

FOUNDATION FRIENDSHIFTS AT JORDAN MONTESSORI LYCEUM UTRECHT

As early as October 2020, a colleague put us in touch with Marieke van der Laan of the Friendshifts Foundation. In a Zoom meeting she gave us (the French section) a short presentation about Friendshifts' activities. Creating contacts between children (6 to 18 years old) from different countries and cultures to discuss their future, seemed very interesting and useful to us. The Western children are more open-minded about this, as they actually have more options. This gives children from less privileged countries ideas and encourages them to dream. The Western children are becoming aware again that not everything is possible if you live in a relatively 'poor' country. Great to work on such a project!

Pupils of the highschool in Kpalimé had already written letters and given them to Marieke of Friendshifts when she visited there in February 2021. In the last quarter (pensum 4) our students from 6 classes 3 H/V and the 2 classes 4V, read the letters and wrote answers.

Marieke has been in all eight classes to give a very inspiring lesson about the country, the school, the Foundation. She presented with a good PowerPoint presentation with lots of photos and videos. Afterwards Marieke handed out the letters. The students thought it was fantastic. They had so many questions and couldn't wait to start writing to the Togolese pen pal.

The letters were written on paper due to the fact that the school does not have laptops and that the Togolese students do not have them at home either. Many of our students chose to write back by hand (after all, they had also received handwritten letters from Togo) and sent beautiful drawings.

They also tried very hard to write it in correct French. Something that we as French teachers found important for the learning process. In fact, I think many students in 3rd grade who had to choose French or German in 4F chose French because of this project. It was very motivating for them, not just linguistically. It is very enriching to get an insight into the culture and the possibilities of someone else your age: teenagers really learn new things and we noticed!

It was fantastic to do this project, especially in Corona time when little was possible.

The school has decided that the money that will be earned at the annual Christmas market, organized by all second classes, will be donated to the Friendshifts Foundation.

In October Marieke goes back to Togo with the letters. We are very curious what the Togolese students think of our letters....