



BEING EXOTIC

AS A “TOUBAB,” OR WHITE PERSON, STUDYING ABROAD IN DAKAR, SENEGAL, I could never walk down the street without attracting attention, despite my best efforts.

A trip to visit a rural school with my fellow study abroad peers proved no exception to our lack of invisibility in the culture. Regardless of our desire to quietly observe Senegalese students in their classrooms, word quickly spread among the students of our presence. As we moved from classroom to classroom, a crowd of young kids followed, vying for positions at every door and window just to catch a glimpse of the toubabs. I could only laugh at the way their enthusiasm and curiosity made me feel. Like an animal in the zoo, exotic and on display for the world to gawk at.

Looking back at one of my favorite photos I ended up taking in Senegal, I can't help but wonder where these students are now. Will they ever have the opportunity to feel as exotic as I did? Working in the field of international education, have I ever made anyone feel as special as I felt in that moment? I certainly hope so.

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YOU'RE INVITED! We invite you to submit your photos along with a brief (approximately 200 words) description of why these images are important in your understanding of a person, place, idea, or incident from your experiences in international education. The photos could be of a simple moment on your home campus involving international students, a major event in an exotic location, or anything in between. The editors of *International Educator* will run selections on this page throughout the year. Please contact us for submission details at elainal@nafsa.org.