

## European 2<sup>nd</sup> Gen co-organised a West African summer workshop in Ivory Coast

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We are very excited and happy to share that some ESGD members and supporting European 2nd gen have recently returned from Abidjan in Ivory Coast. We co-organised a West African summer workshop for more than 120 African blessed children. True Father emphasised during his European Tour in 2011 that Europe should have a significant role in supporting Africa. We are glad we could contribute to his wish and that such a co-operation could come about in precious area of education for Blessed Children.

Beginning on 23rd June, we organised a 2-day leadership training for elder 2nd gen and Jacob's children who were taking responsibility for the upcoming workshop. Goal was to share our vision for education of blessed children based on Father's teachings and the Principle. Content included our approach to purity and Blessing lifestyle education and also key components of spiritual leadership. Alongside these sessions, much of the value came from us and the Ivorian staff; being able to share our experiences, challenges and concerns regarding the education of 2nd gen in both continents.



ESGD staff was invited to give the main sermon on Sunday service and thus also connect with broad community of blessed families, both parents and children. Great step in preparations for the actual workshop.

This then led straight into welcoming the 120+ workshop participants for a week-long summer workshop in Abidjan. Using our European summer motto, "Be Original", we centred all the education and activities on connecting to our roots in God and True Parents. This included strengthening our confidence to be our true selves, work on our fallen natures and live a blessing lifestyle in order to become our original character and reach our full potential. Alongside our lecture content, a workshop highlight was the personal testimonies from the elder BCs (both European and Ivorian) who shared how they had overcome certain challenges in their lives to the participants. We also had a particularly special 'Family Day' out where we all spent the day at a local National park together. We enjoyed walking through the forest, playing team games and simply enjoying each other's company outdoors as brothers and sisters.

By the end of the workshop, many participants and staff expressed that they really appreciated the creative and personal dimensions of the workshop; having new experience of creative activities on workshops such as dancing and games. They valued team meetings where they could share more personally and connect with each other more than before.

Based on workshop reflections and the staff evaluation day we can say that our time together was a great success! Both the FFWP national leader of Ivory Coast and the FFWP regional president of West Africa expressed their appreciation of the European group coming there to help with education. Through the project we could build personal connection with elder 2nd generation active in education and willing to develop it further. We believe it is a wonderful foundation for an ongoing co-operation that can now grow and continue between Europe and Africa. We will welcome your support for our future projects – be in touch with us J

European team in Ivory Coast: Sean, Yebuny, Martin, Ntima, Pierre



### Reflections from some staff members

Pierre (Germany):

My name is Pierre and my mother is German and father is Congolese. Having grown up in Duesseldorf, Germany, this trip to Ivory Coast was my first time to Africa. From the first moment I met the Ivorian blessed families at the Church Centre, I was just amazed by how they all treat each other. The feeling of being one family is just natural for them. They expressed an intense amount of joy through their singing, dancing and playing with one another. I saw how powerful emotions can be and how much happiness can be created if we all include one another. Being in this environment made it easy for me to connect to them.

We were able to open our hearts in such a short amount of time. I learned that quite a few of the Ivorian BCs have difficulties in their lives, some not even having the proper chance to go to school. So it really touched me that they were still trying to be hopeful and making God a part of their daily life. They are all trying to take responsibility for their situations in life. Trusting in God is so important for them but they also know that you have to work hard in order to create something good. I was touched by their immense joy and hope despite those difficulties. Learning from their lives was definitely one of my highlights of this experience.

We all were so happy to create this bridge across the 2 continents. Cultural differences between European BCs and African BCs don't really matter because we can learn from each other and expand our hearts to one another. Through establishing friendships at the workshop, I could learn that no matter where you live as Blessed Children, the best education is always needed in order to create an environment where we love and care for each other; where we respect one another and truly feel that we are God's children. Through this experience I could see that we as BCs should all have the desire to live good lives with others and for others, connecting to each other across the globe. We can give hope to everyone, no matter where you come from and who you are, because we all have the same parents.

Flora (Ivory Coast)

My name is Flora, I am 24 years old and I'm a Jacob's Child studying in University. The past summer camp for 2nd Gen we had here in Ivory Coast was an amazing experience for me; we started with 2 days training for leaders. I learnt a lot in this time as it allowed me to understand how important it is for us as leaders to prepare and develop our heart to be a model of integrity so that we can be a better support for our younger brothers and sisters. Since I am always concerned about how to take care of others, I was very happy to learn more about spiritual leadership.

Also, during the workshop I understood God's heart through my relationships with the participants. This is because it was not always easy to deal with their characters and behaviour but still I needed to keep loving them and helping them move forwards in a good way, just as God does with us. I really felt concerned and responsible for them. And I realised that supporting each other is the key to succeeding in our life as blessed family members. Furthermore, I appreciated the lectures, which were clear and deep. And the co-operation with the ESGD team was wonderful – it was so easy and good to work together, planning the schedule and preparing activities. I felt our staff was a second family. Thank you to Heavenly Parents and True Parents and ESGD for this experience!

So Sheloba (Ivory Coast)

Usually when I go for a workshop, I always hope to learn something new, grow internally and get a stronger faith. And at this workshop, I certainly received a lot. I really got a chance to improve and learn more about myself. I really learnt more about how to balance my own personality and my way of doing things with the wider needs of the workshop. I also learnt to be more flexible and tolerant because I discovered that being flexible towards others gives them more space to discover themselves and take action for their own situation. It was definitely a step on my path of developing a better personality.

I also really appreciated working with the staff team. We were patient with one and other. To co-direct the workshop with Sean and Yebuny was simply great – we worked hard so that each person played their role fully. What's more, I could discover more about the European situation and education system for 2nd generation, which opened a concrete perspective in this field for me. One thing I really appreciated is the clarity concerning the standard we should set for our life as blessed family members. I used to feel I was alone in this battle, trying to set a high standard by myself, but now I know there are other people around the world that have a similar goal and approach. So I want to thank you – it was just wonderful!

Many parents have told me how happy they were that this workshop took place. And since the workshop, I have heard that many children who took part are pushing their parents to come to Sunday service each weekend! In my community, there are definitely more sisters attending Sunday service now! So I would like to say thank you for all the hard work of the staff and especially to the ESGD team giving their best in teaching the participants and engaging them in new games and activities, which all contributed to a lasting result!

Kevin (Ivory Coast)

My name is Kevin and I'm 20 years old. I am a student, working now with CARP Ivory Coast and also helping sometimes in my local church. First of all, I would like to express gratitude to God and True Parents to have allowed us to hold this wonderful workshop. When I heard about the plans for an international workshop here in Ivory Coast, I felt really good and hopeful because it has been a long time since we had a workshop.

During the first 2-days leadership training, I received a lot of inspiration for my life. We talked about the blessing lifestyle and I was really focused on it because it allowed me to reflect on myself and on how I can become a good spouse and create an ideal family. We also talked about how to be a good leader and the values to embody in order to develop our own leadership. It was really good for me and I learned so many things that could help me to improve myself.

Then after this training, we started the workshop. I really liked all the activities we did, it created a good atmosphere. I also learned so many things through this workshop – it allowed me to develop my sense of responsibility because it was my first time that I was in the staff team and I'm very grateful for that. In conclusion, this workshop has been a real opportunity for me to rediscover myself, to learn more and also to consolidate my relationship with brothers and sisters; I had a great time at this workshop.