

# Matthew Williams Summer 2016 Fieldwork

I was on an ISSLP this summer in the village of Adaklu-Helekpe, Volta Region, Ghana. I got to teach high school biology and live in the community, and although I wasn't required to, I attempted to perform my first unofficial ethnography, learning as much as possible about the community and their ways of life. I attempted this by using myself as a measuring stick, tuning into what made me uncomfortable and asking why? I also wrote a lot and read Joseph Henrich's 2016 book *The Secret of Our Success* about evolutionary anthropology and gene-culture convolution. The village was the perfect place to see the forces Henrich discusses at work, and I spent a lot of time thinking and writing about how the ballet of culture and genetics is continually shaping us. I also wrote a research paper on how important the cultural forces of family and educational system are in shaping capable human beings who will generate sustainable and successful development later in their lives. I am planning on continuing to work on this paper and possibly turn it into a thesis or submit it for an undergraduate journal. The experience was incredible and I learned a lot about myself and humankind. I think that the most significant thing I took home with me was a more fully-developed understanding of just how many forces are at play when a human being is made and proceeds to grow, and a newfound appreciation for how large of a part culture plays in that matrix.



Doing yoga with the kids



Grading tests with a friend



Village salon with the kids



Saying goodbye to kids