



Fellow Report: 3-Month

This report focuses on the specifics of your fellowship experience thus far. The following questions are meant to help you evaluate your first three months at your fellowship post.

We will use your comments to assess fellowship organizations, site placements, stipends, and overall logistics. The information you include will be shared with the Board of Directors, applicants and future Fellows via PIAf's online database. Please be **professional** in your responses. We may use your comments to give feedback to fellowship organizations as well.

We encourage you to attach relevant anecdotes, photos, or other documentation to supplement the required responses.

Deadlines for this report are as follows:

If you began your fellowship in

June
July
August
September

Your report is due

September 30
October 31
November 30
December 31

Your Personal Information (*Please complete the following sections and if needed, please be sure to update your online VITALS as well*):

Organization: Maru-a-Pula School

City, Country: Gaborone, Botswana

Your Work

1. **What is your job title?** Junior Maths Teacher
2. **What are your primary responsibilities? Please list your job duties as you would on a résumé.**

Teaching duties:

- Teach Forms 2 and 3 Mathematics
 - Set and evaluate exams, all assignments, lectures, projects, coursework
 - Create daily lesson plans
- Oversee a homeroom form class

Administrative roles:

- Serve as assistant Boarding House mistress
- Faculty sponsor for several extra- or co-curricular activities, including:
 - MaP Refugee Advocates (organize trips to Dukwi Refugee Camp in Botswana), Maths Tutorials, Girls' Football Team, Botswana SPCA animal shelter
 - Bundles of Brightness, an off-campus student group committed to partnering with underserved schools to determine/distribute supplies to communities (e.g., solar lights, uniforms, school supplies, etc.)

3. **Did you receive any sort of orientation, handover or “onboarding” when you started your fellowship? By whom?**

Fortunately I had about a week with the previous year's PiAf Fellow who was in the Maths department, so she showed me the ropes and I had the opportunity to observe both her Form 2 and Form 3 classes. There was no formal orientation, but I had several meetings with my supervisor and was guided by the head of the Maths department in regards to classroom management and lesson planning.

4. **Describe a representative day at work.**

I wake up around 6:00 am as boarding house duty is at 6:30am. After the daily staff briefing at 6:50am, homeroom classes begin around 7:05am and last about 20 minutes. There are 6 lessons a day and on average I teach three of the periods, but I often substitute at least four periods a week. I have been covering an English class all term and also consistently cover health and French classes. During the periods I am not teaching, I use the time for various meetings or to prep for upcoming lessons. After our lunch break, the after-school programming (“Service, Physical, and Enrichment” program) begins at 2:15pm to 5:00 pm. I'm off when my afternoon activities end. On Tuesdays when I have boarding house duty, I supervise the girls from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.

5. **Please describe in greater detail 1-2 specific projects you have undertaken or accomplishments you have made so far.**

1. One of the English teachers here had to take off half of last term and all of this one when her son became seriously ill. I have taken her Form 2 English class, which meets 5 times per cycle, and one of her Personal Development classes once a week. Though I am fully supported by her when she has time to advise, this has been a learning experience as I had to undertake teaching a new subject in the middle of the term. However, it's also been one of the greatest opportunities since I adore all English literature and language!

2. As the faculty sponsors of MaP Refugee Advocates—a student group promoting awareness of human rights issues and directly engaging with the Botswana refugee community—another Fellow and I led a group of eleven students to Dukwi Refugee Camp in the north of Botswana on a service learning trip. This meant organizing an itinerary for each day and evening reflection each night, arranging travel, lodging, and food accommodations, and generally guiding the students through various service activities including participating in a leadership program for the youth in the community, painting a classroom, and meeting with community partners throughout the week. We're now trying to plan a campaign to fundraise for a Dukwi student scholarship.

6. On average, how many hours per week do you work?

50+, depending on how much boarding house duty I have that week or if I supervise day/weekend trips with the students.

7. What is your office environment like? Please comment on the size and structure of the office(s) where you do most of your work.

MaP has a wonderful office environment, especially the Maths department! Each department has its own office and the offices are scattered around the campus. There is a staffroom where meetings are held and it also functions as a general break & lunchroom area. The number of teaching staff is about 70. As far as my actual office goes, I have a desk in the Maths department, where all of the maths teachers—save those who have desk space elsewhere—are in one big air-conditioned (!) room. Most of the day, however, I'm not in the office because I'm teaching. Our classrooms switch every day since the class schedules operate on a rotating basis.

8. To whom do you report? (Please specify title of all applicable persons.)

I report to the deputy principal, as she manages all teaching staff. In regards to teaching duties, I report to the head of Form 2, the head of Form 3, the head of the Maths department, and the head of the SPE department.

9. Do you receive adequate direction/support to perform your job? How often do you check in with your supervisor?

All of my supervisors are very supportive and often available to offer guidance and advice. In the beginning of my first term I would reach out almost daily to discuss lesson plans, etc. with the head of the department, and the PiAf Fellows have a weekly meeting with the deputy principal where we review any scheduling arrangements or ask any questions we may have. I also shadowed a few teachers across departments to pick up skills on classroom management. There are also weekly department meetings that are used to set exam dates and discuss the progress each teacher is making on teaching the course material for the term.

If I have questions, there is always someone to answer; however, now that we are in the midst of our second term usually my supervisors are comfortable with my level of work and don't routinely seek feedback. On that note, I do think the Maths dept. is better than others at collaborating with lesson plans and materials than other depts.

10. What opportunities for travel has your work included so far? Do you anticipate work-related opportunities to travel in the future? How does your organization handle the arrangements/costs/plans for your work-related travel?

There are opportunities for travel when sports and academic teams are traveling for competitions, as well as for some SPE's. As mentioned, another Fellow and I took a group of eleven students to the refugee camp situated in the north of Botswana. I also travel at least twice monthly for other extracurriculars like Bundles of Brightness, whether that be to towns or villages ~three hours away or around Gaborone itself. I will be also traveling as a coach for the Girls Football Team for our tournaments. All work-related travel is paid for by MaP as well as meals during the trips.

11. I feel adequately prepared for my position's professional responsibilities.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

Please briefly explain your response.

While I feel like I now have adequate support from staff when I take initiative to ask questions, the lack of formal orientation when I arrived made the transition into a classroom more difficult than it should have been. I feel like I ultimately learned many of the school's policies in practice, rather than prior to a situation in which I would need to act or respond to something. Additionally, because I had (very) minimal teaching experience before coming to MaP, I'm learning a lot while on the job. I feel like extending the shadowing period at the start of the fellowship could enhance our knowledge of best/effective teaching practices.

12. Have you met with your supervisor to discuss your work plan assignment? If not, please explain why.

Not yet. Because teaching operates on a much more cumulative basis than other PiAf posts, I feel that the work plan differs substantially for the teaching positions. It's been a busy term for me and the head of my department, so our meeting to discuss the work plan assignment has been pushed back.

13. Please look back at your online VITALS form to review the goals you set for yourself before orientation. Are you working towards these goals? Have you met any of them? Please explain.

Yes, I am constantly working towards these goals; luckily for me, it will be a yearlong pursuit since none of them have an "absolute" deadline. I am gaining satisfaction daily from watching my students grasp difficult concepts, and certainly am having the opportunity to vary forms of physical activity here, from hiking and climbing to ultimate frisbee. And while I realize that my knowledge of Botswana's past and present is not comprehensive, I do feel that I have the opportunity to saturate every day with conversations with Batswana or experiences that enhance my understanding of the country and its complex communities, successes and challenges.

With respect to learning Setswana, a personal goal of mine, I have been having Setswana tutoring sessions with one of the older students from the boarding house. Slow, but sure, progress!

14. Please indicate 3-5 goals you have for the rest of your fellowship year (these can be personal or professional). Your professional goals should align with your work plan (see end of report)

1. I want to create stronger and more creative lesson plans for my classes, and next term implement a term-long maths project that could provide students a hands-on experience from which they will learn and retain information. Seeing individual progress for my students from the start to finish is a goal of mine.
2. I would like to add one more class onto my courseload, hopefully English, and engage on a deeper level with the boarding house girls, my students in class, and my soccer girls.
3. I want to continue to improve how MaP RAdS and Bundles of Brightness can function as catalysts for change in the way service is seen here – a self-reflective, reciprocal process with community partners as opposed to a box to check.
4. I also plan on (am in the process of) re-establishing the Amnesty International group/partnership MaP has with the local advocacy organization Ditshwanelo, and help them plan events or undertake legal research.
5. Outside of work, I plan on adventuring around Southern Africa as much as possible, continuing to learn Setswana, and strengthening the relationships I have with colleagues, other Fellows, and both local and ex-pat friends.

Your Arrival in Africa

- 15. How did you travel to your host country? Please be specific in terms of what airline(s) you flew, what cities you flew to/from, how much your plane tickets cost, and how you found/purchased your tickets. For example: "I purchased my ticket from the Cape to Cairo travel agency based in Washington, DC. I flew on British Airways from JFK to London, London to Johannesburg, and**

Johannesburg to Maputo. I have also booked a return flight for next May to return through the same cities. The round trip ticket cost \$2,277.”

I took a Delta KLM flight from DC to Johannesburg via Amsterdam, and then a separate Air Botswana flight from Joburg to Gaborone. Return flight is the one-way ticket from Joburg → Atlanta on Delta. Roundtrip ticket cost \$1700.

16. Please describe your visa arrangements. Please provide as much detail as possible to assist future Fellows in the visa application process.

- i. **What kind of visa/work permit do you have?** Resident permit
- ii. **How did you obtain it?** The school really helps with this. Their transportation office will take your passport and other information when you get here, and drive you to the office to begin the process; what you need to remember to bring is a certified copy of your birth certificate.
- iii. **Did you receive your visa/permit before heading to Africa or after arriving?** After arriving.
- iv. **What costs were associated with obtaining it?** The school covered the costs; we just had to pay for passport photos (a special size that you have to get here).
- v. **Did you pay these costs or were they covered by your organization?** Covered.
- vi. **Any suggestions to help future Fellows navigate this process?** Yes – just remind the school staff to start early because you don’t want to get caught not having enough time at the end of the 90 days you’re originally given, and then have to pay extra for staying within the country!

17. What vaccinations were you required to obtain prior to your departure? How much did your vaccinations cost?

My insurance covered my vaccinations, but I got the yellow fever vaccine separately. I don’t remember the exact cost but I do remember that being expensive.

18. Comment on your arrival and first week in Africa. Any improvements that could streamline the assimilation process for future Fellows?

The first week in Botswana was much colder than I expected – warm jackets and a solid pair of warm shoes are crucial for mornings and evenings! As for the assimilation process, it was simultaneously helpful – and a bit stressful - to come into the school mid-term, since everything is in full swing. The “introduction” to the school was arriving on your average, busy Wednesday schoolday and taking over your own classes by Monday. I was happy to have had a condensed amount of time with two of the previous PiAf Fellows, but I wish that week together had been at least two, in order that I could find out more nuanced information about the school/community/city once I had time to see things on the ground.

That being said, the city of Gabs is small and it’s very easy – and quick –to meet a wonderful group of expats & locals. By the end of the first week, I had joined an ultimate Frisbee team, gone rock climbing, and been introduced to many of the people I would now consider good friends. One stressful factor was not having a car when we first got here, so a suggestion would be to buy one (take a loan from the school) as soon as you arrive.

19. PiAf’s Pre-departure Orientation was sufficient in preparing me to transition into my fellowship.

a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral **d) Disagree** e) Strongly disagree

Please briefly explain your response.

I believe that PiAf’s orientation was sufficient in preparing me for the cultural, safety, and social aspects of moving to Gabs, but not the actual teaching aspect. Since the majority of posts are more project-based,

it seemed like the orientation fully covered those fellowship roles, but could have spent more time on the divergent fellowship roles.

20. Is there anything in particular that PiAf could cover at orientation that would have better prepared you for your fellowship post? Please specify.

It would help if the session tailored to individual industry were expanded so that more position-specific questions could be asked and answered.

Your Housing & Local Transportation

21. Is housing provided by and/or paid for by your organization? Provided/ paid for.

22. Please describe your living arrangements. Include the following details:

- a. **Are you living in a house, apartment, guest room, etc.?** The other PiAf Fellows and I live on-campus in the Annex, a small attachment to the side of the girls' boarding house.
- b. **Are you living alone or with roommates?** With roommates, but we each have our own room.
- c. **How did you find your housing?** We live on campus.

23. How do you typically travel between your home and your work? How much does your daily transportation cost and how long is your commute? See above.

24. Is your local transportation adequate? Please briefly describe your options and their related costs.

Options of local transportation are: 1) combis 2) taxis 3) personal cars. Combis are the cheapest (equivalent of 30 cents / ride), but the least efficient because they basically don't have a schedule, and taxis are about USD \$3 per ride and mostly reliable. For the first month I used a taxi to get everywhere and the costs added up, as did the time waiting for them to show up. It became frustrating needing to call someone every time you needed to leave campus, so having a car is a far better option. The four MaP PiAf Fellows share one car and the cost of gas, and it's turned out to be the easiest and best option for us thus far.

Your Daily Life

25. Do you live and work in safe areas? A very safe area. Since we live at the school, we always have the security of the gate and the guards who oversee it. The city of Gabs is also pretty safe. I have had no difficulty being out late at night or anything like that, but I wouldn't walk alone at night since that's known to be more dangerous within any area of the city.

26. What has been your experience with crime so far? No personal experiences yet in Gabs.

27. Describe the crime and general security situation within your city/town. Could you recommend specific areas future Fellows might consider for safe housing? What about areas that should be avoided? See #25.

28. Comment on the local languages, your proficiency in them (if any), and your subsequent ability to get by.

The local language is Setswana, though the school / most businesses operate in English. I am very at ease communicating with my students since they are all very proficient in English. Plus, maths is a universal language 😊. However, I frequently find it challenging to communicate at length with some staff members who only speak Setswana or on some of the trips I have taken around the country, since many communities across Botswana (though secondary schools are conducted in English) speak almost exclusively Setswana or their local language, of which there are several more. I can easily get by with English here but I'm taking lessons in Setswana right now. Level of proficiency is minimal at this point – nothing beyond simple greetings and short phrases – but I'm working on it.

29. Comment on appropriate clothing for work and outside of work.

For work, it's similar to what teachers wear in the states: more "casual" than "business," but nonetheless something you would feel comfortable wearing among large groups of students. In winter I wear long pants and blouses; in summer, I usually wear a dress or skirt/shirt combo made of light, breathable material. All shoes go, excepting flip flops.

Outside of work, you can usually wear whatever you want. Shorts are fine in summer in the cosmopolitan areas of Botswana. I wouldn't ever wear shorts in the smaller or more rural areas of the country though because the communities can be more conservative in clothing there.

30. How have you been spending your free time? What kinds of opportunities are available for socializing in your city/town?

I have actually spent a lot of free time doing the "teacher lifestyle" of investing in outside-school, school activities – which means several of my weekends have been spent on day- or weekend-long school trips. Outside of that, Gabs offers plenty of opportunities for socializing; it's a small city but people love to get together.

I'm part of a fun Ultimate Frisbee co-ed group that meets every Wednesday and Friday, and also have gone climbing or hiking on the weekends with friends. People often throw dinner parties, and once a weekend there's usually some sort of city-wide event that you can attend. For instance, I've gone to outside concerts, wine tastings, and farmer's markets on the weekends.

31. I feel adequately prepared for my personal/social life. _____

a) Strongly agree b) **Agree** c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

Please briefly explain your response.

I feel very fortunate to be in a city like Gabs that is small enough for you to get to know a considerable number of expats and locals in a short time, yet big enough that there are often new or interesting things to do around the city. Everyone here has been incredibly welcoming and very willing to spend weekends adventuring around the city or outside of it.

Your Reflections

32. Any frustration with living arrangements or with work? Any frustrations outside of work?

Living arrangements have been frustrating, certainly not because of the people but rather the fact that our "house" is more of a dorm. Though we each have our own rooms – I live with the other PiAf Fellows – there is little privacy and almost no kitchen space, which makes it difficult to cook healthy food for oneself. Outside of that, I don't have any major frustrations!

33. Has there been anything that you have needed but have not been able to locate or acquire?

Nothing – Gabs has it all.

34. How did you deal/are you dealing with "culture shock"?

This is an interesting question since in many ways, adjusting to the city of Gaborone was smooth: I can speak English here, I learned how to drive on the left side of the road (I love it now), I can get familiar foods at the grocery stores. Though this is the longest I will yet have lived abroad, I experienced extreme "culture shock" in other places I have lived that a) have fewer expats and b) the experience of being abroad was newer. Here, the culture shock has been more subtle, as I have had to get used to new expectations, manners of doing things, and of course the decreased access to water and power across the country. Having other expat or international friends around has made the transition very manageable.

35. What about your experience thus far has been the most...

Surprising?:

I have been happily surprised by how much socializing and physical activity intermingle here. It's a great way to spend time with friends as well as feel better about yourself after stuffing your face with Setswana food at school meals!

Pleasant?:

The friendly, welcoming community here. Spending time with locals, expats, and my coworkers and students has definitely been the highlight of my year thus far.

Frustrating?:

The lack of communication across different channels of the school is frustrating at times. While people are usually very direct in person, it's difficult to convey a meaning to someone in a short conversation or via email, and often no one checks their emails for a few days anyways.

36. What are the Top 3 things you miss the most from the US? (Can be food, amenities, movies, etc. Cannot be people—although we know you miss us in the PiAf office terribly, and we thank you! We miss you, too.)

1. Botswana has spotty internet access just about everywhere. While I *love* this for the increase in quality of conversations, I miss the easy convenience of using my phone as a GPS or calling friends/family. It also makes it difficult to give students homework they'd need a computer for, due to loadshedding and the quality of internet.
2. Hills!
3. Seasonal variety in the weather

37. What are the Top 3 things about life in Africa that beat out the US?

1. Better use of free time
2. Proximity to amazing wildlife, scenery, and adventures
3. Connection to local community or history

38. Please comment on your relationship with the Princeton in Africa office. Include the following details:

- a. Are you receiving sufficient support, materials, and information from us?
- b. What could we improve?

Very positive relationship with the PiAf office; they do a great job updating us on travel warnings, sending intermittent alumni reflections, and reminding us of deadlines ☺ No big improvements that I notice!

Your Stipend & Budget

39. If you are receiving stipend monies directly from your fellowship organization, how are you being paid?

- a. Biweekly, monthly, etc? Monthly.
- b. In US dollars or in another currency? In pula, which is Botswana currency.
- c. In cash or deposited directly into a bank account? Local account or US account? Cash.

40. Have you undertaken additional work to meet expenses? (Please remember that during the term of your fellowship, you are to work only as a Fellow and at no other job unless any such job is

previously disclosed to Princeton in Africa and approved in writing by PiAf). Not yet, but I plan on babysitting to make some extra spending money.

41. Please provide a sample monthly budget of your average expenses (in US dollars).

Rent	\$ 0
Utilities	\$ 0
Furnishings	\$ 0
Phone	\$ 15
Internet	\$ 0
Transportation	\$ 60
Fitness	\$ 5
Entertainment	\$ 60
Food	\$ 150
Travel	\$ varies month to month...but on average, ~\$200
Medications	\$ 0
Laundry	\$ 0
House cleaning	\$ 0
Home security	\$ 0
Other (specify)	\$ 0

Other one-time or infrequent expenses not included in your monthly budget above (e.g. visa expenses)?

Buying a car, and car check-ups. Bought it for USD \$3500 and we took a loan from the school to finance it. Our pay is docked by \$75 / month.