

Kimberly Ross, Peace Corps Volunteer, Guinea (1999–2002)

Biography



Kimberly Ross

My village is located in the country of Guinea, West Africa, which is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. The American town where I grew up is also located along the Atlantic Ocean in the state of Maine, but far from the African coast. I am almost 24 years old and the first of two children in my family.

After completing high school in Scarborough, Maine, I moved to Burlington, Vermont, to attend St. Michael's College, where I majored in anthropology and minored in both journalism and French. Among my many passions are photography, water-skiing, dancing, snowboarding, poetry, bongo drums, and traveling. During my junior year in college, I studied abroad: one semester in London, England and the other semester in the country of Madagascar. That year marked the beginning of my overseas travels, and they haven't stopped yet!

I am currently a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Republic of Guinea. My primary job is teaching English to four different high school classes. In addition to teaching large classes at school and tutoring one-on-one after class, I keep myself very busy with other "secondary" projects. They include organizing classes for women who want to learn how to read and write; working with youth on theatrical pieces that inform people about AIDS/HIV; encouraging girls to attend school rather than dropping out to get married or to do

housework; writing textbooks and manuals for the inadequately equipped teachers and students; showing people how to make energy-efficient, environmentally friendly mud stoves; helping farmers make money through small-business projects; creating a small resource library; building benches, chairs, and desks for several classrooms; looking for American pen pals for my students; and participating in conferences led by Peace Corps Volunteers.

All of my time isn't spent working, though! I attend traditional dance ceremonies, take drum lessons, go for hikes to see waterfalls, learn how to cook local meals, go for walks with my friends, listen to the elders tell folk tales, cultivate vegetables in the garden, make tea with my neighbors, swim in the Niger River, practice the indigenous language Malinke, and travel to the villages of other Peace Corps Volunteers. I have been here for a little over a year, but I plan to stay for two more years.

Wish me luck!



Kimberly with friends in a Malinke village in Haute Guinea (Upper Guinea).