A WEEPY DAY

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Category: Observations

It's been a funny day. It's not often that I start crying; much less twice in one day! Over lunch I was involved in a discussion about renegotiating the contract with FATEAC, a theological college in Abidjan which runs a degree course in Bible translation. Seven or eight years ago I was involved in the initial negotiations which set up the course. Despite the troubles in Ivory Coast the course has continued running and is educating well qualified Bible translators. As the discussion went on, it became clear that I was being asked to go to Abidjan as part of the team renegotiating the contract. The thought of my dream of all those years ago turning out to a succesful programme and the thought of going back to Abidjan and seeing so many friends was too much and I had to stop and dab my eyes a few times as they filled up.

Later that day, we were in a large group discussing some of the problems which arise when Africans and Expats are working together. It's a fact of life that there will be difficulties in this sort of situation and it can get very tense. One African colleague, a very bouncy African leader suggested that we were too often in a tug of war and that we needed a 'hug of peace'. She asked expats and Africans to hug each other. It's not quite 'British' but it was good to take a time to share how much we appreciate one another. One Cameroonian colleague gave me a big hug and told me in a very heartwarming way how much he appreciates working with me - the appreciation is entirely reciprocated. For a second time in the day, my eyes filled up.

Working with Africans is a huge privilege.