

## WORLDWIDE BROTHERHOOD: DUTCH AMBASSADORS VISITING NAMIBIA



After the WYD 2013 in Brazil we, two Dutch ambassadors (Jacqueline van der Lee en Ellen Severijns), were invited by a Namibian ambassador (Hortensia Uupindi) to visit the 'land of the brave'. She had planned the whole journey for us, together with her friend Sirkka. And for a couple of weeks we travelled along with them. This article is a summary of our enriching experiences.



*Ambassadors WWB*

Already at the airport Jacqueline was welcomed by a large number of Namibian ambassadors. It was great to see all those familiar faces again. After a few days, Ellen and Frank joined the group. We stayed in Windhoek for a couple of days to meet all the ambassadors, local friends and family, visit the brother houses and the main tourist attractions.



We continued with a road trip through Namibia, visiting Hortensia's grandmother in a traditional homestead (see picture at the left), and also the village school, Etosha National Park, and ambassadors in Walvisbay.

After the road trip we travelled accompanied by 6 ambassadors by night train to Tses. Here the brothers CMM have a small community and they participate in the local school as teachers. We played games with their learners and we were asked to give them motivational talks about the possibilities for their future and the importance of education. They took us to a hot spring, to Keetmanshoop, a cheetah reservation, the Giant's playground and the quivertree forest. On Sunday we prepared Mass with the locals and said our farewells.



*With the learners in the school*





Ellen had to go back to the Netherlands but Jacqueline stayed to do some voluntary work at a local orphanage. She also spent time with Hortensia and her friends, visiting the university, joining a debate and exchanging Dutch and Namibian traditions. For example: baking a Dutch apple cake (appeltaart) and fitting a traditional Ovambo dress.



**Ellen:**

What I will remember from this journey is the great hospitality of the ambassadors and their families. We were invited into their houses and lives and were given everything they had. I really felt a part of a worldwide brotherhood. I hope I can give these or other ambassadors a similar experience. The life in the traditional homestead also made a lasting impression, because of the beauty of simplicity. It showed me that life does not need to be as complicated and luxury to be a full life. Furthermore, the ambassadors made me feel really welcome and they were a close group. I hope that the ambassadors in the Netherlands may become like them.



**Jacqueline:**

I fully agree with Ellen; I felt at home and that feeling was just like what the ambassadors were singing: 'we are one big family'; celebrating together, eating (too much of this delicious) kapana and even go clubbing together. I was impressed by the beauty of Namibia's nature: I've never seen the stars so clear, how the earth turned under the milky way; and of course seeing all those wild animals was amazing. I learned a lot while playing games with the learners and the children from the orphanage. Sometimes they shared their hopes and dreams and I was touched by their enthusiasm and endurance to make a change, to take every opportunity to reach their goals. Briefly, I discovered a lot about the culture, history and traditions of Namibia.



But, most important, I've learned to discover more who I really am. Of everything I experienced, it was spending time with Namibian friends which I cherish the most. All those moments together were enriching and I'm thankful for all those memories.

**Hortensia:**

This was one of the most beautiful experiences, The first day I saw Jacqueline at the airport I was showered with so much excitement and felt blessed, I was like this is a dream come true. When I saw Ellen days later, my excitement level just went up again. It all started in Brazil and now we were all together in Namibia. The days spent with each other and the other ambassadors was super. Our road trip around the country was another great and exciting experience. We have learned a lot about one another's cultures and our own different unique personalities. The fact that we could do something for those children in the village taught me that you could add value to someone's life by just making time for them and not necessarily always giving material things. One of the things that touched my heart was the fact that despite the fact that we all came from different backgrounds we all lived together as one big family, they ate what we ate, drank what we drank, lived our own lifestyles, and just experienced the Namibian culture. Thank you for coming to Namibia, thank you for visiting us. It was really great spending the month with you guys and playing jungle speed ☺.

***May the spirit of "one big family" continue living in our lives. Remain blessed dear ambassadors. Ondi ku hole efelende (I love you friend).***