

KADRI



THE BLOG OF KADRI AAVIK
SOUTH AFRICA: JULY - NOVEMBER 2005

July

TUESDAY, JULY 05, 2005

kadri's blog, vol. 1 ;o)

So, just a few days left and I'll be in South Africa! Still can't believe it...

I thought I'd start this blog to keep you all updated about my adventures during the next 3 months. Hopefully I'll have enough time to write about my experiences.

Please, feel free to post your comments at any time! You can write your comments in English, Estonian, French... ;o)

For Estonians - I'm really sorry for writing the blog in English.. I probably won't have time to write it in both English and Estonian.

Right now I'm really starting to feel nervous about my trip.. There are still some things I'm concerned about...like some practical issues.. I'm not really sure whether someone will actually pick me up at the airport.. I've heard there's no public transport from the airport to Cape Town. And I still have no clue about accommodation. I guess I'll stay in a hostel for the first couple of days.

My major concern is safety.. I really hope I'll be ok.

Today I got some South African money - the rand. It's really cool... normally, you'd expect to have portraits of some important men on the notes, but the rand has animals instead - rhinos, tigers etc. Nice!

In case my explanations have been too brief or vague and some of you are still wondering what I will be doing in South Africa, here are

some links which will hopefully explain more:

- ASA, network of development education. Lots of information on their website: <http://www.asa-programm.de/site/index.php>

- My project description is here (2nd from the bottom, titled "Internet for Township Kids"): <http://www.asa-programm.de/site/index.php?menuNav=3&sprache=en&kontinent=1&list=themen&land=44>

- GLEN - Global Education Network for Young Europeans, co-ordinating all the projects: <http://www.glen-europe.org/>

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 11:34 AM 0 COMMENTS

SATURDAY, JULY 09, 2005

in South Africa!

I'm in South Africa!! It's just incredible! Somehow, it's still hard to believe...

It is just my second day here and there have been so many impressions and so many experiences that it's impossible to describe everything here...

The flight from Frankfurt to Cape Town lasted 12 hours. I got no sleep on the plane - I guess I was too excited.. The plane arrived earlier, and since the weather was perfect, the pilot flew us around the Cape of Good Hope - magnificent view! Too bad I couldn't get the window seat...

At the airport there were about 10 black people who had come to meet me - most of them children from the Esangweni school where I'm going to do my project.

They had made a sign with my name on it!

Unfortunately, I hadn't booked a hostel before - I had assumed that there would be enough places in hostels since it's not the high season now (winter). And that was a big mistake - most hostels were full. We managed to find one finally, although not too cheap...

Tobi (my project partner) arrived today. We were really lucky - we found a place to live for 3 months already!! It's in a house near to our hostel (in Observatory, a student area, more alternative, mixed) - a lady is renting two rooms of her house. We decided to take the offer - i guess we cannot get anything cheaper. We will pay 1500 rand per month, everything included.

So, now my impressions of Cape Town... We haven't really been around much until now... I've explored the Observatory area - at first we were really scared for our safety here, but now we see that there's nothing to be afraid of (right now it's 11 pm and walked across the street to an internet cafe where i'm writing this). The atmosphere here is really vibrant and lively!! South Africans are really warm and open people!

We really did our best trying not to look like tourists on the streets (kept our map and cameras in the bag all the time).. but I guess we failed. Today, when walking around in Cape Town city centre, we were approached by some guys asking for money. We stopped and told them that we don't have any..

At first they were polite, but then became aggressive and didn't let us go - they grabbed Tobi by his arm and threatened us - they said that they had a gun. Then we gave them some coins. Later, we talked to some white South Africans who said that we shouldn't have stopped, we should just have ignored them...

Anyway, this was a really scary moment for me.. I hope we'll be wiser next time..

On Monday we are planning to rent a car, a Beetle. Hopefully we get something which won't break down too soon. The traffic is just crazy here! It's really difficult to get used to driving on the left side! We've almost been hit by a car a couple of times while looking at the wrong side of the road to see if cars are coming..

Today, I had the experience of being in a minibus taxi - the main transport here in Cape Town. It's something I can't describe in words - you'd have to experience it yourself.. The taxi is packed with people, all windows open, the drivers are speeding (I doubt that they actually have drivers license), they are shouting to the street to collect more people on the taxi... Well, we survived the trip (twice!)

I've taken some photos, but can't get them from the camera now. We haven't been to our project location yet - the Khayelitsha township. There's school break right now - until the 19th, so we still have a week to explore Cape Town and the surroundings!!

We'll climb Table Mountain soon (it's a huge mountain right in the middle of Cape Town).

About the weather. Well, I thought it would be really cold here and so I took lots of warm clothes. But.. it's very warm - I think like 25

degrees C!! Can't believe that this is really winter here!! For those 2 days I've been here, it has been really nice and sunny the whole time.

The local languages are very interesting. South African English sounds kind of funny - a bit like British English, but they have a special pronunciation and some different words. I haven't heard much Afrikaans yet. The black people speak the Xhosa language.

Tomorrow, there's going to be an African crafts market at Green Point - I really want to go there. And we are moving tomorrow!!!

Greetings to everyone & waiting for your comments!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 2:01 PM 2 COMMENTS

priit said...

You should try renting a tank instead of the beetle - you never know when a tank might come in handy!

And as always - never leave the house without your bulletproof vest and helmet.

Good luck surviving there! :D

July 10, 2005 8:59 AM

kirsti said...

Kadri,

edu, päikest ja head starti tegutsemisel!:)

July 10, 2005 10:23 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2005

day 3 in Cape Town

So, today we moved to the place which (hopefully) is going to be our home for the next 3 months! It's a really nice place - both of us have a room of our own, everything is included in the price (electricity, washing machine, fridge...). I guess we got really lucky!

Afterwards we (Tobi, Karen (a German girl studying in Cape Town) and I)) went to an African crafts market in Green Point. They sold amazing stuff there - I just bought a few things - I'll have plenty of

time for that later.

I realized that I'm really bad at bargaining - and this is what you really need to do here! I could only get 5 rands off the price! I, so why not give them a decent sum.

After that we did the typical tourist sightseeing and walked along the coastline where rich white people live. The view to the sea was nice and there were huge waves. Some people were even swimming. The water wasn't too cold.

There were some really beautiful shells on the beach - but most of them broken. I'll definitely pick some later. And Tiina, I haven't forgotten about the stone you wanted - I think I'll get it from the Cape of Good Hope where we are planning to go this week... but just a small stone, ok? :o)

I've never seen this many people in a minibus taxi than today - there were 20 of us! Apparently, for the drivers it wasn't too full still! :o)

Tomorrow morning we'll try to rent the car. The left side traffic is still very confusing and we are discovering unfamiliar traffic signs every day. Maybe it would be a good idea to buy a booklet of traffic signs before we start driving... :o)

Still can't believe this is winter here! Today I had to use the sunblock - the African sun is just too strong for my skin it seems..

And one more thing.. please add your name if you write a comment!
Thanks.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 10:32 PM 2 COMMENTS

Anonymous said...

Hello KADRI This is unbelievable that you are in Africa. I must admit you are really bold to do this. Be careful and I'm waiting your next blog :)

Hanna

July 10, 2005 10:36 PM

Sigrid said...

Dear Kadri,

I am really really happy that you seem to be fine and that

you're enjoying your first days in Cape Town. Also great that the guy came to meet you at the airport.

Take good care and have a good time. I will follow your blog with excitement.

Hugs, Sigrid

July 11, 2005 2:52 AM

MONDAY, JULY 11, 2005

We have a car!!

The major event today: we rented a Beetle!! The car rental was about 30 minutes drive from Cape Town- I drove back the whole way ... and we survived (so did the Beetle)!!! Driving on the left side took some time to get used to, but after 15 minutes I was fine.

The Beetle is so cute! Only you have to press the brake pedal really hard if you want to stop and changing the gears is a bit tough... but well, at least we have the car now! Although, when we got home, some smoke was coming from the engine..

The car takes about 10 litres of gas per 100 km, I think it's quite a lot..

I was a bit annoyed by the attitude of the people at the car rental company, they were Afrikaans, all men and it seemed to me that when they were telling us about the car, they addressed only Tobi and they ignored me (because I am a woman)! I kind of felt excluded from the conversation.. Anyway, I bet those guys were really surprised when they saw that I was driving back to Cape Town! :o)

In the afternoon we went to the most beautiful beach in Cape Town - Clifton Beach. Since it's winter now, the beach was quite empty. I've never seen so big waves in my life - just amazing! The water was quite cold, but despite that we went in - can't really call it swimming, because the waves were just too big!

I think this sounds a bit crazy but I realized today that I really like those minibus taxis....they are packed with people, the drivers are crazy (no speed limit for them), but somehow I feel safe there and I don't mind the crowd.

We are starting our project next Monday, so there's still time to do

other stuff.

The plan is to climb Table Mountain and go to the Cape of Good Hope in the next days...

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 11:42 AM 0 COMMENTS

TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2005

Cape Town & Dolphin Beach

We went to the German embassy today to let them know that we are in South Africa. They didn't really care about us, just as we expected... Didn't even make copies of our passports..

Afterwards we just walked around in Cape Town, went to Bo Kaap - the Cape Malay district... really nice and colourful houses there. Too bad I forgot to take the batteries of my camera... We had lunch in a vegetarian Cafe called Lola's (Lola, next time when I'm there I'll take a picture and send it to you!).

Then, afterwards we took our lovely Beetle and drove out of Cape Town to Dolphin Beach (the plan was to go to Bloubergstrand, but since there were no signs anywhere on the road, we didn't find it). I'm really getting used to the car and driving on the left side is not a problem any more...

There is a magnificent view from Dolphin Beach to Cape Town and Table Mountain!! And a great view to the ocean.. We stayed until sunset - it was one of the most beautiful sunsets I've ever seen.. We took lots of great pictures - still haven't had the chance to get them in the computer..

Afterwards we went to a bar and had cheap South African wine (5 rands a glass! - that's 10 EEK!)

We were planning to go to the Cape of Good Hope tomorrow, but according to the weather forecast it will be cloudy - in that case we'll postpone it. Then it's going to be a day of museums (South African Museum, National Gallery).

Hopefully we'll manage to climb Table Mountain this week..

It's really difficult to get used to the sun setting so early - about 6 pm. It gets dark early and the sun rises as late as 8 am. So, I'm always confused about the time and I get sleepy early in the evening....

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:27 PM 0 COMMENTS

THURSDAY, JULY 14, 2005

Exploring Cape Town ..

Yesterday we went to the South African Museum - it was much smaller than I expected. The exhibition of South African culture & peoples was really interesting, although it was quite small. The rest of the museum was mostly about fish & birds & dinosaurs, which wasn't as interesting.

Yesterday evening we went to dinner at George's place (our project partner). He lives in Parow - it's about 20 km outside Cape Town... we had some trouble finding the place.

It turned out to be party rather than a dinner. George had invited some of his friends and teachers from the Esangweni school. The music was great, we danced a lot and really enjoyed ourselves.

We had planned to climb Table Mountain today, but as it was cloudy in the morning we had to postpone it again. So, we went to the city instead and visited 2 museums. First, the District Six museum - I think it's the best museum in Cape Town, really worth seeing. In the 60s, the white minority forcibly removed the black and coloured inhabitants of the District Six from their homes and relocated them to the Cape Flats. The museum has lots of personal stories & experiences from that time...

The other museum was a really small one - the Bo-Kaap museum in the Malay quarter.

If anyone wants to read some South African literature, I can recommend 'An Instant In the Wind' by Andre Brink - really good.. I'm just finishing it now and today I bought another book by him...

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 9:54 PM 2 COMMENTS

Alvar said...

Tsauka,
kõik mis kirjutad on VÄGA huvitav ja vahest ka hirmutav:)
Kõige hea juures tekkis aga mõte, et ega sa juhuslikult
mingeid pilte üles ei tahaks panna?
Seniks kalli- kalli js jõudu aafriklastega suhtlemisel.
A.:)

July 14, 2005 1:09 PM

mare said...

hei kallis kadri, loen huviga su paevikut...muidugi see uks
vahejuhtum oli paris hirmutav(motlesin vaesele ingridile...)aga
muidugi on see koik nii teistmoodi seal ja nii ponev. ootan
uviga pilte ka....
kalli, mare

July 15, 2005 8:05 AM

SATURDAY, JULY 16, 2005

Table Mountain!!

So, we finally did it! We climbed the Table Mountain today!! In case you haven't heard about the Table Mountain - it's a mountain in Cape Town with a flat top, a bit more than 1000 m high. Here is a photo of the mountain:

http://darkroom.com.au/darkroom/catalog/images/IMG_1379.jpg

That's the highest mountain I've climbed so far! :o) (in Estonia, the highest "peak" is 318 m :o)

We didn't start at the very bottom, but drove up to the cable car station where we chose one of the many hiking routes up the mountain (I guess the easiest one). Still, it was quite hard. It took us 2 hours to climb the mountain. The sun was shining all the time, it was really hot and at some point (during the most difficult sections) I started wondering why I chose to do this on foot instead of taking the cable car! :o)

But once I reached to top, I was really glad that I had climbed! It was very windy at the top and the land was not as barren as I had expected - there was low vegetation, no trees, only some bushes. Tiina, I wish you had been there - you would have loved to see the plants there (I had never seen any of those in Europe!) - I picked a stone from the top and a couple of flowers.

We walked at the top (as I said, the mountain is flat), took lots of pictures, had a picnic and then climbed down - for me, coming down was more difficult than going up - you had to be really careful not to slip on the stones. I guess my legs will really hurt tomorrow..

Afterwards, we drove to Signal Hill (next to Table Mountain) and again took some pictures there. On our way back, we drove to Camps Bay beach and relaxed there for a couple of hours.

We've discovered a great eating place a few minutes from our house - a cafe/restaurant called Diva (it's supposed to be Italian food) - the vegetarian lasagna is delicious there!

We are having some trouble with our car - it takes too much oil, like about 1 litre per day!! (it uses oil instead of water to cool the engine). On Monday we will go to the car rental to have it checked! Meanwhile, if anyone reading this knows what the problem might be (why it takes so much oil), please let me know!! The car is Volkswagen Beetle, quite old, I think made at the beginning of the 80s.

Yesterday night we got home really late, so there was no time to come to the internet cafe to write the blog. We had a great day - the weather was perfect, so in the morning we went to the Kirstenbosch botanical gardens. It's one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen in my life... I won't even attempt to describe it here, you have to see the photos!

I've taken lots of photos, so that both of my memory cards are full and I had to buy an extra one (which after today is full too!) - I can't wait to share the photos with you, but I can do it only next week when we start our project.

After the botanical gardens we met with our friends from Khayelitsha who took us to townships. We started with Nyanga, then went to Guguletu and finally, Khayelitsha. It's just such a huge contrast... the rich white people living in their villas along the beaches and poor black people in shacks in the townships... The worst are the informal settlements, the squatter camps...

We also drove past the school where we'll be working starting from next week. We went to a couple of bars in the townships. In the first one, they sold only meat!! You could buy the meat and then they would cook it for you and you'd eat it there. So, for me there was nothing to eat there. Then, we went to another bar (in Khayelitsha, near our school) - it was really crowded there.. we danced, played pool and enjoyed ourselves. Afterwards, a teacher from Esangweni (Thabs) invited us to his place - there the party continued (again dancing, eating (meat) - it seems that the black people here don't eat much else than meat!)..

We got home really late and I felt that I was tired - there were too many emotions for one day. While driving back, we saw an accident on the highway - 2 cars had crashed and a person was lying on the road.... This was quite shocking to me. Quite close to our place I almost turned to the opposite lane (for a moment I forgot about the left side driving...)...

While in the townships, I felt really safe because our friends were sort

of protecting us. Otherwise it would have been impossible for us as white people to go there on our own..

Some of you back in Europe have been checking the weather forecast for Cape Town - don't believe it when it says 13 degrees!! It's much warmer. So far, only one day has been cloudy, otherwise really warm and sunny. The sun is so strong that I've had to use sunblock every day and despite that, I've become quite tanned...

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 11:50 AM 1 COMMENTS

Anonymous said...

tsau Kadri,

su tegemisi põnev jälgida, mida kõike sa selle lühikese ajaga juba teinud-näinud oled... hetkel võib neid kohti su kirjelduste toel ette kujutada ning hiljem fotodega võrrelda...loodetavasti saab peagi ka fotojäädvustusi näha:)

Päikest,
kirsti

July 17, 2005 11:46 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 17, 2005

SA National Gallery...

Today has been just a quiet Sunday. The weather is quite cold... now we finally felt the wind they were all talking about.. and it's raining. There's a "tablecloth" on Table Mountain (this is how they call the clouds covering the mountain).

We went to the South African National Gallery and saw some really impressive works of art there. The entrance to the museum is free on Saturdays, so I will definitely go back another time and take some pictures.

Afterwards, we went to the Waterfront and had some rooibos tea there (a typical South African drink).

When we returned home we saw that our landlady, a Muslim woman called Ielhaam had cleaned our rooms! I was so embarrassed, because my room was such a mess... She is really so nice to us! Also,

she gave both of us 2 necklaces she had made herself...

In South Africa, Muslims are very different from what we typically think of them; no strict codes for behaviour, clothing etc.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 8:02 PM 0 COMMENTS

TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2005

First day at school!

We had a lazy day yesterday, didn't do much during the day, just rested because we had to get up at 6.30 today. In the evening we went to the Independent Armchair Theatre near our house and watched a South African movie called "Forgiveness" - I don't have time now to describe it here, but it was a really good (and very sad) movie.

Today we had our first day at school! We had to be there at 8 am. It took us about 40 minutes to drive there. The weather is very cold and rainy today...

The principal introduced us to the teachers, we also met some students, but we'll see all of them on Friday at a school meeting. Then, we were taken to the computer lab where we spent the whole day. It was a chaos there - nobody knew where to find CDs with software, passwords were missing, some computers broken etc. There is a new computer lab with good computers, but because some small parts are still missing, it cannot be used. And it has been like this for 3 months.

It came as a bit of a surprise to us that there was no Internet! But they said that they will have it by the end of this week.. Let's hope so..

Today we spent the day installing Windows in some of the computers and repairing a computer which broke down just today (it was the best one!!).

Tomorrow we'll set up a schedule of classes we will be teaching. We also need to give some classes to teachers.

It is very cold inside the school - there is no heating. People are wearing hats and coats all the time. I had my warmest clothes on and I was still cold.. even in the server room, where it's usually warm..

Probably the best experience today was hearing the school choir sing!! This was amazing! There were about 16 kids, both boys and

girls.. and they really sounded like a professional choir! Their voices were really strong! Tiina, you would have loved to hear them sing! We are planning to record them.. They'll be practicing a lot because there will be a competition in September.

Right now I'm quite tired, but luckily tomorrow we can sleep a bit longer...

I really feel that I would like to go somewhere out, take a walk alone, run, do sports, anything... but here you cannot go out alone in the dark.. and it gets dark at about 6 pm..

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 8:31 AM 0 COMMENTS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2005

We have the Internet!!

So, we managed to get Internet today! Tobi discovered that there wasn't any major problem - just some wires weren't properly connected! The connection is not too fast, but it's ok for now.

I forgot to write about our car yesterday. We called the car rental company and they came and towed the car. Then they called us a couple of hours later and said that the problem was that we had put too much oil in the car! They had to drain about a litre of oil! Luckily they didn't charge us for that!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 3:40 PM 1 COMMENTS

mare said...

kallis kadri!loen huviga nii tihti kui võimalik su seiklustest seal...kui vahva, et sa niimoodi koigiga oma muljeid jaga!!!

see on lausa uskumatu, et sa hakkad opetaja ametit seal pidama...

muide, karinil-adamil varastati kaamera sveitsis ara (600 pilti):(

tervitusi-mare

July 21, 2005 11:36 AM

FRIDAY, JULY 22, 2005

Photos!!

So, here comes what you've all been waiting for - photos! We've taken lots of photos, especially during the first week. I've selected just some of them - the choice was really difficult! The sequence of the photos is a bit messed up, but you will also find comments: <http://www.kadri10.pri.ee/gallery.php> - you are welcome to check this gallery for updates once in a while!

Otherwise, it has been more or less the same for the last 4 days. We are spending all of our time in the computer lab. There's quite a lot to do here - we need to fix some computers, find drivers etc. Next week we will start with our classes. I can't wait! Yesterday, we spent almost 10 hours in the computer lab! In the end I felt a bit tired and stressed.. But it's just the beginning and hopefully it will be better next week.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:04 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, JULY 25, 2005

Cape of Good Hope ..



The weather was just perfect on the weekend, so we decided to go to the Cape of Good Hope. Actually, the plan was to rent bikes from Simon's Town and cycle to the Cape Point, but because we didn't find any bike rental there, we went by car. The views from the road were magnificent. Because the Cape of Good Hope is in a

nature reserve, we had to pay the entrance fee 35 rands each. But it was well worth it! The landscape was unique and the views to the sea were magnificent! And we saw ostriches!

Tiina, I've got some more stones & shells for you!

The Cape Point is the most southwestern point in Africa. The air is really fresh there, as it comes straight from the Arctic.

We spent the whole day there - there were 5 of us - Tobi, I, Karen (a German girl studying here) and a Dutch couple. On our way back we stopped at a beach to view the sunset and had dinner in a fish restaurant in a small town called Kommetjie (luckily, I found a

vegetarian pizza in the menu!). I was driving back to Cape Town - it was really difficult - the road was narrow, very curvy and going downhill all the time.. and it was on the edge of a mountain! Besides, it was dark.. Luckily, we survived.



I forgot ... on our way to the Cape of Good Hope we stopped at Simon's Town and went to see the penguins! There is a colony of African penguins there. They were cute, but they smelled!

Sunday was a day for relaxing. We went to the Camps Bay Beach and spent the whole day there. And I went swimming! Actually, you can't really call it swimming, because the waves are too high to be able to swim. A couple of times I was knocked over by the waves.. The water was cold, but after a while I got used to it and didn't want to come out! :o)

At the beach, there are some guys who want to sell stuff to people - it's mostly crafts (small figures, keyholders, drums..) - at least 10 of them passed us and wanted us to buy their stuff. In the end, a woman came to us and started playing some musical instrument and wanted us to give her money for that...

Now some bad news... On Saturday my camera broke! :((((The lens got stuck - it doesn't come out and doesn't go in either.. I'm really sad about this... It looks like this is something which happens quite often to Canon cameras. Well, nothing has happened to mine for 3 years and now, just when I need the camera the most... Now I'll have to see how much they charge for repairing it and if it's too much, I'll have to buy a new one..

Tobi and I have tried to repair the camera on our own, but unsuccessfully so far..

While trying to fix it, we both almost got ourselves killed!! Since we don't have a screwdriver, I used Tobi's pocket knife to get the screws loose... but the knife somehow slipped in my hand and it almost cut half of my finger off.. it was bleeding really bad and I was thinking of going to the hospital even, but then luckily it stopped... I was really in panic! Tobi, thanks again for your support!

Yesterday, we tried to fix the camera again... and Tobi got two electric shocks from the flash battery!!!

It's kind of strange - so far nothing has happened to us in the township or on the road, but this small camera almost killed us! :o)

I saw a huge bug in my room the other day - it was at least 3 cm long!! Really scary... and it can climb vertically.. that means it can climb to my bed!

To Karin & Adam - I made apple burgers!! Although I couldn't find any dark bread here, the burgers were still delicious!!

Check out my gallery (<http://kadri10.pri.ee/gallery.php>) for new photos.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:57 PM 0 COMMENTS

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2005

School life..



Some of you might be more interested in what we are doing in the Esangweni school. So, I'll write a few words about that.

It's now our second week at Esangweni school. (On the picture, there's one part of the school, seen from the parking lot - can you see our Beetle there?)

By now, we have met with all of the groups - photography, newsletter, webpage and the new one we started - the movie group. On the first meetings there have been quite many students in each group - more than 20. But many of them didn't come to the 2nd meeting.

We've set up a plan of what we are doing with them and we are trying to stick to it. Of course, we also have to be flexible and prepared for unexpected situations. For example, at the moment it is quite difficult to do anything with the photography group, because the school's digital camera (the only one they have) is broken. Also, we are having a similar problem with the movie group - the sound card of the multimedia computer is not working...

At first it was really difficult to understand the students, because their mother tongue is not English, but Xhosa and it was difficult to get

used to their accent. (We are trying to learn some Xhosa, but we are not doing very well - I still can't do any of those click sounds...) Also, it is very difficult to remember the names of all students.. But it seems that once we get their attention in the groups, they seem to be really interested in what we are telling them and they really want to learn.

Besides teaching the students and teachers, we are also repairing computers (at least trying to) and installing software in the computer lab.

The school also has a webpage, which we started updating:
<http://esangweni.wizzy.org.za/webpage/index.html>

Right now I feel that I'm getting used to it here and I'm really enjoying it, although during the first week it was quite difficult to settle in.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:44 PM 1 COMMENTS

Sigrid said...

Dear Kadri and Tobi,

It sound like you're doing fine. It is not easy to settle in a different environment where it is difficult to understand the rules and what motivates people around you. I thnik it is an important part of the experience, that you will learn new things every day and that you will feel how long it takes to understand just a glimps of this different culture.

All the best, Sigrid
July 27, 2005 8:07 AM

SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2005

Internet is down at Esangweni..

I'm writing this from an internet cafe .. When we arrived at school Friday morning, the Internet was not working. Nobody had any idea what had happened.. and we couldn't fix it either. Something must be wrong with the Linux server..
Hopefully the connection will be restored next week..

Otherwise, Friday was a great day - we had the movie group in the afternoon and we really had a great time with the children.. They were really excited about the video cameras.. We'll start shooting a movie about the school on Monday.

I'm really exhausted today - we went out last night and had some drinks in a bar at Long Street..

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 7:21 PM 0 COMMENTS

August

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 03, 2005

still no Internet...

There is still no Internet at Esangweni.. The server is fixed but there are still problems connecting to the internet. I'm writing this from an Internet cafe.

I've done lots of interesting stuff last weekend & it has been really interesting at school too... I'll write about it when we get the internet. Also, I've taken lots of pictures, which are waiting to be uploaded...

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 8:28 PM 0 COMMENTS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 05, 2005

July 29 - Aug 6

It's been quite a few days since I last wrote the blog - the Internet at Esangweni went down last week. There was something wrong with the Linux server. The internet is back now, but it's very slow for some reason...

We had a great weekend! Although I was still exhausted from Friday night - we went out to a bar at Long Street - the drum music was

amazing! On Saturday we planned to go swimming but when we got to the pool, it turned out that it was closed for a week - there was no reason given!

At night we (Tobi, Karen, Lucka and I) went to a gospel concert in Bellville (about 30 min drive from Cape Town) - it took us some time to find the place. But the concert was just amazing, it was a choir called "Desire". Tiina, I wish you had been there - you would have loved it! I bought their CD for you + I have a CD of another choir! Also, I recorded parts of the concert with my digital camera - but the sound is not too good there.. The concert lasted 4,5 hours!! I was a bit surprised about the reaction of the audience during the concert - they were quite noisy and when they liked some song or parts of it, they raised their arms, stood up and danced!! Very much unlike European audiences!

31 July.. it's already the end of July... time is going too fast! It was a great day, the weather was perfect. We climbed Lion's Head! It took us less time than climbing Table Mountain, but some sections were more difficult, because you had to climb vertically. Luckily, there were chains and ladders. I really enjoyed the climb! Now the plan is to climb a mountain every weekend! :)

The views from the top were amazing.. and we did some crazy tricks there -it looks much worse on the pictures than it really was!! The only thing I didn't like was that it was much too crowded at the top (and on the way to the top)...Many people were climbing with their dogs, carrying the dogs on their backs as they climbed the parts with ladders and chains! :) Afterwards, we drove to Muizenberg and Kalk Bay, went to a beach and had dinner.

I'm quite used to the school now, the groups are doing fine and we are having a great time with them. We met with the movie group on Monday morning at 7.30 to film students coming to school. It was freezing cold outside, but almost all members of the movie group showed up! We even managed to film something, but the shots were quite shaky (we didn't have a tripod) and the kids just loved the zoom function (although we told them not to use it too often!)

A student from school, Mandisi, took us to a beach in Khayelitsa. It was nice there, but the beach was rather deserted and it would probably be dangerous to go there alone. But it was a good relaxation & we got some great pictures!

For those who know a bit about computers, here's something quite funny - the principal's computer was brought to us - they said it was too slow and asked us to do something about it. What we discovered was quite 'interesting' - the computer had Windows XP with 32 MB of RAM!! :) After adding more memory and removing a bunch of viruses (there was no antivirus software!), the computer worked just fine!

Yesterday was an exhausting day - but it was really great! We had lots of stuff to do at school. During the lunchbreak we attended the meeting of the HIV group of the school. The group is planning to visit an HIV hospice next weekend - we are planning to join them. In the afternoon, we had two classes. First, there was training for the teachers - we taught them how to use a computer program for educators. It was quite difficult to teach the teachers, because they were incredibly noisy during the training - much more than the students! :o)

Right after the teachers training, we had the webpage group for the advanced learners. We taught them CSS - at first, they were really confused about it - but when they got it, they were really happy and excited about it! I was really glad in the end!

At 5, when we finished, we were invited by a caretaker at school to his place. He lives about 5 minutes from the school. He showed us his house - it was not a shack, but built from brick - although he had extended the house himself - the material used for the extensions was mainly cardboard...

It was amazing to hear this man talking about his life and experiences in South Africa. He has spent 10 years on Robben Island as political prisoner.. Right now, he's really struggling to survive - he is working only 2 days a week and his salary is not sufficient to support his family... He has 4 children, 2 of them living with him... It was amazing to see how the man had tried to provide his children with things necessary for life... Experiencing something like this makes you see life from a different perspective...

There's no school until Wednesday - they have holidays here..

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 5:39 PM 1 COMMENTS

mare said...

kallis kadri!!

kull on tore lugeda su juttu ja vaadata fotosid...

elu on seal ikka nii teistmoodi...
kull need loodusepildid on kaunid, eriti paikselojang-kas olete
ookeanist kaugel?
kalli-mare

August 05, 2005 11:34 AM

SUNDAY, AUGUST 07, 2005

Hermanus

Yesterday we drove about 2 hours outside Cape Town to a small town called Hermanus, known for the fact that during the southern hemisphere winter (which is now), whales come close to the shore there. So, basically it's all about whale-watching in Hermanus. We took a walking path along the coastline - and we saw the whales!! Although, I have to admit, we saw just an occasional tail or fin... Just as I took out my camera to take a picture, they disappeared... So, you need lots of imagination when you look at my pictures of the whales.. :o) I'll upload them on Wednesday..

In the afternoon, it became so windy in Hermanus that the wind almost knocked me over, not to mention that my mouth and eyes were full of sand..

We were driving back in the dark - the roads here are very good (and very hilly and curvy!) but the drivers are crazy! Many of them don't switch off their high beam lights when they approach you! And we are still discovering 'new' traffic signs which we haven't seen before.. :o)

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 5:35 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, AUGUST 08, 2005

rainy Cape Town...

The weather is really bad today - we got quite wet when walking in Cape Town.

I went to a swimming pool (indoor) in Cape Town in the morning. It was definitely a strange experience - I was the only person in the whole swimming pool!! The water was rather cold, just 19 degrees, so I just swam about half an hour. Normally you can have a shower after swimming, but there were no showers there!! In fact, there was a sign in the women's locker room saying "Soap and shampoo not allowed"!

Then, I went to a bead shop on Long Street - I was a bit confused there, because the choice of beads was just enormous. But I bought something and now I can start making earrings and necklaces...

Yesterday we went to the cinema at the Waterfront and saw "Hotel Rwanda" - the movie was very touching and very well made. For those who haven't seen it, I really recommend it.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 10:39 AM 0 COMMENTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2005

Silvermine nature reserve & "adventures" with our Beetle!

Yesterday we went hiking near Cape Town, in Silvermine nature reserve. The weather was really cold and windy, but the views were amazing!

Later, we wanted to see the sunset at Camps Bay. We drove there and just as we were about to go to the beach, we discovered that we had left the keys inside the car! Luckily our Beetle is really old - we opened the hood and broke a small shield next to the steering wheel from outside - from there, we tried to take out the keys, but our hands were too big to fit through. Finally, we borrowed a wire from the parking guy and managed to get the keys!!

During the process, we broke 2 small parts (don't know how to call them) and some tube (which we taped later) - we'll try to fix them and hopefully the car rental won't notice anything!!

Check out new pictures in my gallery
(<http://kadri10.pri.ee/gallery.php>).

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 2:26 PM 0 COMMENTS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2005

nobody knows about Estonia!!! :o(

Yesterday night our landlady taught me how to make jewelry from beads! Some years ago she used to make lots of necklaces, bracelets and earrings from beads and sell them. But the business wasn't too good, because everyone is doing it here! I wish she was in Estonia! We don't even have a bead shop....

So, yesterday I made my first necklace and a pair of earrings!

Now about something which is becoming really annoying already - people have never heard of Estonia!!! It's unbelievable... I still haven't met a South African who knows anything about Estonia! Everyone is asking "where are you from?" and when I say "Estonia", I usually get the answer "Oh, ok" and a strange look. And I can tell right away that they have no idea what I'm talking about. Some people then ask "Where is it?" and others are afraid to admit that they've never heard of it. So, I ask them myself "Do you know where it is?"

Actually, I've learned that it's not so bad to be asked "WHERE Estonia is?" - it's much worse when people ask "WHAT it is? Is that a country?!?".

When people ask where Estonia is, I always ask them back: "Do you know Finland, Sweden...?...(in most cases people know Scandinavia) Well, it's near there.. It's a very small country, only 1,5 million people.." (I never mention that we are close to Russia, unless they ask themselves). I've said those sentences countless times already.. Ok, I understand if the South Africans don't know about Estonia - I don't know the location of all African countries or the names of their capitals either.

But it's much worse and it really makes me sad when some of the Europeans I've met here have never heard of Estonia!! Hello, did you know that there are some new members in the EU?!?

And I wish I had brought more material with me to introduce Estonia to people. Especially, music and films so that they could hear how nice our language sounds (By the way, just yesterday I was asked (by a European!) - "So, you are using the Cyrillic alphabet there, right?")!!!

In some cases, when I feel it's really no use explaining some people where I'm from or there simply isn't enough time to do that, I just say that I'm from Europe and hope that they don't ask any further questions, because I'm getting tired of explaining it all over again..

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:20 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2005

Cold, cold, cold...

It seems that now we are experiencing the real South African winter.. it's cold and raining all the time.. Hopefully, it will be better soon.

Saturday night we went to the birthday party of the daughter of one of the teachers at school. It was her 2nd birthday. First, there was a party for the kids and then later, for adults. There were lots of kids and they all wanted us to take pictures of them - and so we did! I'm uploading just a few of them now. We also had a camcorder and so we filmed the birthday party.

On Sunday we went to Khayelitsha again - there was a "Cultural Day on Performing Arts Against Crime & Drug Abuse" - it took place in a sports centre in Khayelitsha. There was no heating inside and so it was cold like hell - we stayed there almost five hours. The performances were nice - there were plays, music, dancing. One of the students from Esangweni - Sizwe - performed there. He was dancing & singing - I really liked it. Because we (Tobi, Karen and I) were the only white people there, we were quite popular - people took pictures of us with their cell phones.

We took lots of photos during the weekend + video clips, so it was difficult to choose what to upload. The new pictures in my gallery.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:01 PM 0 COMMENTS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2005

This morning..

..we filmed our way to school! The video is really nice. Can't wait to show it to you!

When we got home yesterday night, we discovered that the tap in the toilet was broken and water was flushing down the sink....about one litre per second!! And there was no way to close it! The first thing was to locate the tap providing water supply to the whole house. With some luck I finally found it at the back of the house and closed it. Since calling the emergency service (plumber in our case) costs here, we had to try to fix it ourselves. We tried all the tools we could find in the house, but still couldn't open the tap. However, later in the evening we got some additional tools and managed to open the tap. Tobi discovered that the rubber under the tap was broken - he just

replaced it with a new one and now the tap is fixed!

On Friday we are going to Robben Island! In case you haven't heard of Robben Island - it's an island off the coast of Cape Town and it used to be a prison during apartheid and even before that. Political prisoners were kept there, including Nelson Mandela, who actually spent 27 years in prison!! (not all of it on Robben Island though). Nowadays Robben Island is not a prison any more, but a major tourist attraction - there is a ferry going to the island and you can take a tour there. And the tour guides are former prisoners. Last week we learned that one teacher of the school was a prisoner there for 6 years during apartheid, because he was a member of the African National Congress and involved in the liberation movement. So, he offered to give us a tour of Robben Island. And because he used to be a prisoner there, he now can get to the island free of charge (otherwise you would pay 150 Rand per person = about 300 EEK) and bring guests with him. I can't wait to go!

We are invited as guest speakers to the 11th grade history class next week. The teacher would have liked us to come already this week, but we felt we needed some time to prepare. They are currently learning about World War II. It's going to be difficult... In my case, I definitely have to take a map of Europe to the class, to first show them where Estonia is..

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:12 PM 0 COMMENTS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2005

some observations...

Yesterday we went out to Obz Cafe to watch football. There were at least 7 Germans at our table. Everyone, except Tobi, spoke German and just ignored me! That wasn't too nice. Actually, it seems that I've met more Germans here than South Africans.

Today, Tobi is going to Germany for 4 days, to his sister's wedding. I'm taking him to the airport and then coming back to school, because there are 2 classes I have to give today - teachers training and webpage group. Tobi is coming back on Tuesday.

It occurred to me why I feel so cold all the time - it's not all about the

cold and rainy weather. We have that in Europe too and it's much colder in the winter. Except for one thing - no matter how cold it is outside you always know that when you go inside, no matter where - it's warm! Knowing that there are plenty of warm places to go keeps you warm! But here, there's no central heating anywhere and so it's almost as cold indoors than it is outdoors, just except that there's no wind and rain inside (actually, in the case of my room it's not true - there is rain inside! when it's raining heavily, water is leaking from the ceiling above my window to the floor and into my bed!)

Another thing which I thought about concerns people living in shacks in the townships. Actually, I haven't written about that here.. The townships are located southeast from the centre of Cape Town. The largest of them is Khayelitsha (where we work), with 1.3 - 3 million people, the exact number is unknown. The other major townships are Nyanga, Guguletu and Mitchells Plain (the latter is a 'coloured' township, the others are black). How the townships were started? When the apartheid began, the whites dislocated all black



and coloured people from their homes and placed them outside Cape Town (far enough so that they would be conveniently out of sight, yet near enough to use them as cheap labour force...). In order to enter white areas, the blacks had to have a special permit. The townships were growing

(they still are) because unemployment is a major problem in South Africa and people come to cities in search of work.

One of the major problems in the townships is housing - millions of people live in shacks.. A shack is a hut built of whatever material people can gather (cardboard, wood etc.) and can afford to buy. The shacks are of different sizes, but usually they are very low, small and built close together. There is no water, no toilet, no washing facilities inside - usually there's a toilet and a tap of cold water outside, shared by several families.

As for the vegetation in the townships, there are practically no trees; there are some bushes; the soil seems to be quite sandy. It is said that Khayelitsha is one of the most polluted areas around Cape Town. I don't know the exact reason why, but I can only guess - the cars that the township people own are old and thus use mostly leaded fuel; people don't really think about the environment, because they have more essential concerns - such as surviving, staying healthy and

getting enough food. Another thing - people keep animals (cows and goats mainly) in the townships - that is probably making the soil even more poor. The animals are walking freely on the streets. One more thing which might add to the pollution - the airport is close to Khayelitsha. And this is really something which is not fair, because it's mostly the white people who fly, the township people just cannot afford it..

Among the shacks there are also better houses and in some areas of the townships the living conditions are not so appalling. The government has built and is continuing to build houses in the townships - the plan is to replace all shacks by 2010. This is rather unrealistic, I think. Those brick houses built by the government are way too small for the whole family to live in. So, people often extend the house - in many cases, the extension is a shack.

When entering Khayelitsha, there's a sign 'You are entering an Urban Renewal Area. ' And below it, 'Together, building a stronger nation'. It is interesting to observe how people are addressed in different cultures- in Europe, we are much more individualistic, while here, it's more about collectivism and about belonging to a group, especially among black people to whom the community is a very strong social structure. Another example - on buses going between Cape Town and the townships it's written - 'Golden Arrow (the name of the bus company) - The bus for us'. In Europe it would definitely be - 'The bus for YOU' ('you' as an individual).

Seeing and experiencing life here has made me view certain things from a different perspective, made me more open and willing to share things (including space around me.)

When driving to and from Khayelitsha, we are passing shacks every day. It's such a contrast between the townships and Cape Town, especially the rich areas there. When seeing the shacks, a strange (and sad) thought occurred to me. The shacks are really small and built of whatever material people can find. Most shacks are tilted and look like they are going to fall apart soon.. When you go inside, the ceiling is low and it's quite dark inside, usually a single light bulb being the only source of light. There's no heating of course. So, in a way, a shack reminds me of a play house built by (white) children at the back yard or in the forest. They would be really excited about it and play 'home' there for a while. But as soon as they get bored, cold and hungry or it gets dark outside, they go to their 'real' home which is big, warm and there's always food there. Only when they feel good again, they would go back to the play house and the game will go on...Except for the people in the townships, this is no game, it IS THE

REALITY! And there's nowhere to escape from it! And this is what makes me very sad.

Yet, I am amazed how the people have managed to retain their sense of humour and their ability to still enjoy life..



There is a part of Khayelitsha where the living conditions are extremely bad - we've been driving through it several times, because we are usually giving a lift to some of the students

(apparently, some of them are living there). In that area, people are protesting against the government - they have been promised brick houses, but obviously there has been a delay in building the houses. So, people refuse to keep the area clean - they litter the streets and throw stuff out of their windows. A while ago, they even burned a bus there (an empty one fortunately). The streets in that area are sometimes so littered that it's difficult to drive there..

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:11 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2005

Robben Island..

Friday was a short day at school - only 45 minutes in the morning! Since Tobi is not here, I invited Karen with me. We drove to Esangweni and picked up Mr. Nobatana, the teacher who had invited us to [Robben Island](#). The ferry was supposed to leave from the Waterfront at 11, so we didn't have much time - I had to drive quite fast to get there on time! Luckily we made it! It took about 40 minutes by ferry from the Waterfront to Robben Island. It was very windy on the sea and the waves were huge - some people who stayed outside got soaking wet! The boat was jumping high on the waves and people were screaming..

When we got there, we had 3 hours to explore the island before our boat back.

We were lucky, because we got a personal tour of the island - all the others went in a big tourist group. Mr. Nobatana had been in prison there for 6 years. So, he knows many of the former inmates who are right now working as tour guides on the island. And so we got access to all areas!

The living conditions in the prison were appalling... The inmates slept on the concrete floor, they only had a thin mattresses.. Beds were

brought to the cells only in the 1980s. The cells were extremely small and besides the mattress, there was hardly anything in there. The food was scarce and there were different meal plans for black and coloured inmates!! It is hard to imagine how people survived in that prison.

On our way back, the waves were so huge and the boat was jumping so much that people got seasick, including me..

When we drove back, Mr. Nobatana said that he had an appointment in town - he said that it would take only 10 - 15 minutes. We said we would wait for him. We waited for one hour and he still didn't show up.. And I didn't have his number either. So we left.. I feel really bad about this.. I have to find him now and ask about it..

I finally found a place to go jogging - the UCT (University of Cape Town) stadium! It's about 5 minutes by car from our place. I've been there two days already and probably going again today..

On Saturday, the weather was quite nice. So we went to Camps Bay to watch the sunset. But we couldn't enjoy the sunset because it became really cold.. and for another reason - there are people there who want to sell things or just ask for money and since they realized that we are not locals, they all came to us! They were mainly selling small figures and keyholders made out of beads. It was really getting annoying. One guy even scared us a bit - I had bought a small bread and placed it next to me - the guy approached us from the back and suddenly yelled: "Give it to me now! I'm hungry!" - I didn't give him the bread and he didn't go away either - until some locals, who were sitting close to us told him to leave us alone.

I'm reading Nelson Mandela's biography, "A Long Walk To Freedom" right now. It's very interesting. I really recommend it.

Robben Island pictures in my gallery.

I'm getting spam to my blog comments! I deleted these and hope that I won't receive any more...

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:02 PM 5 COMMENTS

Kadri Aavik said...

Spammers, please don't comment in my blog!

August 22, 2005 5:13 AM

mare said...

hei kallis kadri-oled ikka kange plika kull, et leiba kaest ara ei andnud!!!!

on ikka vaga ponev lugeda sinu seiklustest... mulle tuli nii see paadiga kihnu soitmise meelde, sinu saarele minekust lugedes-kalahais ja lained viskasaid paati.

siisnpool rahulik, elu muutusteta

kalli-mare

August 22, 2005 1:10 PM

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2005

Very very busy..

There's so much to do here at school that we have no free moment! Especially today. That's why I won't manage to write much more today..

We just went with some students and teachers to a HIV hospice nearby. There were adults as well as children there... All the children were orphans.. The living conditions in the hospice were very good, and the children looked healthy.... but the thought of it...

The Esangweni students had prepared a performance for the people at the hospice - they acted, recited poems and danced. Unfortunately we had to live early because we had the webpage group meeting back at school. But we took photos and filmed the performances.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 5:52 PM 0 COMMENTS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 2005

our Beetle got serviced..

This morning we drove to Brackenfell, the town where we rented our Beetle. Because we had already driven 3000 km with the Beetle, we had to take it to service. It took them much longer than we expected. We got back to school only in the afternoon. But they did a good job - they changed the oil, one tyre (which had a nail in it!) and more stuff.

They even washed the Beetle! I've really fallen in love with this Beetle - it looks cute and driving it is fun too!

POSTED BY KADRI KAVIK AT 3:55 PM 0 COMMENTS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 2005

It's raining again

Today a sports day was supposed to take place at a stadium not far from school. But because of heavy rainfall during the night, the stadium was so wet that the sports day was cancelled. Because of the sports day, all classes had been cancelled as well... So, the school is almost empty now. It looks like a short day for us today..

We still don't know our plans for the weekend. If the weather doesn't improve, there's not much we can do. There's the plan to go to Stellenbosch tomorrow - it's a town not far from Cape Town and known for it's many wineries. Wine degustation is not too expensive there. We only have one problem - nobody wants to be the sober driver on a wine tour.. :o)

A few words about something very interesting which I haven't written about before - the local languages. There are 11 official languages in South Africa - Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga (I don't know the names by heart, just copied them from an encyclopedia...). The major languages are IsiXhosa, IsiZulu (spoken by the Xhosa and Zulu people respectively). Afrikaans is the mother tongue of 13% of the population and English the native language of only about 8% of South Africa's people.

Traditionally, Afrikaans was first spoken by the descendants of the Boers (white Dutch settlers), now called the Afrikaner. Afrikaans has also become the language spoken by the "Coloured" population (in the Western Cape province where we are, they form the majority of the population). The Xhosa people have traditionally lived in the Eastern Cape but many have come to the Western Cape in search of work. Khayelitsha, the township where we work, is now home to the Xhosa people. Their language is very interesting to us and rather difficult to learn, because of some special click sounds. The Xhosa and Zulu languages are closely related, they belong in the Bantu language family. There are at least 3 different types of clicks, depending on the position of the tongue. I've tried to produce these sounds, but it's far

from perfect. So far, I don't know much more than the most basic words, such as "Molo" (hello) and "Molweni" (hello, to a group of people), "Kunjani?" (How are you?) - "Ndiphilile" (Fine). Afrikaans is similar to Dutch. The people to whom Afrikaans is mother tongue, also speak English, but they have a peculiar accent, which is sometimes difficult to understand. In the beginning it was very difficult to understand the Xhosa people when they were speaking English - their accent is very strong. But now we are more or less used to it.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:52 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, AUGUST 29, 2005

bush camp!

Saturday morning Tobi went to Esangweni - a delegation of some computer experts was visiting the school. Since I thought I could not really contribute much to there, I didn't go (and I was really tired from the previous night - we went out at Long Street and returned at about am)...

When Tobi got back in the afternoon, we went to the place where Lucka works - about half an hour from our place (she organises camps for children). The camps are held on the shore of a lake called Zeekovlei. While we were there, the rowing team of the camp was about to have their training. We joined them - the boat was quite large, we were about 15 people inside. Each of us had a paddle - the boat was moving really fast! But paddling was very exhausting.. When we got out of the boat, we were quite wet..

Then we went to Lucka's place and saw Nele (Lucka's tandem partner) - she had arrived a week ago. We spent the night at their place. I couldn't sleep very well, because it was very cold..

Yesterday we drove to Stellenbosch. The weather was just perfect - it was warm and there wasn't a single cloud in the sky. First, we just walked in the town - it was smaller than I had imagined. The streets were quite empty, because it was Sunday. On our way back we stopped at a winery called Spier and did some wine tasting. For me, all the wines taste the same - I can only distinguish between red and white wine and sweet and dry... I guess I'm just not a wine person..

We spent last night in a bush camp on an island on a lake called

Rondevlei! We were taken there by boat at the sunset. One of the reasons why we wanted to spend the night on the island was that we wanted to see hippos - they live in this lake. Unfortunately, we didn't see any..

Again, I slept just a couple of hours, because it was freezing cold (despite wearing all the clothes I had + the sleeping bag..) But altogether, it was fun!

Photos from Stellenbosch and the bush camp [here](#) (last pages of the first gallery).

Today, I ate my first fatcook at school - fatcooks are something like pies cooked in vegetable oil. Usually, they are filled with meat, but I asked for a plain one. It was delicious!

We finally managed to publish the next issue of the school newsletter today.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:17 PM 0 COMMENTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2005

history class!



We are just coming from the 11th grade history class, where we were invited as guest speakers. We went there already last week, but since we didn't have much time, I did not manage to speak. Today, it was my turn.

The students seemed extremely interested - there was complete silence in the classroom. We had a map of the world in the classroom and first I asked them if anyone knows where Estonia is. Nobody knew. So, I asked them to guess on which continent it is. Surprisingly, the first guess was Asia (do I look Asian?). Luckily, the second guess was Europe. So, I showed them the location of Estonia on the map and spoke a bit about the country. Mostly, I concentrated on the history of Estonia, especially the Soviet time because I find similarities between South Africa during the apartheid times and Estonia during the Soviet times. In the end, there was time for questions - one of the questions was: is Estonia a republic now? Since Tobi was also there with me today, the students used the chance to ask questions about Germany. Germany

is a very appealing country to South Africans, everyone wants to go there - apparently they think that it's something like a paradise. Something hilarious from last week when Tobi was speaking about Germany and German history to the same 11th grade students. He had been speaking about 20 minutes, about the WWII, the Nazis, Hitler etc. (by the way, they are currently learning about WWII in class). In the end, there was time for questions. One of the questions was: "Does Hitler still rule Germany?!??"

I feel really grateful to the history teacher who invited us to his class. I would like to go to more classes to speak about my country.

Something interesting which we have observed here - people are employed to do really small jobs - for example, there are 15 people employed to cut grass on an area less than the size of a football field or dig a ditch - in Europe, big machines would do the job instead, or just a few people. But I like the solution here - to employ as many people as possible, since unemployment is a major problem here. Also, when you are parking your car, doesn't matter where (street, in front of a shopping centre...), there's a "parking guy" who "takes care" of your car. Later, you just give him some tip. In the gas station, you don't even have to get out of the car - the guys there just fill up the tank, pump the tyres and check the oil if you want to. Before leaving, you just give them tip.

I finished reading Nelson Mandela's "Long Walk to Freedom" last night. The book is just great! Mandela is truly a hero. I got a good overview of South African history by reading this book. I really recommend it, if anyone is interested. I think I'll buy the book because I want to read it again after some time.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:48 PM 1 COMMENTS

J. Otto Pohl said...

Tere, I find your comment on the similarities between Estonia under Soviet occupation and apartheid interesting. I just posted a blog entry on the parallels between Soviet treatment of certain nationalities and apartheid.

September 05, 2005 6:55 AM

September

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 01, 2005

exploring Khayelitsha



Today we went to see the place where last year's ASA participants Juro and Augustas lived in Khayelitsha. When we arrived there, the house was full of people.

We didn't spend much time there. The guy who rented them the house last year, Xolani, was not there. But we are definitely going back there. The Khayelitsha crafts market is just across the street. We went there today, but we didn't have any money with us.

We also went to a nearby church where a Home Management Training Centre for women was established last year. Basically, unemployed women receive training there to become domestic workers. It's kind of sad.. they will be working for rich white people..

We were taken around the premises and saw the women having the training sessions (cooking, cleaning, sewing etc.). Next week they will cook dinner for potential employers - we were also invited.

Pictures in my gallery.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 4:44 PM 0 COMMENTS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 04, 2005

weekend

Friday was a very exhausting day at school - somehow nothing was working at school and everyone was asking us for favours.. By the evening I felt quite tired but still went out with the others. We went out (10 Germans, 1 British guy and me!) to a pub at Clifton's Beach. Later on we went to a private party. It was quite ok - there was even a band!

On Saturday we went to Century City, a huge shopping mall about 20 minutes from our place. We spent more than 2 hours there and in the end I was really fed up. I don't think I want to go there again - it was too crowded and too commercial..

In the evening we went to Khayelitsha - we were invited to a gathering of school teachers. The party was really fun and we danced a lot! The party took place at the home of one of the teachers. This was one of the best parts of Khayelitsha, there were no shacks there,

but large brick houses. It's home to the middle class and mostly government employees work there. At the party I talked to the Xhosa teacher and she promised to teach us some basic Xhosa! (On the weekend I practiced the click sounds, but I still cannot distinguish two sounds from each other). I also asked her about school fees - it's about 200 rand per year for one student. This is not expensive, but still, many parents cannot afford it. Only about 2 - 5 students from Esangweni are able to go to university each year - there are two options, either the parents pay the fees or you get a scholarship (which is very difficult to get because of high competition)..

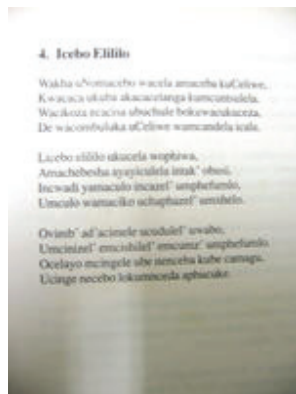
Sunday was lazy day.. The weather was not too bad. At first we went to the Waterfront and then to Bloubergstrand - the beach with a nice view to the Table Mountain. I attempted to draw Table Mountain, but the result is not too good - it was really difficult to draw the shadows on the mountain..

In the end it was so cold that we had to watch the sunset from the car..

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 11:47 AM 0 COMMENTS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 06, 2005

learning Xhosa!



Since a few days now we've really been trying to learn Xhosa. (Take a look at my favourite Xhosa poem on the picture!) Yesterday, we practiced the clicks the whole way back from school. My tongue was quite exhausted in the end! There are 3 different clicks in Xhosa, marked by the letters X, Q and C. The C is easy and by now, I manage to pronounce the X as well, but it's the Q that gives me the most trouble. Today we practiced reading Xhosa - we read Xhosa poems to some of the

students and they corrected us. It was really amusing for them to listen to us! Today I borrowed 2 books in Xhosa - one book of poetry and the other of prose. In addition to that, I've borrowed an English-Xhosa-Afrikaans dictionary. Too bad I cannot take them home with me..

I've just spoke to one of the Xhosa teachers at school and asked her if we could visit one of her classes this week. So, we are going on

Thursday!

I really hope to master the clicks by the time I come back!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 4:53 PM 0 COMMENTS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 08, 2005

HIV/AIDS day at school

Yesterday the whole school gathered for an HIV/AIDS day, dedicated to those who have died of HIV/AIDS. There was a performance (actually the same one we saw at the HIV/AIDS hospice) and the school choir was singing. The noise level was unbelievable! I took some videos with my digital camera.

Yesterday Andy, a computer expert who comes to Esangweni once in a while to fix the servers, was here. That guy is really smart and almost all what he did seemed like magic to me.. In the end, he solved some of our problems.

The evening was not that interesting (at least for me). We went to a German (Bavarian) restaurant at the Waterfront to watch the football match between Germany and South Africa. Unfortunately, South Africa lost.. The restaurant was packed with Germans.. There was even Bavarian music..

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:28 PM 1 COMMENTS

Anonymous said...

Hi

it semds you missing Bavarian Kiel :)

September 09, 2005 3:49 AM

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 09, 2005

crash

Yesterday we saw a movie called "Crash" - it's very good (despite the fact that it's a hollywood movie).

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 4:07 PM 0 COMMENTS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2005

it's saturday..

... and we are at school! It's linux training for teachers today and we came here too. The weather is very nice today and supposed to be like this on Sunday as well. So, tomorrow we are planning to drive north to the West Coast National Park - it's supposed to be very nice there with lots of wild flowers. Yesterday night we felt quite stressed and that's why just want to get out of Cape Town for a while.

Yesterday after school we went with a friend of ours, Sizwe, who is a student at Esangweni, to his place. He is a dancer and he also teaches dancing to children. So, yesterday they performed on the streets in Khayelitsha. It was great! Even the smallest children were dancing! We took lots of pictures and video. The pictures are [here](#) (last pages of the first gallery.) Later we took a walk in the neighbourhood and lots of people joined us. But then, Sizwe suddenly told us that we had to go - he said that there were 2 guys who wanted to rob us but he had just stopped them! After hearing this, we became quite scared and drove away fast. The crime rate in Khayelitsha is very high, especially at the weekends.

POSTED BY KADRI SAVIK AT 2:04 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2005

West Coast National Park

... a bit more about Saturday. The linux training at school was not that interesting for us. We expected a history of linux and some commands, but there was nothing like that. They just taught the linux equivalents of word, excel and powerpoint..

We stayed until the afternoon. Since the weather was very nice on Saturday, we felt like being outside. So, we drove the direction of Stellenbosch and went to the Spier winery again (it's just 20 minutes from Khayelitsha). This time we didn't drink any wine, we just laid down on the grass and enjoyed the weather. It's strange how quickly the weather changed here. On Thursday it was still cold, especially during the night, but on Friday it was suddenly warm and sunny! It's weird for me because in Europe it takes quite a while for spring to turn into summer, but here it just happened in one day! Today was supposed to be 31 degrees!

On Sunday we drove to the West Coast National Park with Lucka, Karen and her boyfriend. There were 5 of us in the Beetle. The West

Coast National Park is about 120 km north of Cape Town. The road was not far from the sea and there was nice scenery. The land there is very wide and open, there are no trees, just low bushes (called 'fynbos'). The main reason why we drove to the park was to see the wild flowers there. The flower season is quite short, it's just in September. We didn't see many flowers when we entered the park, but as we drove on, we began to see more. Driving through the park was quite 'interesting' - there were mostly dirt roads there and at some point I started to regret that we had taken our Beetle there. Also, the people who passed us on their 4Wheel drives were quite amused when they drove past us. Mostly we just got smiles and a few weird looks, and on one occasion, a guy offered us a tow-rope! :o) But in the end we didn't need it, because our Beetle made it! I tried to be really careful when driving, because some animals, such as worms, mice and turtles, were crossing the roads. Luckily, I didn't run over any of them. I'd never before seen turtles in the wild and now we could take a close look at them!

I took lots of pictures of flowers in the park - it was amazing! Also, we stopped at some nice viewpoints. There was one place called the 'lagoon' - it really looked like one, and the water was especially blue there.

The sun was shining the whole day and it was really warm. In the end we were quite tired. Before going home we drove to a town called Langebaan and had dinner there. We drove home in the dark - the way back seemed really long.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:43 PM 0 COMMENTS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2005

37 degrees!

... at least according to the weather forecast!! I don't know if it's really that hot but it seems pretty close! Today is the hottest day I've ever experienced in my life!

It really is hot!

After school we drove to Camps Bay and went swimming there! The water was still cold, although a bit warmer than the last time when we were there. It took me a while to get in the water, but once I did, I felt like staying there and not coming out at all! It was really refreshing!

I haven't written about this here yet, but we are planning to extend our project for one more month! I really hope it works out! My main concern is the reaction of my employers. I hope I won't get fired because of that... But I've continued work from here and really tried to do my best..

We spent 5 hours in the Department of Home Affairs yesterday, trying to extend our visas. And it worked! They gave us the extension! And we didn't have to pay as much as we expected!

I just got approval from my boss and I'm really happy about it!!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 4:55 PM 0 COMMENTS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2005

pictures!

I haven't been able to upload pictures for several days now, because I've been really busy, but I've uploaded some new pictures in the gallery finally. They are taken on the weekend in the West Coast National Park and on Monday at the Radio Zibonele in Khayelitsha. Also, a few pictures of one of the most beautiful sunsets I've ever seen, taken at Camps Bay.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 2:12 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2005

lots of climbing and baboons! :o)

On Friday, Darek, a Polish guy doing another ASA project in Pretoria, came to visit us. His project is finished now and he wanted to spend a few days in Cape Town before flying back to Europe. He says that Cape Town & its surroundings are much more beautiful than Joburg & Pretoria. So, it seems that I won't miss much if I'm not going there. The weather was very nice throughout the weekend, so we spent lots of time outside. On Saturday we drove to the Cape of Good Hope. We've been there once, but since the nature there is magnificent, I'd go back there anytime. Besides, last time my camera was broken and now I wanted to take pictures with my new one. The weather was sunny, but not too hot, so I thought that sunblock would not be necessary. Well, I was wrong.. By the evening, my face was completely sunburnt! While at the Cape Point, I was really hoping to see baboons (a kind of ape). Unfortunately, we didn't see any.

On our way back we stopped at a beach. We were just walking around



when we suddenly saw a baboon on a hilltop! It stayed there for a while and then disappeared behind the hill. We followed the baboon and suddenly saw that there were many of them! At first I was a bit frightened, because the baboons are considered rather dangerous and aggressive animals.

But as we saw that they were not really interested in attacking us, we went closer and took some great pictures of them! My favourite picture is the one where a baboon is climbing on our Beetle!!!

On Sunday, the weather was sunny and quite hot (and this time I used sunblock!). We climbed the Lion's Head (again!) - I really enjoyed the climb, especially the part with the ladders and chains! :o) The view from the top was great! This time I made some panorama pictures and a 360 degree video! After climbing down we drove to Camps Bay to go swimming. The water was still quite freezing and this time, the waves were really huge!



POSTED BY KADRI SAVIK AT 1:17 PM 0 COMMENTS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2005

Matric ball!

Yesterday we went to the matric ball (this is how they call the prom here) of the 12th grade. It took place in the Ritz Hotel in Cape Town. The event was supposed to start at 6. When we arrived, nobody was there yet. We waited almost 2 hours!

The girls were wearing amazing dresses! We took lots of pictures, but today the internet connection here is too slow to upload anything.. The evening was very nice -first there were speeches, after that, certificates were given to the best students. And then, dinner and dance!! The party lasted until 11.30 pm - it was over too soon!!

Tomorrow there is no school because of the sports day. In the evening we are invited to a teachers gathering.

There will be school holidays next week, so I won't be online then. I'll write again on the 3rd of October when I'm back!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:34 PM 1 COMMENTS

Anonymous said...

Hi Kadri! Greetings from GLEN Team in Sri Lanka! Nice blog.
Janis, www.srilankaproject.com

September 28, 2005 12:56 AM

MONDAY, OCTOBER 03, 2005

back again!

It was school holiday last week and so we also took some days off. Now we are back at school - it's really busy the first days, but I'll update the blog as soon as possible. Also, I've taken lots of pictures meanwhile and now have the trouble choosing which ones to upload ;o)

Generally, I enjoyed the holidays. We (me and 2 German couples!) left Cape Town last Saturday and drove to Hermanus (the whale watching town). Unfortunately, the town was packed with tourists since there was a whale festival at that time. From Hermanus, we drove to Mossel Bay (we were driving east along the coast, this area is called 'Garden Route' for its greenery and nice landscape). We also drove to the southernmost point of the African continent - Cape Agulhas.

On Monday we spent a few hours in the Wilderness national park, which was on our way. I went hiking there, the nature was great! On Monday night we reached Plettenberg Bay, where we stayed for 3 days. By that time, the weather had become really nice and warm. We hired surfboards (surprisingly, they were not too expensive) and tried surfing. The Indian ocean was still cold, but we had wetsuits. I have to say that surfing is much more difficult than it seems! I could ALMOST stand on the board in the end! (By the way, today I heard that there had been 2 shark attacks there last week!).

On our 3rd day in Plettenberg Bay I decided to drive around a bit. I drove about 170 km east to Tsitsikamma National Park (this was in

the Eastern Cape already!). I decided to do some hiking in the park. The first trail I took, was only 1 km long and not too impressive. Also, it was crowded with tourists. After that, I took a 3,7 km trail through the forest - I didn't meet any people there!

We started to drive back to Cape Town on Thursday morning. We had to drive about 600 km. We decided to take another way back, not along the coast, but further north, through a dry desert area called the Karoo. I was impressed by the landscape - wide open space, a mountain range; just a few houses, lots of ostriches... it made me feel small and insignificant..

On our way to N1, the highway, we had to cross a mountain range. Unfortunately the road was unpaved (poor Beetle!). But in the end we managed to get over the mountains without any major damage to our car (just two things, the handbrake and the dashboard light broke during the holidays!).

During the last days of the holidays I already missed Cape Town and Khayelitsha. I really wanted to work again.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 4:09 PM 0 COMMENTS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2005

New photos

Because I've been very busy lately, I didn't manage to upload pictures until now. Finally, [here](#) are the pictures!

Today is Saturday and we are at school to help enter the data of learners. The secretary of the school had been doing it for 2 weeks before the holidays and she had nearly finished... but when we came from holidays, we discovered that most of the data was gone! Because the deadline is today and the school cannot get extra time, we have to do it.

Yesterday evening we went to Monwabisi beach in Khayelitsha with some of the kids. They went swimming. The water wasn't too cold actually.

We took some great pictures!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:46 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2005

weekend in Khayelitsha

We spent the whole weekend in Khayelitsha, which was quite enjoyable actually.

On Saturday we were helping the school with entering the data of learners. Luckily, we finished this by the afternoon. Afterwards, we went to a teacher's place to watch soccer on TV. We ate African salad there! It was our first time to try it! Actually, it's not really a salad... It's a porridge made of corn, it's not smooth but has chunks in it. It's eaten with sour milk. When I first saw it, I wasn't sure if I want to eat it, because it doesn't look too delicious... But it tastes really good!

On Sunday we were in Khayelitsha again. This time, 9 o'clock in the morning. There was a choir competition, which was supposed to start at 9. Instead, it started 3 hours later! (We should have known it by now....). Twelve choirs from the Western Cape were supposed to compete. But only about half of them showed up (by 9 o'clock only one choir had arrived!). Some of the choirs were really good, while others seemed to be singing some songs for the first time.. A major problem for many choirs and soloists was singing with the piano. Apparently, most of them did it for the first time!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 4:13 PM 0 COMMENTS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2005

only 3 weeks left :(((

As of tomorrow, we only have 3 weeks left here. I don't even want to think about it... it's too sad...

One thing is for sure - the time I've spent here has been one of the best times in my life.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 7:55 PM 0 COMMENTS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2005

yesterday..



was definitely one of my best days I've had here in South Africa.. One of the students, Mandisi, had his birthday yesterday. We gave him a cake which he shared with all of us! After eating the cake, we played music and danced in the server room! Afterwards, we (Mandisi, Thandile,

Sizwe, Khanyiso, Tobi and I) went to Monwabisi beach (the beach in Khayelitsha). We had lots of fun!

But the best part of it was when the guys started singing in the car! More pictures in my gallery.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:09 PM 0 COMMENTS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2005

about this blog & why I haven't been too creative lately

Lately I've been receiving information that my blog is being read by more people than just family/friends. On the one hand this is good news, but from the other hand, I'm a bit concerned about the style of my blog. Since it was originally planned as a sort of journal recording my stay here (including all activities, both personal and project-related), I didn't bother much about the style and content, therefore, it's not too 'official'. It was intended as a convenient alternative to writing emails to each friend and family member separately.

As of now, I only have 2 more weeks here, so I think it's a bit too late to change anything. Instead, I have the plan of creating a website about my experiences here in South Africa after I've returned. The website will contain photos, stories, video clips etc..

Now the other thing - maybe some of you have been wondering why I haven't been updating the blog as often as I did in the beginning of my stay. First of all, lately there hasn't been much time to do that, since all nearly of my time at school is devoted to activities directly related to the project.

Second, when I look at the entries I made in the blog at the very beginning, many of them are more in the style of a daily journal, like "today i woke up at 8, ate breakfast, went to bed at 10 etc.." - and this is not really how I intended the blog to be.

Another thing is that in the beginning I was extremely amazed at the

things happening here and of the life of the local people in general. I guess it was something like a cultural shock, which is natural when you get in close contact with a culture different from your own. By now, I'm used to the life here and the things which surprised me in the beginning, are natural in my eyes now and therefore I fail to see them as something phenomenal and thus I'm not mentioning them in the blog.

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 4:19 PM 0 COMMENTS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2005

almost had a car accident this morning...

We were driving to school as usual. We had already reached Khayelitsha and were standing at the traffic lights, waiting for the green light. As the light went green, I started to cross the intersection, but then suddenly, a car came from the left (driving on the right side of the road!!) . Luckily I managed to break in time!! But we were really close to crashing with that car! Apparently, the red light doesn't mean anything to some people! The drivers here are crazy!

Yesterday we had members of the advanced web page group teach the beginners! The guys did really well, I was impressed! They were explaining in Xhosa, so we didn't understand everything, but what we saw from the board and from the computer screen was all correct! Today, a guy from the advanced webpage group, Khanyiso, has volunteered to teach the advanced group! This will be interesting!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:07 PM 0 COMMENTS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2005

last days in South Africa :o(

Only 4 days left and I'll be coming home...

It will be difficult to leave because I've become so used to the life here. I've become friends with many people here and the thought of not seeing them again makes me incredibly sad...

We had a great weekend! On Saturday we went hiking with the kids! There were about 20 people - most of them were kids from the school but also some teachers. Originally we had planned to go hiking in a

nature reserve near Stellenbosch, but as we found out that they are charging an entrance fee, we had to change our plans. So, George, our project partner, proposed that we climb the Table Mountain. We were supposed to start climbing at 8 am, but because George had to pick up everyone from Khayelitsha, they arrived about 1,5 hours later. By that time the weather had become very hot already! There were no clouds in the sky and the sun was almost no shelter from the sun during the whole climb! It was incredibly hot. Climbing the mountain this time was so much more difficult compared to the first time during our first week here! Some kids were really fast, they basically ran up and were singing the whole time! It took us 1,5 hours to reach the top. There, we had to wait quite a while for some people. Coming down was easier, but quite hard for the knees. Afterwards, we drove to Muizenberg to have a braai.

It was a great day and we all enjoyed it! I'm really glad that we spent our last weekend with the people from Khayelitsha!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 12:26 PM 0 COMMENTS

November

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2005

back home..

Exactly this time last week I was in Cape Town airport, waiting for my flight. Now I've been home for almost a week. I have a few thoughts and feelings i'd like to express.

It is extremely difficult to readjust to the life here in Estonia again. I got so used to South Africa, driving to school every morning with the Beetle, spending time with the students and giving them a lift every evening (and them fighting for a place in the Beetle!). I miss all of that and I miss the sun and the warmth, the blue sky, the mountains and the huge wide open landscape. Here in Europe it's almost winter, I don't even mind the cold so much as the absence of the sun, which is really getting me down. I miss the warm and open people, always smiling, laughing, dancing and feeling so free, despite their problems - they have much less than we do in terms of material things, but they are so much more happy.. I'm trying very hard to retain inside me the warmth and happiness that South Africa gave me, but it is incredibly difficult - I feel that already with the first few days here I've become more serious again. Not seeing these people any more and not experiencing the things we did together every day in South Africa

makes me feel like I've been deprived of something essential, as if I've suffered some great loss...

I can say one thing for sure- the 4 months I spent in South Africa has probably been the best time of my life, it's unlike anything I've ever experienced.

You'll find the last pictures I took in South Africa in my gallery.

My dear friends in South Africa, I miss you so much!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 4:37 PM 0 COMMENTS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2005

final words in this blog

With this 50th post i'm finishing this blog. The purpose of the blog was to write about my experiences in South Africa. Now I'm back home (still haven't recovered!) and there's no point in continuing the blog - I'm not doing anything interesting and worth describing here. However, this blog still remains online, so those who are interested can still read it.

Who knows, maybe someday I'll go back to South Africa or somewhere else and then I'll start writing the blog again. Thanks everyone who visited my blog! Until next time!

POSTED BY KADRI AAVIK AT 1:21 PM 0 COMMENTS