still need to communicate with local students. Sometimes they don't answer when I talked to them which made me very sad sometimes. Then I realize that quite a few can speak English although they sometimes feel shy to speak it may be due to lack of confidence in speaking it or also many are shy.

I started going to class and to the lab to study whenever am free. Unlike other local students, my supervisor and lab mates are very nice. Communication is never my problem when am with them. Everybody in the lab was welcoming from the first day I joined them which gives me so much courage. The lab manager always answers to my needs whenever I required, which makes me very grateful.



In my lab with lab mates

When life becomes a bit boring for me sometimes, I normally go to Taipei to visit my colleagues from the Gambia. I also have opportunity to go to the south. I went to pingtung in Decembers to take part in the TICA cup that was organized by ICDF where I met lots of Gambians and friends.

I also went to Kaohsiung in November with some of my lab mates to attend conference. We spend few days but I love the trip since it was my first experience to visit the south.



With my colleagues from the Gambia in pingtung for the TICA cup

So many other activities are organize by the division of international affairs, all geared towards making life easy and enjoyable for international students. During one of the functions I was introduce to a host family. I was very happy and grateful to be associated with a family who volunteer to show their love for me. This makes me to realize that not only the school in Taiwan shows concern but the community at large, indicating how welcoming they are. I always feel at home when I visit my host family who cared and show so much love for me. I can always feel the sense of acceptance from even the children of the couples when I step at their gate making me feel very free; Hospitality I can never forget in my life forever.



With my host family at the university and at their home