

MASCA NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LYCÉE DES MASCAREIGNES

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Good morning Rodrigues!

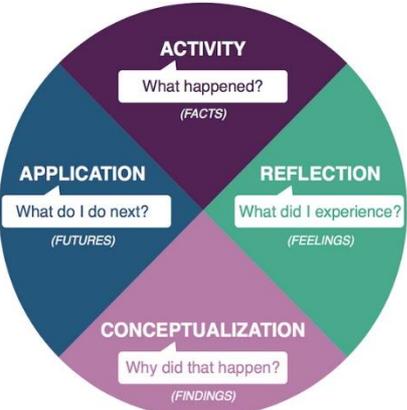
Forty students from the European section (Première) of the Lycée des Mascareignes went to Rodrigues Island last February for an education and cultural trip. They were accompanied by their English teachers Mrs Bax and Mr Vencatapillay. This trip to Rodrigues was a great opportunity for them to discover the beauty of the smallest of the Mascarenes Islands. To visit Rodrigues is discover the handicraft products, the honey business and the traditional octopus fishing. Our students appreciated the charm and simple unhurried pace of life of the Rodriguans and enjoyed the scenic beauty and the tropical vegetation. It was an unforgettable trip filled with rich memories and discoveries.



Learning Differently – The Trip to Rodrigues

The “bazar”: heart and soul of Rodrigues

Located in the Northern East of the island, the local market, also known as the « Bazar » of Port Mathurin, is one of the most famous markets in the island. This highly colourful market has the particularity of being situated next to the beach.



Experience-based learning is so effective because it helps establish lasting behaviour change.

Indeed, rather than simply understanding a new subject or gaining a skill, we develop new habits and behaviours. In fact, according to studies in the field of Experiential Learning, 70% of what we know comes from experience and trying new things. Yet, the real learning happens when we reflect on those experiences.

Here lie the main objectives of our trip to Rodrigues: providing the students with a new platform for acquiring new learning patterns and ideas. Knowledge should no longer be contained within the four walls of the classroom.

Experiencing a bigger world outside also provides bigger ideas.

Azagen Vencatapilly
English Teacher



Actually, the first thing we saw when arriving at the market was the coconut seller. What a treat it was for us to have fresh coconut cream and water! In fact, the Port Mathurin Market is well known for its variety of products and the locals would come from all over the island to sell or to buy the specialities typical to the island. It is quite amazing to see the sellers welcoming us whole-heartedly and of course, canvassing us hard so that we can spend some rupees at their stall.

The « Bazar » is an integral part of the Rodriguan's lifestyle with their typical food such as the « piment confit », « Gateaux cocos » and the well renowned « miel de Rodrigues ». It is fascinating to observe that the market can represent a kind of museum or microcosm showcasing life as it unfolds there. A visit to the local market is definitely a must for all visitors coming to Rodrigues. We enjoyed it so much that we visited the place twice!!!

By Eyshna, Adam and Julie



Rodrigues College: The Elite School of the island



Rodrigues College is the super school of the island. Indeed, this school which is under the authority of the Catholic Church has over the years established itself as an elite school producing laureates on a yearly basis. For information, the school system in Rodrigues is based on the Cambridge curriculum where students sit for the Higher School Certificate examinations in their final year of study. They typically take three main subjects (to choose from Science, Economics or Arts Sides) and two subsidiary subjects (inclusive of the compulsory subject "General Paper").

On our arrival we were welcomed by an enthusiastic Rector (the Head of the school) and some selected students from the school. We were assembled in their main Hall where we had the chance of explaining to them the French system and of course, "marketing" our beautiful school. The best part of the programme was definitely the various class visits which were organized for us by our Rodriguan friends. We had the opportunity to attend some classes, which allowed us to witness the difference in class management and methodology between our two systems.

Our Rodriguans friends were undoubtedly happy of this visit. Indeed, they bombarded us with questions and were filled with excitement and curiosity about our school and lifestyle. We must confess that we spent a good time with them. Needless to say that we decided to remain in touch thanks to the magic of social media. This is an unforgettable moment that we shall cherish for the rest of our life.

By Hannah Thengberg & Ameidee Arragherry

Behind the scenes of Rodrigues college



The day after our arrival on this wonderful island of Rodrigues, we went alongside with our teachers to meet the amazing Rodriguan students of the Rodrigues college which is situated in Port Mathurin, the capital of Rodrigues.

First of all, an English teacher from the college welcomed us with a speech alongside with two students to present their school system and history. Two students of our school then did the same, mostly explaining the French, international and European section.

After that we got to meet personally the students, who took us on a school tour and told us more about their school and life in general in Rodrigues.

We got to meet the teachers of different subjects. They have a different school system than ours. They have different subjects from ours such as "food and nutrition" which is learning how to cook healthier. Their school schedule is way different than the one we have: they start school at 8:10 am and finish at 2:20 pm and have 30 minutes per class and 30 minutes for break.

After the visit, we exchanged about their personal life's, hobby's and dreams... It was really an amazing time of exchange between two completely different lifestyles. We kept contact with some students and hope to be able to welcome them in our Lycée sometime soon.

By Mia and Kim

Care CO: Helping the handicapped



On the 18th of February, we all went to Care-Co Rodrigues, a rehabilitation and production centre. It is a little non profit business registered in Mauritius.

This small enterprise was created so that disabled people's talent could be exploited. They first started in 1989 with a Mauritius branch of craft Aid. It provides professional training to individuals suffering from various handicaps and even provides a salary to the workers making them independent.

The Centre bears the name of Gonzague Pierre Louis, a blind retired man. Even though he is retired now, he still keeps contact with this organization and visits it daily. While interviewing him, he confessed: « I feel connected with this place ».

The spirit of this association is still alive as they developed original concepts of creating artisanal products using coconuts which they import from Saint Brandon.

The visit has been very emotional for us. Seeing handicapped persons making exquisite artisanal products have taught us an interesting lesson: being handicapped is not a fatality and we should enjoy life to the maximum.

By Sonakshi and Nazanah



The Honey business in Care Co



Beekeeping and honey production are very important to Care co since 1994. Needless to say that Care Co has established a solid reputation in the production of honey in Rodrigues and even abroad.

Care Co has numerous hives and uses innovative and latest techniques for the bees. As a matter of fact, they do use pesticides and have installed special plants which provides nectar for the bees. It is to be noted that this specialized centre has specific and specialised materials imported from England.

Hence this technology allows the production of honey and easily manipulated by handicapped persons. Honey production is not the only product made out of bees, they actually use bee wax to make candles as well.

Overall Care Co cares about their workers as well as the flora and fauna of the island. This little industry based on bees and coconut is very reflective of the originality as well as the implication of the rodriguans in providing work for disabled persons and offering a unique experience to foreigners. It was an enjoyable experience and a very memorable time for us.

By Razia, Maita and Imaan



Visit to Le Chou College



On Tuesday 19th of February, we went to Le Chou college in Rodrigues. We were warmly welcomed by the school administration and we kick started the day by a speech from the headmistress. Afterwards, we gathered in smaller groups which allowed us to brainstorm and to share experiences. While discussing about their system, we discovered their lifestyles, their customs and their opinions about their school system. Ironically enough, they found our French system quite complicated and also complained about our long working hours.

We also got to know each other really well and we realised that we were not so different after all. We visited the classrooms and the facilities, learnt about the subjects that they have. It is fascinating to observe that they have more subjects and amazing combination of subjects. By the end of this exchange, we had all decided to stay in touch with them.

Was it a good experience in the end? Yes it was! We met people that we can relate to and the knowledge shared was simply amazing.

By Anne Camille, Imaan and Drishti

Le Chou College



With more than 900 students, Le Chou College is one of the 3 biggest educational institutions we visited in our trip. As in the first one, we had the privilege to exchange about our respective school systems. It was a very interesting part of our trip since having the testimony of these students helped us understand the importance of the differences, which exist in various systems of education. Different school systems mean different ways of thinking and therefore seeing the world. While we, in our French system, were stuck on predetermined pathways, they have the chance to choose from a variety of options. However, the English system really lack languages since only French and English are taught. But even with these differences, it was really easy to talk and get integrated with the students who were really nice to us. The visit of the college itself was also an important part of the trip since we had the occasion to attend various classes and learn a bit more about education in Rodrigues, which is done exclusively in Creole and in English. I think that both systems have very much to learn from each other and that with trips like this one, we work for a better future for education globally.

By Alexandre Bertone

The Ocean, our second home



On the 19th of February, we went to the Head Quarters of SEMPA, the South East Marine Protected Area. This association was created in 2013 to protect Rodrigues' Marine Ecosystem and to establish set rules on fishing.

Rodrigues' main economy depends a lot on the protection of its marine park and it is incredible to observe that the Rodriguans are generally very conscious about environmental issues.

The main aim of this visit is to take cognizance of the various actions initiated by the Regional Assembly to ensure the sustainability of their resources

Hence, octopus capture is limited to specific timing in order to allow their population to grow and mature. According to the SEMPA, this technique has been very successful and has allowed the proliferation of this species in Rodrigues.

After listening to this lecture, we became aware that Rodrigues has definitely an upper hand in the protection of the Environment and that Mauritians have lots to learn from our neighbouring island.

By Daphne, Kim and Anjali

The “ourites” of Rodrigues



For our first trip to Rodrigues, we discovered that there is something very important to Rodrigues and its inhabitants: the Octopuses or "Zourite" as they are usually called in Creole. We had the great opportunity to interview a woman and her family about this very specific business.

We learnt that this craft is from Mother to Daughter. Pass on What is amazing is that this business of selling octopuses seemed the affair of women only.

For once, we were happy to learn that women were the real bosses!!! In fact, it is a very difficult job and can be very tiring.

To sum up, the "Ourites" are really important to Rodrigues: not only is it rightly considered as the traditional food of the island, but to a certain extent, the economy of the island depends a lot on this business.

By **Victor Debes**



A trip to Trou d'Argent



Trou d'Argent, the "must see" beach of the eleventh Mauritian district, hides a legend unknown by most of the tourists. Indeed, during the 18th century, wealthy pirates arrived in Rodrigues island and wanted their treasures to be safe by the time they would come back from their native countries. Trou d'Argent's beach was the perfect place for that: it's access from the land and sea is difficult because of the cliffs and coral.

However, by the time they returned to the island, their treasure chests had been broken and all their wealth were lost in the sand and waters of the spot, hence the name "Trou d'Argent" or "money hole" in English.

During our trip to Rodrigues with the European section group, we had the chance to visit this sparkling, powdery and sandy beach. We started our hike from St François beach and walked a distance of approximately 4.5 kilometers before arriving to our destination.

During our walk we enjoyed a stunning view from the top of the cliffs and from the 150 meters beach itself after we got down. Trou d'Argent's dense coral reefs does not allow any boats to access the spot from the sea which keeps the place natural and away from nuisances.

By **Alister and Kaashif**

THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY OF RODRIGUES



The Regional Assembly of Rodrigues island plays a critical role in ensuring democracy and is the main political structure for all the legislative decisions taken in Rodrigues. It is located in the capital, Port-Mathurin.

Created in 2002, the first Chairperson of the Assembly was Lamvohee C.S.K. Today, the Chairperson is Mrs. Speville since February 2017 and is chosen by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Our visit on Wednesday, 20th of February was really interesting as most of the students had never seen or visited a parliament before. Our visit helped us to understand the functioning of this democratic institution.

Mrs. Buchery, the Deputy Clerk, received us at the parliament and we were asked to be seated where generally the representatives of the Rodriguans' people would be battling hard for the progress of the island. We felt important as she explained to us the process and functioning of passing and voting a law.

On that day, we were also interviewed by a team of the MBC Television. This was an opportunity for us to explain the objectives of this trip and to voice out opinions about the European Section which allows us to experience learning differently.

By **Timol Hassen, Rossignol Florian, Taujoo Sajeel, and Leevehang Johannes**



Frères Leopold: the Artists



On the 20th of February 2019, we went to an artisanal workshop called "Frères Leopold" after visiting the regional assembly of Rodrigues. We had the occasion to interview Mr. Laval Leopold, the owner of this workshop. He explained the methods and raw materials used to craft his different creations such as boxes, baskets, files, handbags or even purses

The raw materials used are extracted from the "vacoas tree". In fact, this special tree can be seen everywhere in the Indian Ocean and are usually known for their leaves. Mr. Leopold informed us that they cut the leaves and let them dry for approximately one to two weeks. The leaves are then sliced into thin stripes. It is said that the processed leaves are strong enough to last up to thirty years.

Furthermore, they use the leaves to make braids in different fancy patterns. The sheets are glued to a white cardboard and are then sewed on the contours to make the product more resistant. We could observe the different steps in the process of crafting artisanal products. First, the braiding of the leaves, then the adjustment of dimensions of the product, the sewing and finally the finishing.

To conclude, Mr. Laval Leopold who has been working in this workshop for more than thirty-five years mentioned that he has a strict time table and that this specific craft is time consuming.



By Tommy and Zina

