



Former Canadian ARO intern talks about her experience in Africa

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She is 23 and she has a passion for urban studies. She is also Canadian. Michelle Hoogland, is a Geography student at UFV (University of the Fraser Valley), in Canada. Between May and August 2008, she served as intern at the Africa Regional Office of the World Scout Bureau, in Nairobi.

Hoogland's journey to Kenya is a continuation of UFV's "child-friendly cities initiative", an international project that aims to improve the day-to-day living conditions for children. While working for the World Scout Bureau, Hoogland travelled around Kenya, from villages to cities and into businesses, homes and schools.

Not just about campfires and songs!

On completion of her stint, she shared her opinion of Scouting in Africa. "Scouting in Africa is very, very different than [sic] Scouting in North America. It's not all about campfires and songs", she explains. "Scouting over there is more about giving children the tools needed to succeed in life."

Michelle Hoogland, is now back on the UFV's Abbotsford campus, and working towards a major in Geography, with a special interest in urban studies and international development.



Scout Programme in Africa

Agriculture is a key part of the Scout programme in Africa and Hoogland explains how Scouts are taught to plant and nurture vegetables and even sell any crops they produce. "Once they get an idea about selling produce, then not only is the child learning skills to succeed in an economically driven global community, but they are also using skills that will directly benefit their family."

The Africa they never show you!

"I do actually see some hope; it's not all bad," she says. "I think people from developed countries tend to focus on the negative, especially when discussing the less-developed countries. But I see a lot of hope and potential, and if more people became educated about how they can make a change then it's not all hopeless. I think regular citizens can make a change."

The Africa Regional Office is grateful for the services rendered by Michelle through the partnership between ARO and UFV. Cherie Enns, a professor at UFV coordinates this programme with her counterparts at the ARO.

Edited by Euloge Ishimwe