

**SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORS NETWORK AND
Guéde Chantier Municipality
Summer 2014 Study and Internships abroad**



**STUDENTS IN GUEDE CHANTIER ECOVILLAGE
WITH MAP OF AFRICA MADE IN BEE'S WAX FROM COMMUNITY GARDEN**

STUDENT TRAVEL LOGISTICS AND HEALTH HANDBOOK

Variable length summer programs 2014

Introduction

This is a travel preparation and orientation handbook, covering the practical things you need to know to prepare and enjoy your time in Senegal this summer.

Keeping in touch with family and friends

Email, Instant Messenger, Skype, and other VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) options

Remember that Senegal is 4 hrs ahead of Eastern Standard Time in the summer.

When you are in Yoff, in the capital city of Dakar, email, Skype and other Internet phone services are the best ways for students to remain in contact with friends and family. U.S. students are advised to bring their own laptops, headphones and webcams although a few PC's are also available for student use and headphones and webcams can be purchased locally, and the neighborhood has a number of nearby cyber centers. The SNN building in which you begin and end your village visits is equipped with cable and wireless DSL high speed Internet connections. You can set up your choice of instant messenger programs, Yahoo, MSN, Skype and others. In the villages however, your communications may be limited to occasional pay phone shops and cell phones capable of placing international calls. If electricity is available you also can connect to the Internet anywhere in Senegal using a Sudatel connection that plugs in like a USB key.

Land-line and cell phones

It is not possible to make international phone calls from your homestay family or from SNN's telephones, because itemized phone bills aren't available until 6 months later. More than 80% of the population has a cell phone or access to one and cell phone coverage extends throughout the country.

You should buy one too, at a price of about 12,000 CFA (about \$27 for the phone, chip and subscription. You'll be able to sell it when you leave. Skype Internet calls are free if both sides are using this free service. Skype also offers a "Skype-in" service to telephones in other countries, for which the US rates are very low.

Mail

We request you rely on email for communication. Official documents should be signed scanned and the scanned version sent by email. Regular mail is very slow. However, for mailing valuables such as credit cards, checks, CDs, etc. you will need to use a courier service. We have good luck only with FEDEX and UPS, with lowest costs close to \$75. Our building is close to the airport from where these companies have their offices, and if you have need to do this, we'll give you additional information.

Travel

Flight Information

Airfare is not included in the cost of the program. Students are free to use their own travel agent or purchase tickets over the internet.

Please arrive in Dakar on by July 1, 2014; and send us your flight information as soon as you buy your ticket. We will pick you up from the Dakar Airport. Cost for staying in our experienced home stays when you are in Dakar is 5,000 CFA per night or about \$12 and includes room and board. The same rates apply in Guédé Chantier and other ecovillages and communities in Senegal

Arriving at Dakar

Dress for summer as the temperature in Dakar will be in the 80°s F. Upon arrival at Dakar's Leopold Sedar Senghor Airport, a bus will take you from the airplane to the immigration hall, where you will fill in an arrival form and wait to receive your visa, for which you will have paid about \$70 on line in the US. On the form, **put down “SNN, Yoff –Layene” for your address in Dakar.** From the immigration hall you will pass into the baggage area. This area and the arrival hall of the airport can be disorienting when the airport is busy. The young men who seek to help you with your baggage or with changing money vary from polite to somewhat aggressive. Look for free carts in the baggage area and get your own cart if possible. We recommend you refuse the help of a porter unless carts are unavailable, which can occur if several flights arrive in rapid succession. If you do let someone help you, the person(s) from SNN who meet(s) you will give him roughly a dollar per suitcase as you enter your taxi.

We will email you the name(s) and identifying information of the person(s) meeting you shortly before your arrival. One of our English-speaking staff members will meet you and/or your group and accompany you to your homestay family(s). If you arrive between 10 pm and dawn at least two (male and female) staff members will be there to collect you and/or your group and to introduce you into your homestay families. In the very unlikely event that you don't find your contact person, approach a member of the airport staff and pay a small amount (a couple of dollar bills should do) to phone the program director, Ousmane Pame, +77 436-7046 and sit tight until one of our staff arrives.

Do not let anyone apart from our own staff help you change money! And make sure you note the Our staff member(s) will either take you to the airport bank to change money or give you an envelope containing a small loan of spending money to tide you over, if the bank is closed. We will pre-pay your taxi fare and introduce you to your homestay family. The building in which we hold classes also is very close to an ATM machine which accepts Visa cards.

Passport

Your passport is your most crucial travel document. You will not be allowed to enter Senegal (or the USA upon return), without one. If you do not have a passport valid through at least December of 2014, this should be your first order of business. A passport can be obtained in a few days, at a higher than normal fee. Consult the State Department's web site: http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Think about how you will carry your passport (money belt, neck wallet, travel organizer, fanny pack). While in Senegal, you may wish to keep your passport locked in your suitcase with your homestay family. Local authorities accept the certified photocopy as your ID document, and just as Senegalese carry their identity cards, you should keep it with you at all times. If you travel with your passport in your daypack, be sure you have your pack within eyesight or that a group member is keeping watch over it.

Travel-related Insurance

Trip interruption insurance: If you purchase plane tickets with changeable return dates, it is not so important to get extra insurance for trip interruption. However, you may want to inquire about this and/ You may also want to check with your credit card company whether they offer insurance for the purchase of airplane tickets in case your tickets get lost or stolen, or your flight is cancelled.

Notes on Packing

Clothing sends many personal, cultural, and gender signals and it is important to consider cross-cultural interpretations to avoid misunderstandings. Young Senegalese women often dress like young Americans, in tank tops and blue jeans, for example. Older women more often wear long Senegalese dresses and head

coverings. Male participants should wear nice, casual pants, reserving knee-length shorts for leisure activities. It is also a good idea to bring at least one or two nicer outfits for going out in Dakar. Senegalese tend to get very dressed up when going out in the city. You will want to bring both work/travel clothes and at least one or two nice summer outfits, unless you prefer to have these made locally. Many SNN students take advantage of Senegal's beautiful fabrics and inexpensive seamstresses and tailors to have clothes made locally. There will be times you will want to look nice for both daytime and evening events.

In Yoff-Dakar, near the beach, expect warm to hot weather with a mix of cloudy, rainy and sunny days during your entire stay. In Guédi Chantier, the weather will be hotter. In addition to a backpack or duffle bag, you may also want a daypack or carry-on bag for travel items like your toothbrush, journal, etc. All luggage must be able to be securely locked. If necessary, sew tabs onto your backpack so you can put small padlock on it. Make sure your name and address are on all your pieces of luggage.

The following is a suggested list for things to bring or include in your luggage. *Items in italics* are available locally, but your favorite brands may not be, and there will not be much time for shopping in the beginning of the program.

Suggested to-bring/packing List

Spending money

- Books and supplies.....\$50
- Other.....\$150-\$500

Notebooks and school supplies

- Laptop computer** (highly recommended)
- Journal or art book* for academic work
- Private diary* if you wish, in addition to journal
- Miscellaneous*: pens, colored pencils, glue stick, ruler, paints, whatever you need, etc. Office and school supplies are also available in Senegal.

Clothing, etc.

- 2-3 Pairs of shorts** (the longer the better)
- 5-7 pairs of underwear** (and bras)
- Sandals* (rubber or Teva type for heavy use)
- Sturdy running or walking shoes and a nice pair of dress shoes** (most walkways are sand or dirt)
- Cheap poncho** (local umbrellas available)
- Insect repellent** Doesn't have to contain DEET, but 32% is strongest suggested. Badger is a good brand. (If you don't use these products, your malaria tablets are sufficient to protect you from Malaria)
- Potent sunscreen** (SPF 30 or higher).
- Means for Filtration**: An absolute 1 micron water filter (iodine tabs may be added to this water if the water source is particularly questionable, but need not be used to purify tap water in Senegal)
- Pillow and pillow case, top sheet* as many families do not use these
- Bathing suit*: One- or two-piece (a skimpy bikini sends the wrong signals).
- 1-2 pair regular pants** (loose, fast-drying ideal) **and a nice pair of light weight slacks for men**
- 2 Skirts for women** (not short minis and below the knees is more convenient for sitting on mats on the floor)
- Nice summer dress or blouse** with sleeves for meeting Muslim religious authorities (Your homestay family can lend you clothing for these occasions or you can have clothes made at the local tailor).
- Light scarf** for women (to cover shoulders - can be borrowed from homestay family)
- cotton shirts, T-shirts, tank tops, etc.* (loose fitting)
- Sunglasses*

- Crushable sun hat or head covering**
- Tampons** are more expensive and of fewer different varieties in Senegal than in the US.

Washing

- Hand sanitizer lotion**
- Toilet articles:** Soap, shampoo, tooth-brush, toothpaste, comb or brush, deodorant, razor blades, nail clippers - all are available in Senegal, but you may have difficulty locating your favorite brands.
- Bath Towel,** washcloth, and handkerchiefs or camp towel (Kleenex locally available)

Miscellaneous Important Items

- PASSPORT** & other documents (student ID, insurance info, traveler's checks, credit card). Please remember to carry on body while traveling.
- Personal health records:** immunization records, blood type, allergic reactions to drugs and medical insurance.
- Personal address book**
- Prescription drugs** and copies of prescriptions
- Glasses** and a copy of prescription
- Water-resistant wristwatch** with alarm! Or alarm clock
- Belt or neck wallet** for passport and other valuables
- Money belt for cash and passport**
- Electrical adapter** if needed (local current is 220)
- US to French plug adapter** (flat to round prong – easy to buy locally)
- Small locks** for luggage and backpack -- purchase type that can be opened by airport security inspectors.

Other

- Digital Camera**
- Pictures that connect you to home** (nice to share with each other & new friends)
- Multi-vitamins**
- Gifts** - Suggestions include schoolbooks or children's books with simple English, watercolor paints, crayons, art supplies, etc.
- Special things to share:** harmonica, songbook, hacky sack, frisbee, etc. iPods – please use with discretion when in community and keep in mind that extras like iPods and cameras may be considered to be “community property.”
- Fun stuff:** (games, jokes, songs, poetry - anything that you want to share.

Spending money will vary significantly from student to student. One student may spend as little as \$75 while another may spend over \$300 a month for gifts, clothing, postage, paper, toiletries, cultural events, travel to tourist sites, etc. Traveler's checks are a safe way to carry money. Make sure **TO BRING THE TRAVELER CHECK RECEIPTS** with you, since they can only be changed in banks in Dakar, and only if you present the receipts as proof you purchase them yourself. A much simpler option is to carry a Credit Card and take out money from your US bank account, as you need it, from local ATM machines in Dakar. Shops and restaurants typically do not accept credit cards for purchases. SNN will have emergency funds, but this money will not be available for loans to students.

Costs Not Covered

Costs covered by this program are similar to those covered by university programs in the United States. These include room and board (but not bottled water). They include cultural events that are a part of the cultural orientation program, instruction, project material and travel that is a part of the academic living and learning curriculum. They also include occasional celebrations and special group events, some of which are covered entirely by the program and others to which participating students contribute (e.g. pot-luck or picnic style) or by purchasing their own tickets for local sports, musical and theatrical events. The program cannot cover travel or activities that are not part of the instructional curriculum, such as holiday or weekend travel. Recommended but uncovered activities are listed as (optional).

A major difference between this summer program and those given in the United States or other countries is that American and other foreign students come to Senegal to discover an unfamiliar culture and environment and to interact with it in unfamiliar languages. Therefore, although the program is not able to pay for the costs of some leisure activities, or travel, it supports these activities - as needed and possible within our budget - by providing information, advice and program staff or responsible Senegalese student partners who accompany the American students and serve as personal guides, translators and companions. As a part of the safety precautions of the program (see section on security), students are not permitted to take overnight out-of town trips without informing staff where they are going and abiding by staff regulations that they be accompanied in rare cases in which they wish to travel in rural areas lacking roads or presenting similar concerns.

Costs covered by SNN:	Costs not covered by SNN:
Airport reception and delivery to your homestay family on arrival	Optional cultural/sporting events, shopping, dancing
Academic & project supplies, books, computer lab and Internet, R&B and laundry in homestay families in Yoff & ecovillages	Visits to libraries and other academic resources in the Dakar area
Welcome and farewell meals/parties and lunch on the road during travel scheduled In the instructional program	Other group meals and parties organized by students
Group transport scheduled in the instructional program, by rented public transport buses or seven-seater group taxis to ecovillages	Student and staff trips to tourist destinations, within limits of course calendar

Health

SNN runs safe, healthy, and conscientious programs, with skilled, responsible resource and medical people in all of the communities we visit. Still, one must recognize that travel involves risks as well as rewards. Please think carefully, realistically, and positively about your participation on this program and discuss it openly and thoroughly with your parents and/or partners. And of course, please don't hesitate to call with any questions or concerns.

It is likely that individuals will experience illness at some point in any long-term stay in a developing country. The combination of travel, a new bacterial environment, unfamiliar foods and living conditions, as well as the overall pace and intensity of the program can overwhelm the senses and the immune system of even generally healthy individuals.

With this in mind, we feel that it is important for students entering the program to have an understanding of the body-mind connection and how this may affect your experience in Senegal. The immune system is

inextricably linked to and responds to your emotions and your state of mind as well as to your external environment. As you are likely to experience a variety of emotional and mental states during the next few months, it is also likely that your susceptibility to illness will fluctuate. This may mean, for example, that the nausea or diarrhea you are experiencing is caused by an exposure to bacteria, AND that your body is telling you to pay closer attention not just to what you are eating, but also to what you may or may not be “digesting” emotionally.

The faculty will focus a great deal on preventative measures to ensure student health. At the same time, we believe that illness or dis-ease can be a useful teacher, can force us to slow down and pay attention to our bodies and our environment, and can engender compassion for our selves and for each other during our time together. Please reflect on where and how you hold stress or emotion in your body, and what support you may need when you are feeling ill so that we can collectively create an environment of well-being and compassion within the community. If you are willing to allow physical ailments (both your own and that of others) to guide you to greater self-awareness, then you may also be able to see them as a part of the experience of Senegal rather than detracting from it.

Medical Insurance

This program requires that all students carry medical insurance. Prior to arrival, students must demonstrate that they have adequate medical insurance coverage. SNN requires that your medical insurance have evacuation coverage for the rare situation in which you might require medical treatment that cannot be obtained locally. It is worth noting, however, that in 10 years of offering study abroad programs, SNN interns and students have only had commonplace health complaints and no one has required evacuation.

Students are responsible and fully liable for the cost of any medical treatment they require, including transportation to health care facilities. Make sure you know if and how your family policies cover you overseas and bring any necessary report forms. Some questions to ask include:

- What is and is not covered by your insurance plan? For example, high-risk sports injuries, dental care, and optical care are sometimes not covered by basic medical insurance.
- If certain, pre-existing conditions are excluded, what is their exact definition of “pre-existing”?
- What are the financial limits of coverage?
- Does your insurance plan cover independent travel?
- Does it include all countries?
- Are evacuation and repatriation included?
- What are the policy’s start and end dates?
- Does your insurance policy provider have a 24-hour assistance phone number/hotline
- Would you have to pay first for treatment and then be reimbursed by the insurance company?

International Student Exchange Card (ISEC)

Your health insurance should cover evacuation from Senegal in case of emergency. We strongly recommend that students also carry the basic health-accident-evacuation coverage that comes with the International Student Exchange ID Card, which is an internationally recognized identification and discount card available to students of any age, faculty/teacher members, and youths between the ages of 12 and 26 years. The ISE Card costs \$25, which is a good bargain for what the card offers (*up to \$2,000 in medical expenses and up to \$5,000 in evacuation fees*). You can purchase your card at: <http://www.isecard.com>

Special Medical Conditions and Medications

If you have any allergies or special conditions that might lead to sudden illness (such as asthma, diabetes, bee sting, peanut or penicillin allergies, etc.), you must inform the faculty of your possible reactions. You should also discuss these with the rest of your class during the orientation period so that other people will know how to react in case you need assistance. Let each faculty member know where you carry or store these medications, how to administer them, and the dosage. We also recommend that you consider wearing a medical alert bracelet describing any special conditions.

Ask your doctor or health service to prescribe all medications that you might need and purchase them in the US because they could be difficult to obtain in Senegal. Bring enough medication along to last the entire program. You should pack it in your carry-on luggage in a way that it will not be damaged by wetness or travel. Pack all medications in their original bottles with proper labels for customs. Bring your written prescriptions from your doctor for customs and in case of loss.

In addition, The Center for Disease Control makes the following recommendations:

“Food and waterborne diseases are the number one cause of illness in travelers. Travelers’ diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout the region and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting (E. coli, Salmonella, cholera, and parasites), fever (typhoid fever and toxoplasmosis), or liver damage (hepatitis). Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. (See below.)

To Stay Healthy, Do:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Drink only filtered, bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by filtering through an “absolute 1-micron or less” filter. Iodine tablets may be added to the filtered water if the water is cloudy or if it comes from a lake, pond or stream. “Absolute 1-micron filters” are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- Take your malaria prevention medication regularly during your stay in Senegal, and before and after your travel in and out of the country, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
- Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals) and permethrin-impregnated mosquito nets, and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants from dusk through dawn. (Although your anti-malarial medications will protect you from Malaria without additional precautions, it is smart to use repellents or cover up in places that are particularly “buggy.”)
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot except indoors in rooms where shoes are prohibited and along the waterline of the ocean. Do not go barefoot or otherwise come in skin contact with water along the waterline of fresh-water lakes and rivers infested with bilharzias (schistosomiasis).
- Students are advised to avoid sexual intercourse because of the risk of HIV/AIDS. If not following this advice, always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

To Avoid Getting Sick:

- Don’t eat food purchased from street vendors, except for roasted nuts, factory packaged buns or biscuits and fruits that you can peel.
- Don’t drink beverages with ice.
- Don’t eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don’t share needles with anyone.
- Don’t handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague)
- Don’t swim in fresh water. Salt water is usually safer.

For more information, please visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/wafrica.htm>

Immunizations for Senegal

Note: We at SNN are not health care professionals. You, in consultation with your physician and/or travel clinic, are in charge of your health. As you make plans to insure your health, please bear in mind that you also have a responsibility to the group and the program to maintain your health. Problems can disrupt the program not only for you as an individual, but other people and the program as a whole as well.

Travel to Senegal exposes you to health risks, which are not normally encountered in temperate and more developed countries. Regulations and recommendations for healthy travel change and there is often not a clear consensus among medical practitioners. SNN has several years of successful experience in advising and monitoring our participants' health. SNN has as its program doctor the German physician who serves most of the non-official American community. Students will receive a thorough introduction to health and hygiene during orientation at SNN. We expect participants to obtain the required immunizations listed below. You may consult us for additional health questions, but ultimately each of you must use your own judgment, in consultation with your family doctor, as to what you actually do. It is essential (and good sustainability training) to educate yourself. You may want to consult some of the sources that follow. (You may also notice that availability and high costs for some of these immunizations are heavily controlled by US pharmaceutical companies and travel clinics, try accessing your university clinic first.)

A good source book for traveling is International Travel Health Guide by Stuart Rose, which is available from Travel Medicine, Inc., 351 Pleasant St., Suite 312, Northampton, MA 01060. You can also call them at 1-800-TRAVMED or email them at travel@travmed.com. Another excellent source is the Centers for Disease Control where much of the information in this document has come from. They have a detailed web site at www.cdc.gov and publish Health Information for International Travel. To obtain a copy, you can write to them at P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954 or call them at 202-512-1800. You or your physician may check with the CDC International Travelers Hotline 404-332-4559 or the US Public Health Service 716-754-4883.

The CDC recommends and SNN requires that students be vaccinated against Yellow Fever. The CDC also recommends that all travelers to Senegal take prophylactics for Malaria and have current immunizations against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), tetanus/diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Rabies, Typhoid Fever, and Cholera prophylactics are also worth considering, but are low-incidence in the areas we will be traveling. More detailed info about these diseases and travelers' diarrhea follows.

MALARIA is a serious parasitic infection transmitted to humans by infective mosquitoes. The mosquitoes carrying the most dangerous falciparum malaria bite from late at night from to dawn. Symptoms range from fever and flu-like symptoms, to chills, general achiness, and tiredness. If left untreated, malaria can cause anemia, kidney failure, coma, and death. Preventative measures can be taken, and malaria can be effectively treated in its early stages. Delaying treatment can have serious consequences.

RISK: Malaria is endemic in Senegal and all travelers are at some risk. In January, the nights are cool and the season is dry so there are relatively fewer mosquitoes than at other times of the year, but there is a risk year-round.

PREVENTION: Your antimalarial medication will help prevent you falling ill from malaria. You may also wish to protect yourself from mosquito bites by using an effective repellent, and wearing long sleeves and pants in the evening. If you like camping, you can also choose to bring a pup tent with mesh to protect yourself from mosquitoes at night. If you tolerate insect-repellent skin products and are not worried about their side effects, you may also wish to use some of the low-DEET, "activated" repellents such as Ultrathon or DEET-PLUS. These are available through local stores or Travel Medicine at 800-872-8633. Do not use DEET in higher than 32% concentration. We like the natural repellents but they don't last as long and are not as effective in malaria regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS: We urge all of our students to discuss with your physician and/or travel clinic the pros and cons of various types of malaria prophylaxis

YELLOW FEVER: Yellow fever is a mosquito-borne viral disease. Illness ranges in severity from an influenza-like syndrome to severe hepatitis and hemorrhagic fever. Yellow fever is caused by a zoonotic virus that is maintained in nature by transmission between nonhuman primates and mosquito vectors. Yellow fever vaccination is required for entry into Senegal and many other African countries. Vaccinees should insist on receiving a completed International Certificate of Vaccination, signed and validated with the center's stamp where the vaccine was given. This yellow certificate should be carried with your passport. It is valid 10 days after vaccination and for a subsequent period of 10 years. Therefore, as in the case of other vaccines, it is best to receive your immunizations at least a couple of weeks before departure.

SCHISTOSOMIASIS (Bilharzias) may be a danger in parts of the Senegal. It's caused by flukes, which have complex life cycles involving specific fresh-water snail species as intermediate hosts. Infected snails release large numbers of minute, free-swimming larvae (cercariae) that are capable of penetrating the unbroken skin of the human host. Even brief exposure to contaminated fresh water, such as wading, swimming, or bathing, can result in infection. Human schistosomiasis cannot be acquired by wading or swimming in salt water (oceans or seas). The cercariae of birds and aquatic mammals can penetrate the skin of human beings who enter infested fresh or salt water in many parts of the world, including cool temperate areas. The cercariae die in the skin but may elicit an itchy rash ("swimmer's itch" or "clam-digger's itch").

PREVENTION: No vaccine is available, nor are any drugs recommended as chemoprophylactic agents at this time. Because there is no practical way for the traveler to distinguish infested from noninfested water, travelers should be advised to avoid fresh-water wading or swimming in rural areas of endemic countries. In such areas, heating bathing water to 50° C (122° F) for 5 minutes or treating it with iodine or chlorine in a manner similar to the precautions recommended for preparing drinking water will destroy cercariae and make the water safe. Both in the field and at SNN students will be provided with butagas burners and pots for boiling water for drinking and heating water for bathing.

TREATMENT: Safe and effective oral drugs are available for the treatment of schistosomiasis. Praziquantel is the drug of choice for all species of Schistosoma. Oxamniquine has been effective in treating infections caused by *S. mansoni* in some areas where praziquantel is less effective.

MMR: You should have had two doses since age 14 months unless you were born before 1957, in which case you are considered naturally immune. CDC recommends a second dose for all travelers born after 1956 unless you are sure that you had two doses of vaccine produced after 1980.

TETANUS: SNN recommends a booster within the past 5 years unless your doctor is okay with 10. If your tetanus immunization is due to expire soon, discuss early revaccination with your physician.

POLIO: SNN recommends an "IPV (inactivated polio vaccine) enhanced" booster shot before departure (instead of OPV which has reported side effects for adults)

HEPATITIS A is a viral infection of the liver passed by ingesting contaminated food and water, and through direct person to person contact. Symptoms include fatigue, fever, loss of appetite, nausea, dark urine, jaundice, and vomiting.

RISK: According to the CDC, non-immune travelers are at high risk for Hepatitis A, especially if visiting rural areas and the backcountry.

PREVENTION: The virus is inactivated by boiling or cooking to 85 degrees centigrade for one minute, therefore eating thoroughly cooked foods and treated water serve as precautions. Havrix or Vaqta, the Hepatitis A vaccines currently licensed for use in the US are recommended for protection against Hepatitis A. Immune globulin (IG) may also be taken, although it carries a very low risk of transmitting viral infections.

RECOMMENDATIONS: For travelers over 18 years of age, Hepatitis A vaccine should be given in a two-dose series with the second dose administered 6-12 months after the first. For those aged 2-18

years, a three-dose series is recommended. Travelers can be considered to be protected four weeks after receiving the initial vaccine dose.

TYPHOID FEVER is a bacterial infection transmitted through contaminated food and/or water or directly between people. Symptoms include fever, headaches, tiredness, loss of appetite, and constipation more often than diarrhea. Typhoid fever can be effectively treated with antibiotics.

RISK: Risk is greatest for travelers who will have prolonged exposure to potentially contaminated food and drink. Vaccination is particularly recommended for those who will be traveling in smaller cities, villages and rural areas off the usual tourist itineraries.

PREVENTION: Careful preparation of food, and treatment of water, lowers the risk of infection. Currently available vaccines have been shown to protect 50-80% of recipients. Two current vaccines provide equivalent protection against typhoid fever.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The live oral vaccine, Vivotif (Ty21a) lasts for five years. Avoid the older injectable vaccine due to high incidence of side effects. A new one-dose shot (Typhim Vi) is also available. It is very important to follow the directions for taking the oral vaccine. Don't take them if you are on antibiotics or on the same day as a dose of lariam.

RABIES is a viral infection that affects the central nervous system. Rabies is contracted through contact with body fluids of an infected animal, generally via a bite. If the post-exposure treatment is started immediately, full recovery from an exposure is generally the outcome, but if the disease develops, it is almost always fatal.

RISK: Rabies is found on all continents except Antarctica. According to the CDC, there is a risk of rabies in Senegal, but it is not highly endemic.

PREVENTION: Do not handle any animals! When animal-infected wounds are thoroughly cleaned, the risk of rabies infection is reduced. Exposed individuals should receive prompt medical attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The CDC recommends preexposure vaccination for veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, spelunkers, missionaries, and certain laboratory workers. Preexposure vaccination does not eliminate the need for additional medical attention after a rabies exposure, but simplifies postexposure treatment. Any animal bite or scratch should receive prompt local treatment by thorough cleansing of the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.

Upon Your Return...

Some tropical diseases you could be exposed to in Senegal might not surface until well after your return (rarely, although sometimes years later). If you experience any problems when you return to the USA, you may choose to get a check-up and stool test from your physician or a tropical medicine expert.

Travelers' Diarrhea (Information adapted from the Center for Disease Control)

Who gets travelers' diarrhea?

Travelers' diarrhea (TD) is the most common illness affecting travelers. Each year between 20%-50% of international travelers, an estimated 10 million persons, develop diarrhea. The onset of TD usually occurs within the first week of travel but may occur at any time while traveling, and even after returning home. The most important determinant of risk is the traveler's destination. High-risk destinations are the developing countries of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Persons at particular high-risk include young adults, immunosuppressed persons, persons with inflammatory-bowel disease or diabetes, and persons taking H-2 blockers or antacids. Attack rates are similar for men and women. The primary source of infection is ingestion of fecally contaminated food or water.

What are common symptoms of travelers' diarrhea?

Most TD cases begin abruptly. The illness usually results in increased frequency, volume, and weight of stool. Altered stool consistency also is common. Typically, a traveler experiences four to five loose or watery bowel movements each day. Other commonly associated symptoms are nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, bloating, fever, urgency, and malaise. Most cases are benign and resolve in 1-2 days without treatment. TD is rarely life-threatening. The natural history of TD is that 90% of cases resolve within 1 week, and 98% resolve within 1 month.

What causes travelers' diarrhea?

Infectious agents are the primary cause of TD. Bacterial enteropathogens cause approximately 80% of TD cases. The most common causative agent isolated in countries surveyed has been enterotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (ETEC). ETEC produce watery diarrhea with associated cramps and low-grade or no fever. Besides ETEC and other bacterial pathogens, a variety of viral and parasitic enteric pathogens also are potential causative agents.

What preventive measures are effective for travelers' diarrhea?

Travelers can minimize their risk for TD by practicing the following preventive measures:

- Avoid eating foods or drinking beverages purchased from street vendors or other establishments where unhygienic conditions are present
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked meat and seafood
- Avoid eating raw fruits (e.g., oranges, bananas, avocados) and vegetables unless the traveler peels them.

If handled properly well-cooked and packaged foods usually are safe. Tap water, ice, unpasteurized milk, and dairy products are associated with increased risk for TD. Safe beverages include bottled carbonated beverages, hot tea or coffee, beer, wine, and water boiled or appropriately treated with iodine or chlorine.

Is prophylaxis of travelers' diarrhea recommended?

CDC does not recommend antimicrobial drugs to prevent TD. In fact, most travelers to Senegal experience only transient episodes of TD and treatment is rarely needed. If diarrhea symptoms persist for more than an 8 hour period without improvement, students will be connected by phone to visit one of the Western trained doctors relied upon by the Dakar American community

What treatment measures are effective for travelers' diarrhea?

TD usually is a self-limited disorder and often resolves without specific treatment; however, oral rehydration is often beneficial to replace lost fluids and electrolytes. Clear liquids are routinely recommended for adults. Gatorade and other sports drinks are widely available in the small supermarkets attached to gas stations throughout Senegal. They generally are convenient and effective. Travelers who develop three or more loose stools in an 8-hour period---especially if associated with nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, fever, or blood in stools---may benefit from antimicrobial therapy. As noted above, we will help you visit or phone a qualified doctor, who will prescribe appropriate treatment, and tests for parasitic infection if indicated.

When should antimotility agents not be used to treat travelers' diarrhea?

Antimotility agents (loperamide, diphenoxylate, and paregoric) reduce diarrhea by slowing transit time in the gut, allowing more time for absorption. Some believe diarrhea is the body's defense mechanism to minimize contact time between gut pathogens and intestinal mucosa. In several studies, antimotility agents have been useful in treating travelers' diarrhea by decreasing its duration. However, these agents should never be used by persons with fever or bloody diarrhea, because they can increase the severity of disease by delaying clearance of causative organisms. Because antimotility agents are now available over the counter, their injudicious use is of concern. Adverse complications (toxic megacolon, sepsis, and disseminated intravascular coagulation) have been reported as a result of using these medications to treat diarrhea.

How can I learn more about travelers' diarrhea?

Potential travelers should consult with a doctor or a travel medicine specialist before departing on a trip abroad. Information about TD is available from your local or state health departments or the World Health Organization (WHO).

Other information that may be of interest to travelers can be found at the CDC Travelers' Health homepage at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>.

Safety

SNN has had an excellent safety record in all the programs we have run. We intend to continue this record and believe our success is primarily due to pre-departure counseling and students and faculty acting responsibly toward themselves and each other and being aware of their collective health and safety. Below you will find an outline of some safety policies that we have developed as a guideline for your behavior and for decisions about safety systems. Please read through this and make sure that you are clear about the parameters.

The program faculty are the principal persons responsible for risk management issues, health and safety. They will always have the final say, if a situation is ever questionable. Where specific guidelines are absent, SNN advises both students and faculty to be prudent and conservative in their assessment of appropriate behavior. The following was adapted from NAFSA's web site (<http://www.secussa.nafsa.org/safetyabroad/safetyabroad.gif>)

Health and Safety Guidelines

"Because the health and safety of study abroad participants are primary concerns, these guidelines have been developed to provide useful practical guidance to institutions, participants, and parents/guardians/families. The guidelines are intended to be aspirational in nature. Although no set of guidelines can guarantee the health and safety needs of each individual involved in a study abroad program, these guidelines address issues that merit attention and thoughtful judgment. Although they address general considerations, they cannot possibly account for all the inevitable variations in actual cases that arise. Therefore, as specific situations arise, those involved must also rely upon their collective experience and judgment while considering the unique circumstances of each situation.

Guidelines for Program Sponsors

To the extent reasonably possible, all program sponsors should endeavor to implement these guidelines as applicable. At the same time, it must be noted that the structure of study abroad programs varies widely and that study abroad is usually a cooperative venture that can involve multiple sponsors. The term "sponsors" refers to all the entities that together develop, offer, and administer study abroad programs. Sponsors include sending institutions, host institutions, program administrators, and placement organizations. The role of an organization in a study abroad program varies considerably from

case to case, and it is not possible to specify a division of efforts that will be applicable to all cases. All entities should apply the guidelines in ways consistent with their respective roles.

Program sponsors should:

- Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for the program, and develop and maintain emergency preparedness processes and a crisis response plan.
- Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they and their parents/guardians/families can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation and behavior while on the program.
- Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country, dealing with health and safety issues, potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures.
- Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
- Either provide appropriate health and travel accident (emergency evacuation, repatriation) insurance to participants, or provide information about how to obtain appropriate coverage. Require participants to show evidence of appropriate coverage.
- Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding the potential health and safety risks of the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored accommodation, events, excursions and other activities, on an ongoing basis and provide information and assistance to participants and their parents / guardians / families as needed.
- Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding available medical and professional services, provide information for participants and their parents /guardians / families, and help participants obtain the services they may need.
- Provide appropriate and ongoing health and safety training for program directors and staff, including guidelines with respect to intervention and referral, and working within the limitations of their own competencies.
- Communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that participants are in violation.
- Obtain current and reliable information concerning health and safety risks, and provide that information to program administrators and participants.
- In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors and others who need to know.
- Provide information for participants and their parents / guardians / families regarding when and where the sponsor's responsibility ends, and the range of aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond the sponsor's control. In particular, program sponsors generally:
 - Cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.
 - Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.
 - Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
 - Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
 - Cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of the sponsor, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
 - Cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

Responsibilities of Participants

In Study Abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety abroad through the decisions they make before and during the program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.
- Consider their health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
- Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- Inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in host country.
- Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well-being.

Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families.

- In Study Abroad as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.
- When appropriate, parents/guardians/families should:
 - Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor and other sources.
 - Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
 - Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
 - Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
 - Keep in touch with the participant, via Weblog and email.
 - Be aware that some information may most appropriately be provided by the participant rather than the program.

Student Safety Policies

Urban Activities

When in large cities, for example downtown Dakar, you are expected to travel with at least one other person, preferably who knows Dakar. In Yoff, the suburb of Dakar and old fishing village where SNN is located, students are safe alone on into the evening hours in the well-lit and well-populated sections of the old village. However, American students should not walk alone along the highway after dark or on the beach from dusk onward. Each situation should be discussed, especially if it means being out after dark and arriving home after dark.

Swimming

Most Senegalese beaches are not safe for swimming out further than thigh-deep in the ocean. This being said, you can do a great deal of pleasant paddling and surfing without going deeper. When no lifeguard is present at a swimming area, it is essential that at least one member of the group is out of the water, watching swimmers and warning them to stay close to shore at all times. Faculty must be involved in approving the site and parameters of a swimming situation. Swimming without a faculty member present is possible when the site is a known one, but discussion with a faculty member must precede it.

Boating

Students will not go boating unless it is a planned activity approved by faculty.

When traveling overseas it is difficult if not impossible to find life jackets or other safety items. Assess the situation carefully, know your group's swimming ability and make a decision together. When life jackets are available, they will be worn at all times when in the boat.

Vehicles

Students will not ride on mopeds or motorcycles at any time during the program. This is the standard of practice (Peace Corps) and is not negotiable.

Students may not ride in any private car in Senegal that is not approved by faculty first. Public transportation (taxis, buses, vans) is the only form of approved transportation. Travel by night is strongly discouraged. Use reputable drivers and check for intoxication.

Climbing

Rock climbing, cliff climbing, and/or tree climbing is not allowed without a professional rock climber to teach the skill. Faculty reserves the right to interrupt a situation they feel is potentially dangerous.

In the Backcountry

A hiking system in which each participant understands his/her responsibility to the group must be established before students and faculty enters the backcountry. A faculty (or otherwise SNN approved person) will accompany the group on all backpacks and day hikes.

Power Tools

Use of power tools by students is at the discretion and judgment of the faculty. Students may not use chain saws, weed cutters, or tools with whirling blades.

Hitch-hiking

No student may hitch-hike during the program.

Sexual Harassment Policy

SNN, in keeping with college and university procedure, has an official sexual harassment policy. For your information we have described the policy below, and outlined the attending grievance procedure.

“Sexual advances, expression or implied, for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct to a sexual nature constitute as sexual harassment when:

- 1) Submission to such conduct is made wither explicitly or implicitly a term of condition of an individual's education;
- 2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis of academic decisions affecting that individual;

- 3) Such conduct had the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment, or affects such an individual's freedoms within such educational environment.

Grievance procedure:

If you think you or someone else is being sexually harassed, seek help. Any student wishing to file a grievance related to the above policy should talk to an appropriate faculty member or the SNN Center Director. Faculty are directed to notify the Director immediately upon receiving such a complaint.

We suggest that all students, especially females, stay with at least one other group member until they become accustomed to the area, and understand which places are safer to be in than others. Faculty and the Director of Programs should be notified immediately if any incident occurs.

Unforeseen Events

Your faculty is empowered to be aware of any situations that are potentially unsafe. They will, if needed, provide guidance for safety protocols in unforeseen events that could arise. Your cooperation in following these protocols is expected.

Removal from the Program

The faculty, in consultation with the Director, reserves the right to ask a student to leave the program if they are in any way jeopardizing their own safety, the safety of the group, or the safety of other people. Safety is defined as both physical and emotional safety.

Student Expectations

While the sections below cover culture shock, we feel we need a special section on student expectations. One of the main reasons we visit other countries is to discover cultures and lifestyles that are very different from our own. We want to draw to your attention the fact that some of what we discover in any new setting is pleasant, beautiful, inspiring, rewarding and/or deeply meaningful, but that other aspects inevitably are frustrating, less pleasant, not at all beautiful, tedious and otherwise stressful. We propose to you that it is not possible to deepen our insights into a human society and its relationship to its environment without looking at both the bloom and the blight.

We want to encourage you to accept in coming to Senegal that your learning experience will combine insights that are easy and joyous and others that are highly problematic, such as the problems surrounding the lives of beggar children, and the difficult struggles of certain neighborhoods with a crisis in garbage collection.

Living in the Now

You will receive all that is promised in your academic curriculum AND quite likely it will not take place in the order listed in your course descriptions because events will shift to take advantage of last minute opportunities and accommodate last minute shifts in date by course presenters, village hosts, and others. It will also depend much more on you and your evolving learning experience than other traditional academic programs. In our commitment to experiential living and learning, we remain as flexible as we can to setting up independent study environments and resources that respond to your evolving discoveries, emerging interests and learning needs, both as individuals and as a group. This is also a choice to flow with and continue to learn through immersion in Senegalese life.

More than half of Senegal's population still relies on memory and spoken communications alone in their planning, since they have not yet learned to read and write. This is how most of our ancestors lived until very recently. Some Senegalese poets refuse to write down their poems because they remain true to the oral tradition in which poetry is a performance art. The majority of Senegalese still live in the Now, far more freely in improvisational space than is comfortable for average Americans. For example, traditional

Senegalese families cook more than the family alone can eat for the noon meal and put the extra in a “stranger’s bowl” since they never know how many people will join them for lunch. Left over food goes to the children as a late afternoon snack.

Part of what this means is that maintenance typically doesn’t take place until the equipment breaks down, and then there is a long pause while “Nothing is working.” Rather than realizing if you can’t read/write or don’t have the habit of consulting calendars, you can’t write down and follow a maintenance schedule. To Americans, this tends to be intolerably dysfunctional because Westerners typically plan months in advance.

In Senegal, even with detailed course planning, schedules tend to be more ephemeral and events much more spontaneous than in the US, because everybody - including lecturers - lives in a world of last minute changes. Official workshops occasionally change dates a day in advance. Invited guest speakers know better than to show up unless they are phoned the day before their talk to confirm it is still happening. Most people live in large families in neighborhoods in which they have more than a hundred relatives. Funerals and other unexpected family crises often take precedence over prearranged meetings.

The SNN program tries to spare you this type of confusion as much as possible, without limiting your experience of the richness of life in Senegal. On the other side of the coin, you will discover that the Senegalese society is extremely skilled in many real time activities, such as music and dance, folk theatre, ritual and ceremonies, efficient events management, organization of clean-up campaigns, tree-planting, group gardening and many other communal service activities. You may even discover the ways in which this society lives every day as a form of performance art.

Ways to protect yourself from frustration when things break down or take much longer than usual: take a good book with you to read when you are waiting; and a music player or radio with headphones, practice your French and Wolof with others; play the game of trying to understand everything that is going on in the situation; ask questions; journal about breakdowns to understand why they happen and how local people deal with them.

Culture Shock

The following was adapted from the USC Center For Global Education’s Safety Abroad Handbook (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/globaled/studentsabroad/safetyhandbook.html>). While your Senegal program will start with a cultural orientation, the following information may be helpful.

“Experiencing new cultures, and obtaining a better understanding of your own culture, can result in some of the most positive, life-altering experiences students have while studying abroad. When going abroad, students will experience differences in manners, beliefs, customs, laws, language, art, religion, values, concept of self, family organization, social organization, government, behavior, etc. All of these elements combine to form culture.

While the introduction to new and foreign cultures greatly benefits students, it can also be overwhelming. Cultural differences can be so great that a student may need extra time to adjust. This is normal. The new cultural elements a student encounters may be so different that they seem “shocking” in comparison to cultural norms they are used to at home. A student’s reaction of feeling “shocked” by a culture’s attributes can manifest itself in mood swings ranging from anger, to depression, to panic. It can be difficult to explain culture shock, especially if you have never been through it. As Bruce La Brack wrote in his article “The Missing Linkage: The Process of Integrating Orientation and Reentry”:

"Just as you can’t really describe the taste of a hot fudge sundae to someone who has never experienced one, it is difficult to actually convey just how disorienting entering another culture can be to a student without any cross-cultural experience."

Prepare yourself for some down times; they happen to practically everyone trying to make it in a culture they have never lived in before. Realizing that what you are feeling is natural, and that other students are probably experiencing the same thing, will help you to avoid discouragement. Culture shock has its ups and downs, good days and bad—but you will pull through. Many students studying abroad experience times when they

feel depressed. However, the overwhelming majority comes away from their experience abroad even stronger and better adapted for living and working with others.

Culture shock and its effects can occur in a number of stages. However, culture shock is not an exact step-by-step process; every student doesn't experience culture shock the same way or at the same time. When things are going well, a student may feel comfortable, adjusted and relaxed. When negative or stressful situations spring up, a student often lapses back into feeling depressed rather than happy and well-adjusted. Sometimes a "normal" level of stress that a student can easily deal with at home suddenly turns into a high-stress situation abroad because a student is outside of his/her comfort zone. The following 10 steps of cultural adjustment outlined by Steven Rhinesmith show how culture shock can be like a roller coaster ride of emotions:

Rhinesmith's Ten Stages of Adjustment

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. initial anxiety | 6. acceptance of host culture |
| 2. initial elation | 7. return anxiety |
| 3. initial culture shock | 8. return elation |
| 4. superficial adjustment | 9. re-entry shock |
| 5. depression-frustration | 10. reintegration |

Riding the roller coaster of culture shock, a student actually follows a natural pattern of hitting peaks and valleys. The high points of excitement and interest are succeeded by lower points of depression, disorientation, or frustration. Each student will experience these ups and downs in different degrees of intensity and for different lengths of time. The process is necessary in order to make the transition from one culture to another; it helps a student or traveler to balance out and adjust.

Prior to going abroad, students may be excited about new adventures to come. The student arrives and perhaps begins to develop increasing independence as he/she starts to experience a country's culture. At first, a student's expectations may be too high. Through close contact with orientation advisors, introduction to housing, and supported group tours, a student may see things almost as a tourist would during the first few weeks abroad.

A student may be heavily comparing and contrasting his/her home culture with the culture abroad. It is common for students to focus on what they see as weaknesses in foreign cultures. Students tend to point out what a foreign culture lacks; this often leads to feelings of frustration over what is "missing" or what can't be obtained abroad the same way as at home. Students may be challenged on a regular basis by different ways of living abroad (banking, eating, relationships, etc.). Negative feelings and frustrations may reach a level where you begin to recognize you are going through "culture shock".

As a student gets used to the ways abroad, things that seemed like a "crisis" may now simply be seen as different ways of doing things. Most students gradually adjust their lifestyles to be balanced with a country's own cultural norms. The cultural traits that once annoyed or bothered a student generally come to be accepted as normal. Students usually begin to understand and appreciate the cultural differences between the U.S. and abroad. However, if problems arise, a student may briefly return to the "frustration" stage of culture shock.

As a student begins to adapt more and more, he/she may have a new set of friends, may be traveling more, and may even be dreaming in another language. The culture abroad may now become the "normal" way of living. The challenge here is that the better a student becomes integrated to the ways of a country's culture, the more difficult it may be to re-adapt to the U.S. upon return home. The U.S. just won't look the same way it did before leaving to study abroad; a student may see home with new eyes and may also be more critical of U.S. cultural traditions once thought to be "normal". This is called reverse culture shock. Fear of experiencing reverse culture shock should not deter students from trying to integrate as fully as possible while abroad. No matter how integrated a student becomes while abroad, he or she will probably still be "shocked" by differences noted at home after so much time spent abroad.

Making Friends

Your program is designed for ease in making friends cross-culturally. Your Senegalese student partners and coordinators can help explain cultural practices and customs. Learning about a country's culture firsthand will make you more tolerant and lessen your culture shock. They can help you with the language and introduce you to things that tourists and vacationers never experience. They also protect you from the worst blows of culture shock that come from the temptation to only hang around with other Americans. Above all, pay attention to the unique viewpoints you bring with you. Just as Senegalese culture will offer new insight to you, you too will offer new insight to your Senegalese classmates. Creating opportunities for making friends is part of what our program is all about.

Stress

Stress has many definitions. Stress affects everyone differently. The additional/new kinds of stress you may encounter abroad may lead to anxiety/panic disorders, depression, paranoia, eating disorders, and other phobias. Any mental health challenges you have prior to going abroad may become more severe once you experience the effects of culture shock. Even mental fatigue from constant language immersion and time change may cause the symptoms of culture shock to seem overwhelming.

Worldwide Concern

The symptoms of cultural adjustment a student experiences may be more intense due to the events of September 11th and other worldwide threats. Students, parents and administrators may have additional anxiety; they may also take studying abroad and safety abroad more seriously than they did prior to September 11th. Any added feelings of panic or fear related to the international war against terrorism can directly affect how well a student deals with culture shock. Because terrorism is an international phenomenon, terrorist threats in one part of the world--away from where you are studying--may create a chain reaction with consequences for the country in which you are studying. A threat to one country may be taken as a threat to all.

It is important to remember not to fear another country's culture; no culture is wrong or bad—it's just different from your own. If you let world events turn your culture shock into culture fear, you will not be able to fully adapt or integrate into the culture of the country in which you are studying. Remember, counseling is always a good option; talking to someone can usually help to work through anxiety or fears. Students can also talk to a study abroad staff member about their challenges in cultural adjustment abroad. For some students, the process is relatively simple, others may need counseling to help deal with their mental health challenges and stress abroad.

Reverse Culture Shock

One of the biggest challenges for students who participate in study abroad can be the difficulty in re-adapting to the realities in the U.S (otherwise known as "re-entry"). Many students who studied abroad went through many changes, re-examining their priorities, their values, and what they think of themselves and the U.S. The "return culture shock" may be more difficult than the "culture shock" they felt when abroad. If return culture shock is severe, it is important that students are able to seek help/counseling to help them through this.

So what is reverse culture shock? First, let's examine the process of re-entry. There are usually two elements that characterize a study abroad student's re-entry:

1. an idealized view of home
2. the expectation of total familiarity (that nothing at home has changed while you have been away)

Often students expect to be able to pick up exactly where they left off. A problem arises when reality doesn't meet these expectations. Home may fall short of what you envisioned, and things may have

changed at home: your friends and family have their own lives, and things have happened since you've been gone. This is part of why home may feel so foreign.

Feelings You May Experience

The inconsistency between expectations and reality, plus the lack of interest on the part of family and friends (nobody seems to really care about all of your "when I was abroad" stories) may result in: frustration, feelings of alienation, and mutual misunderstandings between study abroad students and their friends and family. Of course, the difficulty of readjustment will vary for different individuals, but, in general, the better integrated you have become to the culture abroad and overseas lifestyle, the harder it is to readjust during re-entry.

Reverse culture shock is usually described in four stages:

1. Disengagement
2. Initial euphoria
3. Irritability and hostility
4. Readjustment and adaptation

Stage 1 begins before you leave the host country. You begin thinking about re-entry and making your preparations for your return home. You also begin to realize that it's time to say good-bye to your overseas friends and to the place you've come to call home. The hustle and bustle of finals, good-bye parties, and packing can intensify your feelings of sadness and frustration. You already miss the friends you've made, and you are reluctant to leave. Or, you may make your last few days fly by so fast that you don't have time to reflect on your emotions and experiences.

Stage 2 usually begins shortly before departure, and it is characterized by feelings of excitement and anticipation – even euphoria – about returning home. This is very similar to the initial feelings of fascination and excitement you may have when you first entered the country where you studied. You may be very happy to see your family and friends again, and they are also happy to see you. The length of this stage varies, and often ends with the realization that most people are not as interested in your experiences abroad as you had hoped. They will politely listen to your stories for a while, but you may find that soon they are ready to move on to the next topic of conversation.

This is often one of the transitions to Stage 3 of Reverse Culture Shock, which parallels the Culture Shock you may have experienced when you first entered the country where you studied. In fact, your transition into Stage 3 might occur sooner than it did when you first went overseas. You may experience feelings of frustration, anger, alienation, loneliness, disorientation, and helplessness and not understand exactly why. You might quickly become irritated or critical of others and of U.S. culture. Depression, feeling like a stranger at home, and the longing to go back overseas are also not uncommon reactions. You may also feel less independent than you were abroad.

Most people are then able to move onto Stage 4, which is a gradual readjustment to life at home. Things will start to seem a little more normal again, and you will probably fall back into some old routines, but things won't be exactly the same as how you left them. You have most likely developed new attitudes, beliefs, habits, as well as personal and professional goals, and you will see things differently now. The important thing is to try to incorporate the positive aspects of your international experience with the positive aspects of your life at home.

Making a Study Abroad Experience Count at Home

Post-study Abroad Advisement

After you begin to readjust to being back home, visit your academic advisor. S/he will be able to inform you of whether your study abroad credits have transferred properly. Even if you are not planning on using those credits toward your graduation, the records are still important and may be needed if you decide to go on and pursue a higher level of education. You should also check with your academic advisor to make sure that you are registered for all of the courses that you need for the upcoming semester, and that you have filled out any financial aid or tuition forms that you will need for that year.

Sometimes studying abroad will affect you to the point where you may decide to pursue another area of study. This meeting with your academic advisor is a good time to discuss any changes that you might want to make to your class selection or even your current major. Your advisor will be able to discuss your options with you and help you decide what the best academic path for you may be.

Career Development

If you are considering a career with an international component, or looking for a job overseas, we also recommend that you visit your campus Career Center. The Career Center often provides various services for students seeking employment, and this is generally a good place to start looking for international job opportunities. If your career plans require a higher degree of education, you might consider graduate school, either in the U.S. or abroad. Your U.S. university's academic and career counselors can be helpful in providing you with information about career requirements and a headstart on your job search.

Careers and Resumes

When you start looking for a job or career, think of the professional and personal growth you've undergone while overseas. If you can present these skills on your resume and in your interview(s) well, you can impress almost any employer. IES, Institute for the International Education of Students, has a useful website that will help you learn to "market" your international experience (a link to this site is provided in the "Resources" section). To sum up IES's resume tips: Make sure your international experience gets noticed by formatting your resume to highlight the overseas institutions at which you studied, or with separate categories such as "International Education" or "International Experience". List any languages that you speak, internships, major projects, or field experience you had, in the appropriate categories. Also briefly describe what you did and the skills and attributes you learned while abroad. If possible, try to incorporate into your interview some of the significant learning, communication, problem-solving, etc. experiences you had.

Study Abroad Re-Visited

Some students choose to continue participation in study abroad, either through the same program or through a new program or location. If you are unable to go abroad for another whole semester, there are a variety of programs offered during the summer that range from 3 days to 3 months. If your experience was a positive one, consider our other January, Summer or Semester programs in ecovillages around the world or talk to your academic advisor about what other programs might benefit you.

Also, if you're interested in continuing your study abroad experience, there are many ways to fund research or post-undergraduate studies. For example, the Department of State Fulbright Program, the National Security Education Program (NSEP), Rotary International, the Rhodes Scholarship Program, the Luce Scholarship Program, and the Marshall Scholarship Program are excellent ways to fund your studies overseas. There are many other scholarships out there, as well as on-line scholarship search engines (some of which you can find in the "Resources" section of this handbook).

Independent Travel

Independent travel is an option for students who feel that they are confident enough to tour on their own. If you decide to travel independently, your student travel office or a travel agent can be helpful. There are numerous travel guidebooks and resources on the Internet. Also, ask friends who have traveled independently to find the best places to go and tips on what to do while you're there.

Internships Abroad

In this section, we'll help you turn your study abroad experience into a useful resumé-builder, and even the start to a future career. If you long to go back abroad, we'll help get you there.

Some students have such a positive study abroad experience that they decide that they would enjoy a career that would give them an opportunity to live and work overseas. There are several ways to go about this. One way is to investigate the possibility of doing an internship abroad. This can be an excellent way to not only

be able to live abroad again, but also to get experience in a field in which you are interested. Many internships are paid; others can count towards college credit.

Careers Abroad

Some students decide to change their field of study to an area such as international relations, which includes a broad background in international policies, politics and history. If changing your major is a little extreme, try taking some international studies classes or focus in on an aspect of your major that could somehow be incorporated into a career overseas. Many international career opportunities lie in the areas of industry, education, government and the non-profit sector. In many cases, you can begin by seeking employment domestically with a company, firm, or group that has international branches. To gain information on career opportunities abroad, talk with a career counselor at your university, and figure out what path will work best for you as an individual.

Volunteering

Volunteering is another great way to go abroad again. There are opportunities available worldwide. In many cases, only short-term commitments are required. However, there are organizations, such as the Peace Corps, that can allow for years of rewarding work abroad. Volunteering can be a good way to defer college loans for a while. Some volunteerships even give you a modest monthly stipend.

Alumni Network

The program listserv that was set up prior to the program will not end after the program, but rather provide an easy way for alumni to continue to stay in touch with each other, network, and learn about alumni gatherings such as reunions.

Introduction to SNN and to Living in the Yoff community

We spend slightly less than 2/3 of our semester in the capital city of Dakar, where we live and attend classes in the old fishing village quartier of the Commune d'Arrondissement of Yoff, located along the beach near the international airport

This guide was first created by Stephanie Ortolano, a grad school student at Tufts University researching iron-deficiency anemia in children, who lived & worked in Yoff for 15 months and by Dr. Marian Zeitlin mzeitlin@refer.sn, original Director of the program.

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Introduction and Mission

The Yoff EcoCommunity Program (EcoYoff) was the original name of the SNN group.

EcoYoff was born during the Third International Ecocities and Ecovillages Conference held in Yoff in January 1996. A small group of Senegalese and international volunteers formed EcoYoff in response to the declaration from this conference, which called for “the integration of traditional African wisdom in an international program of ecological reconstruction (Register and Peeks, 1997). First among the founders, and currently chairman of the Board, was the President of Yoff’s 20-year-old village association, APECSY, Dr. Serigne Mbaye Diene. During his doctoral studies at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, he joined forces with Ecovillage Ithaca to bring the ecovillage movement to Senegal. Dr. Marian Zeitlin, a co-founder of EcoYoff, and original director of the Living and Learning (L&L) Center.

She served as a visiting professor of social science research methods and program design at the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy (FSNSP), Boston, MA. where she taught for many years, and also is a courtesy professor at Cornell University.

In 2001, EcoYoff became a Living & Learning Center of the Global Ecovillage Network, institutionally based in EcoYoff Senegal. This training center is part of a worldwide program of sustainable systems education and demonstration. In addition to providing training for the ecovillages of GEN Senegal, EcoYoff has received since its beginnings about 250 international students and volunteers and many more local students and interns as part of a partnership program in sustainable community development. This program pairs international and local students and other development partners on an equal basis, offers courses and internships in sustainable development, and places volunteers in Senegalese ecovillages, according to the interests and needs of the participants on both sides. The L&L Center and GEN Senegal web sites are at <http://www.SNNi.org> and <http://www.gensenegal.org>

About 40 Senegalese ecovillages already have been recognized, some after using environmental and community assessment forms developed in 2001 by representatives of the founding villages. GEN Senegal is a member GEN, which in turn is a United Nations ECOSOC NGO network of 15,000 rural and urban ecological communities worldwide.

ANEV and GEN Senegal promote and assist holistic sustainable community development and their ecovillages host the SNN/UCLA Summer program.

This guide is meant to introduce people just before or upon their arrival in Yoff, which because of its 5-minute distance from the International Airport and its central location in Dakar, is a natural entry point for visitors to the other ecovillages. A beginning to the cultural adjustment, this guide has come about through informal conversations and insights from various interns and visitors to SNN. Specific information in this guide pertains to Yoff.



Housing

Most visitors and interns of SNN live in a traditional family setting both in Yoff and, sometimes, in other ecovillages. This is the best way to get to know the culture and the people who live here. EcoYoff staff negotiate and supervise these homestays with families who are well known to us. These families in turn express appreciation for being

part of a community development program, which holds discussions and training sessions, looks for jobs for their children, and helps local groups to write proposals and manage projects. However, for some families, this may be the first time a “toubab” (white person) has spent time with them and they don’t always know what to expect.

The key to a positive homestay experience is to not be afraid to ask questions. Yet, make sure you ask these questions to the right person! Usually this will be the head of the household or perhaps a young adult in the family.

Every house is a little different, so make sure to confirm these general rules in your specific house.

Laundry: All clothes are washed by hand here, and your homestay family expects to do your laundry, with the exception of underwear which people generally wash for themselves. If you are unfamiliar with the technique of washing clothes by hand and are interested in learning, pull up a bench on a laundry day! Some interns have preferred to do their own laundry, usually side by side with the women in their host family when they are doing it. Ask what you should do when you need laundry to be done. It may just be leaving your laundry bag out near the washtubs or it may be letting someone specific know a few days ahead of time.

***Useful tip:** Wash underwear at the end of your shower. You’ll be less likely to run out!*

Bathing: In most houses here, there are not running showers. Bathing is done using a bucket of water and a large plastic cup for pouring the water over you. Believe me, you get used to it! Ask where to find the bathing bucket and what water to use. Beware! The water is not always on 24 hours a day here. Occasionally you will be getting your wash water from a reservoir of some sort. Remember that this water is for everyone in the house so take care about contamination - i.e. don’t put lid on the floor, dip dirty cups into water or put your hands in the water.



Eating

This is a subject that deserves it’s own heading. Mealtimes and eating are probably one of our biggest cultural differences. This can be one of the most enjoyable aspects of your visit, especially if you love fish!

A description of the three main meals can help to illustrate the differences you will encounter and what to expect. With a few regional differences, this description is widely applicable across Senegal.

Breakfast: This meal will almost always consist of bread and a hot beverage. Every house will be a little different in the timing, but it is usually early - before 9am. With the bread, you will probably have the choice of butter, chocolate or even spicy tuna spread with fresh mayonnaise. According to your preference, the beverage may be either instant coffee or kinkiliba, a tea brewed from local leaves. Unless you specify to the contrary, both will be made very sweet and often with powdered milk. Unlike in the US where we vary our breakfasts, here it is almost always the same. So beware when you say what you want for breakfast the first morning - you will be eating that for the duration! Of course, if you do want to change, just let someone in your house know.

Lunch: the main meal of the day with the most rules to learn. It will always be rice and there are two versions which several variations derive: “tieb” and “nyari cin”.

The “tieb” is the tiebou diene, the national dish, which is made with rice cooked in a broth of vegetables and the oil that the fish has been cooked in. The two forms of this dish are the “tiebou xonq (red)” and the “tiebou wer (white)”. The red rice is made with tomato paste and the white isn’t. The white rice is often served with a green sauce made from fresh byssap (a type of hibiscus) leaves. The vegetables usually found in this dish are carrot, cabbage, eggplant, manioc, sweet potato, squash and turnip. Other ingredients include yeet (the meat of the conch shell), dried or smoked fish and tamarind.

Nyari cin (two pot) dishes are also known as rice and sauce. So as the name implies, there is steamed white rice served with a sauce. This sauce can be a variation on mafe, a yummy sauce made with peanut butter and tomatoes; yassa, an onion sauce with a touch of mustard and vinegar; thiou, a tomato and onion sauce often made with red palm oil; or everyone’s favorite - soupe khandia - a rich sauce made from red palm oil and okra. (All right, it is not *everyone’s* favorite, but definitely try it more than once. The taste grows on you!) These dishes are usually made with fish and occasionally with meat (sheep or beef) or chicken.

This meal is usually eaten between 1 and 2 in the afternoon. It is served in a common bowl from which everyone eats with their hands (always washed beforehand) or with spoons. Often the women and children eat with their hands and men use spoons, but this varies from house to house. Either the person who prepared the meal or the head of household who is present usually signals the beginning of the meal. Just watch for when everyone starts.

Even though it is one bowl, or round platter, each person has a specific spot to eat from - directly in front of him or her. I’ve seen this space described as pie-shaped with the wide end closest to you. The vegetables and fish or meat (the “good stuff”) is found in the center of the bowl and is for everyone’s consumption. Often somebody dishes out the middle part, or just the fish or meat, especially when there is a guest present. Again, this is something that will vary from house to house. Always start with a handful or spoonful of rice before starting for the better stuff, and watch to see if you will be served or not. In most houses, people do not talk during the mealtime (and if you do talk, there is a chance you are going to miss most of the available food!) It is also taboo to look at other people while they are eating. Just keep your focus on what is in front of you. However, be aware of what your specific family is like because the variations between the strict traditional households and the more modern families will play a role here. Another thing to remember or notice is that in the larger households, men and women eat separately and often children will have their own bowl as well. As a “toubab” you have freer range over where to eat (i.e. a female can eat at the men’s bowl if invited and vice versa for males) so choose to eat where you are most comfortable.

Fruit may be served (usually mangoes) after this meal. Later, someone makes a strong green tea, Arab style. It is common to rest after lunch. During the hot season, it is probably a good idea to follow suit and lie down or do quiet, low-activity work for a few hours in the afternoon otherwise you risk wearing out your body! The heat is constant and while you might not feel too uncomfortable during the day, you may find you sleep more and get physically exhausted with mild energy exertions.

Generally the older boys in the family prepare and distribute the tea, “ataaya,” which is poured back and forth from pot to demitasse glass from a high distance until a fine foam decorates the top. Prepared and served in three separate rounds of decreasing strength, of which the third is mainly from mint leaves, the tea sets the stage for relaxed conversation.

Dinner: The evening meal is always served at some time after sunset, usually between 8 and 10 in most households. Here you will find a variety of meals in different households.

The traditional dinner is a fine-grained couscous made from millet (cere) served with a tomato-based sauce and fish. Fried fish with salad is popular as well as “farcy”, a dish made from spicy, ground fish served with an onion sauce. Occasionally families eat a porridge such as sombia (made from rice) or fonde (made from millet) for dinner. Other dishes include variations on soft-cooked rice - mbakhal, dakhine, ngourbane. You’ll quickly learn the differences between them.

Dinner is not generally a filling meal. This is usually a good thing since lunch is so big! However, if you feel hungry, find out where to buy snack foods - women on the street often sell fillings for sandwiches, like “ndambe” which is spicy black-eyed peas. Fried treats such as fatayas (fried fish dumplings), beignets (similar to doughnuts) and fried sweet potatoes can also be found. Fruits and peanuts are also available on almost every corner.

Relax and enjoy “teranga”, the term for Senegalese hospitality. Guests are expected to eat a lot (learn the phrase “soor-na” (I’m full) quickly!) and complements are always appreciated (“anye bi nhar-na!” Lunch is delicious) but should be said quietly to the cook near the end of the meal.



Etiquette

The first rule of etiquette that will quickly become habit (or it should) is greetings. Handshakes upon entering a home, arriving at the office, and even when walking down the street are a necessary part of everyday life. Even when people are in the middle of work or in a conversation, there is always time to greet someone passing by. Forgetting this frequent ritual will get you some good-humored teasing at first, but can cause bad feelings if it continues.

Here are some useful Wolof phrases used in greetings:

Q: **Nan ge def?** A: **Mangi fi rekk.** (How are you? I’m fine - literally, I’m here.)

This phrase is probably one of the most important phrases to know and you will probably ask and answer it a million times a day. This is used for greeting an individual. When you are greeting a group of more than 4 or 5 people, the following phrase is more appropriate:

Q: **As salaam aleykum.** A: **Aleykum salaam.** (Peace be with you. And to you, peace.)

Knowing those two exchanges will get you pretty far.

Other common phrases include:

Q: **Ana wa ker ga?** A: **Nunga fa.** (How is everyone at your house? They are there.)

Q: **Nanga tuud da?** A: **Mangi tuud da** _____. (What is your name? My name is _____.)

Q: **Foyee dukk?** A: **Mangi dukk** _____. (Where do you live? or Where do you come from? I live _____.)

Foreigners should be aware that some Muslims here do not touch persons of the opposite sex. So if you extend your hand to someone and that person refuses your hand, don’t be offended. That person, or someone else, will probably explain the reasoning for this at that time. Yet, it is better to extend your hand and not be received than to not extend your hand at all.

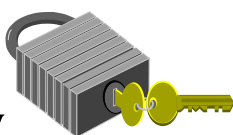
Other rules of etiquette have to do with the use of your left hand. This will probably be difficult for those who are left-handed... The left hand in this society is used for “dirty” tasks and so is never used in touching other people or food. It is good practice not to accept or give things using this hand. (You will find more stutterers around here, perhaps

because children who are naturally left-handed are forced to use their right hand).

During prayer time (5 times a day), be careful not to walk directly in front of someone who is praying. Sometimes this is hard to avoid, so try to walk by as quickly as possible if you don't have a choice.

An interesting visit for newcomers to Yoff is the mausoleum of the founder of the Layene Islamic brotherhood, an impressive building on the beach. Have a Senegalese friend take you inside to walk seven times around the tomb in the cleanest, coolest sand you will find in Yoff! Shoes are taken off at the entrance of the enclosed yard. This is also the time for conservative dress - long pants for men and floor-length dress or skirt, long-sleeves and a head covering scarf for women. Women are forbidden to enter the building if they are having their period.

For people who are not Muslim or are not religious, be aware that you will get into many conversations about religion here. Religion is such a part of everyday life and activities, unlike the usual one day, one hour a week Christian ritual, that people talk about it frequently, especially with foreigners. The inevitable questions about your stance on polygamy (four wives are permitted by the Koran) and your desire to convert should be answered honestly. In general, answering that you are religious is better than saying you are not.



Safety

This is a subject that can never be taken too lightly. Your visit here will most likely be free of any problems, but it is definitely important to practice safe behaviors.

The first thing that should be remembered is to lock up all of your valuables (especially money and plane tickets). In a society where there is much more communal space and property, valuable personal possessions are always kept under lock and key. This may seem strange at first, but you will see that everyone does it. Families are large and there is often high-traffic through rooms. Anything that is out, or within view, may be asked for or shared. This is why there is "just-in-time" management of small supplies, which may resemble a shortage of things such as candles, blank paper, pens, matches, small change, etc.

This is why butter is bought by the pat rather than the stick, sugar bought by the cube and laundry soap sold in single-use sizes.

Understanding differences in the rules that regulate shared vs private property distinctions is a research project in itself and will be a part of your cultural orientation after arrival in Yoff.

Senegalese are generally very friendly to strangers. It is common to get into conversations with people in the street, on the beach, or when visiting friends. This is a great way to learn about the culture and the everyday life around here. However, don't invite strangers to your home if you are alone and don't feel obligated to set a date to meet this person at another time. While the majority of people you meet are honest, caring, interested people, there will be some who want to find out where "the toubab" lives and what is in their room.

A related topic has to do with people who will ask you about help for a visa so they can travel to the US and for monetary support. This is a difficult subject to broach since so many of us are students without a lot of extra income to dispose of. If you are not in the

position to help in these situations, briefly explain why - especially that you are a student, you receive no income for your work here and traveling to Senegal costs a lot of money. It is wonderful if you want to help someone who becomes a close friend here to have the chance to visit you at home, but it is not an obligation to write a letter of invitation to every person who asks you!

While Yoff is full of friendly people, almost all of whom you can greet without problems, traveling to Dakar is another story. There are lots of stories about pickpockets, thieves and scam artists that people are more than willing to share. As in any big city, be aware of what is going on around you. If you are uncomfortable, get out of the situation. You will probably have no problems if you visit the city with a local person. Yet, if you are alone, pay special attention.

A good practice is to photocopy your passport - both the photo and the page showing your entry stamp. Carrying the copy around with you when you leave Yoff will help for random "controls" by the police and will gain you entry to places where an ID card may be needed. If this copy is lost or stolen, it is significantly less of a problem than losing your passport!

Another good practice is to register with your country's Embassy in Dakar.



Health

Turning to health safety, the main things to worry about for most foreigners are water and mosquitoes.

Foreigners are recommended to boil or filter their water, at least for the first few weeks. The water from the pipes has been adequately treated with chlorine. However, cracks in some of the pipes could cause contamination. Also, the storage of water after it has come out of the tap is a contamination risk.

Before coming, consult your doctor or your government's health information offices and follow their recommendations concerning vaccines and other precautions. Laws in many African countries require a yellow fever immunization, and you may need to show proof at the airport that you have been immunized.

Mosquitoes in Africa carry strains of malaria that are deadly and that are a major cause of infant mortality even among groups with high levels of immunity. With that in mind, make sure you are diligent about taking anti-malaria pills. If you run out when you are here, the prescriptions can be bought over the counter at any pharmacy, of which there are 4 in Yoff. (In fact, most medications are available without prescriptions, including antibiotics.) Any fever should be taken seriously. Often, malaria comes in the "back-door" when your system is weakened by another sickness (diarrhea or the "toubab flu"). So pay attention and try to stay well!

Hopefully these explanations will help give you an introduction to the life here in Yoff and in Senegal. This is meant to answer some questions and help you figure out where you should start asking questions. Any suggestions or additions to the content would be greatly appreciated!