



The “Kharits” (friends) of Samba Puppet Play: A true story of friendship from Senegal

Scene 1:

The story starts in Keur Madiabel, a village in Senegal, Africa. Six-year-old Samba lives with his mother Coumba. His dad died already. In their village, the houses have thatch roofs and the mango trees provide shade. Life is peaceful there. Some of the villagers work in the fields. Others tend their herds.



Scene 2:

Life is not easy for Samba and his mother Coumba who is blind. Every day, he guides her.



They go around the village begging to get enough money to live.

Sometimes they take the bus and go to the nearby town because people in their own village have very little too.

There are two schools in the village.

But Samba cannot go to school.

When he doesn't go around with his mother to beg, he is lonely.

Children his age often make fun of his mother's blindness.

So, he doesn't dare to go and play with them.

He thinks that they are nasty. Each day is the same for him. He gets up at dawn, when the muezzin calls for prayer. He walks barefoot around the streets and alleys all day and often goes to bed hungry. But his mom loves him and tells him nice stories.

Samba would give anything for her to see. He finds her so beautiful!

Scene 3:

Far from Keur Madiabel, at Dakar, there is an association called Pilot Village.

They take in children who are in danger, to offer them a better life. They welcome children who live in the street, those who live in poverty and some children who are in trouble with the law. Coumba is worried for Samba's future and she contacts this association.



Scene 4:

Samba and his mom arrive at the Pilot Village Lake Rose.

He wonders where he is and is worried because he never lived apart from his mother.

His mother explains to him that he will receive a good education.

He accepts because he never said no to his mother.

The center is big. He knows nobody there. There are many children in the courtyard who are playing; they seem to be having fun.

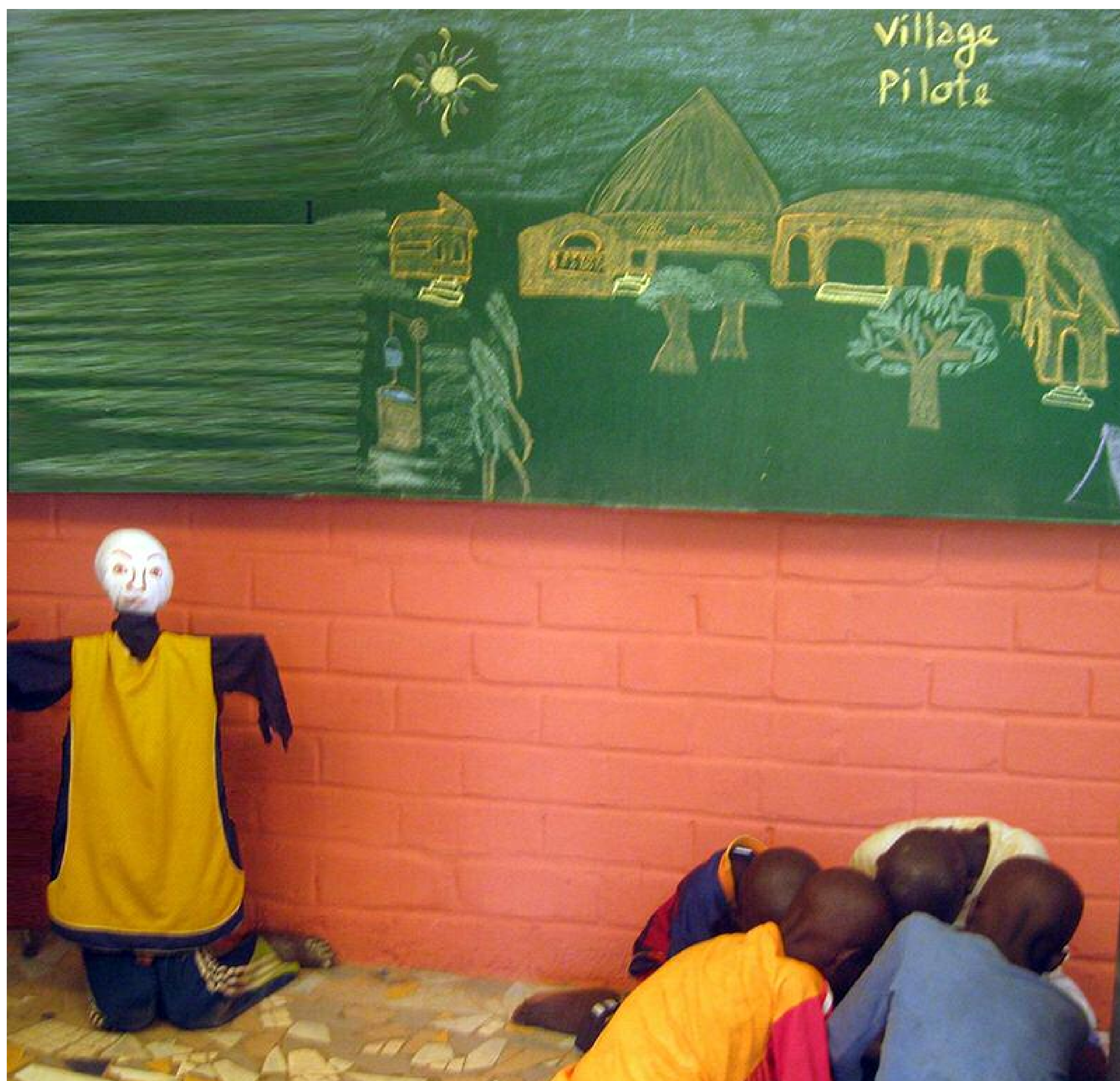
But no one pays any attention to him.

In the village, even if the children are nasty to him, at least he knows them.

He is very sad and would give anything to go back home.



Scene 5:



Samba is all alone in a corner. He is very sad and is thinking how he could run away to see his mother. The teachers are nice, but he misses Coumba and the stories she told him. He feels lost in this big center. His only wish is to go back to the streets of Keur Madiable.

Scene 6:

One day, Yoro, a child who also lives at the center, comes to him and says:

“Do you want to be my friend?”

Without waiting for Samba's response, Yoro takes his hand and says:

“Let's swear that we'll always stick together!”

Then Yoro calls the other children:

“Come and play with Samba, my new friend!”

From this day on, Samba is feeling better at the center.

There he has plenty to eat; he sleeps in a real bed; he can go to a reading class and play rugby.

The class is beautiful; it is full of pictures.

He learns many games and likes it when the whole class sings.

And he is really happy when his mom comes to visit him.



Scene 7:

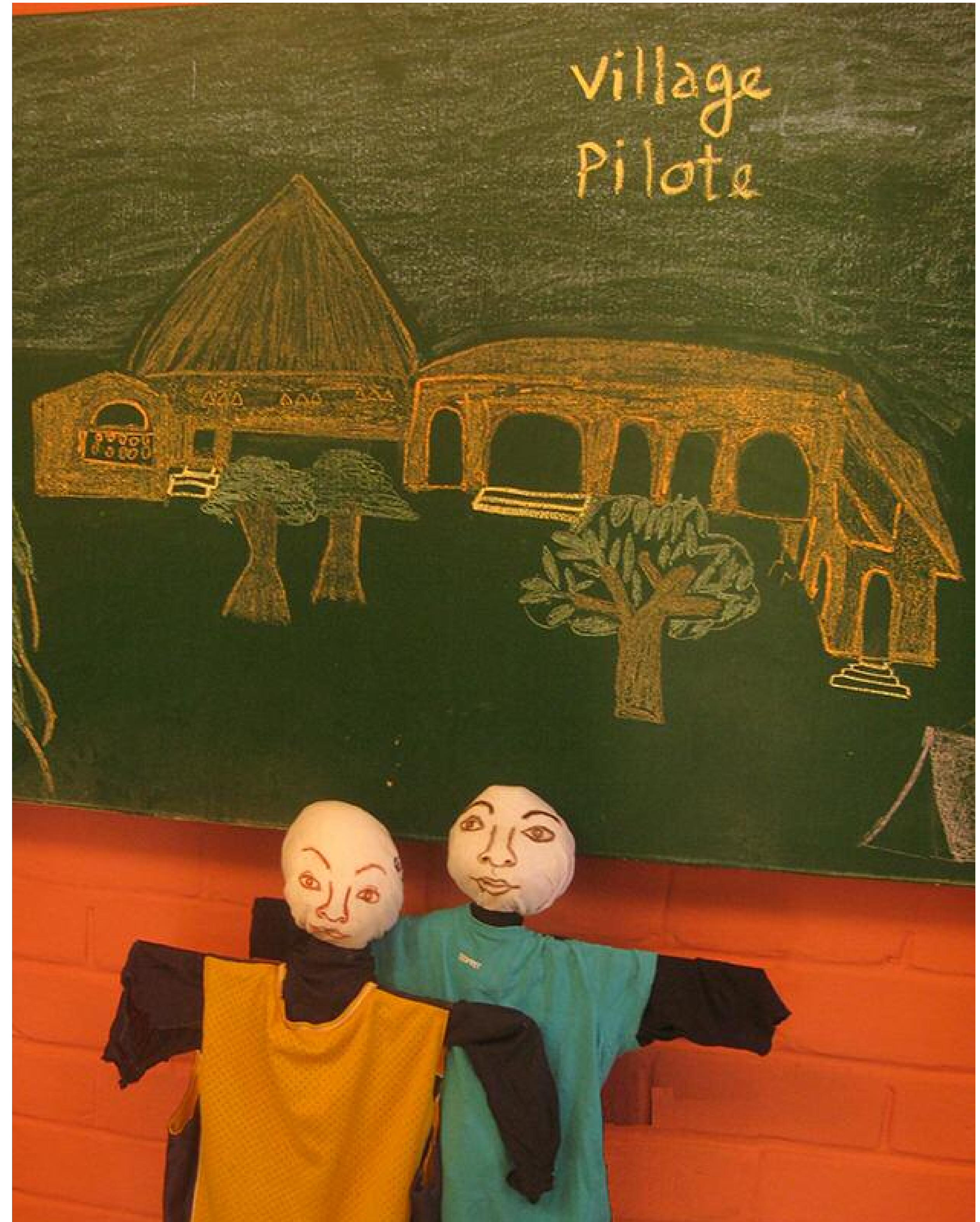
One day, a new child arrives. He looks around shyly and seems to be scared. Samba observes him for a few days and learns that his name is Demba. He goes over to him and shakes his hand.

Then he calls Yoro:

“Yoro, this is my new friend, Demba!”

Yoro answers:

“So this is the new friend of all of us.
Come and join us!”



Scene 8:

The name of the center is **KHARITO**.
It means “**Friendship**” in Wolof,
the national language of Senegal.
There, all the children live as brothers.

CELEBRATE FRIENDSHIP!

The End



Pilot Village is an association in Dakar that welcomes children at risk. In the center, run by the association, the children can learn to read and write. The older ones can get job trainings. The goal is for the children to return home with a training that allows them to stay with their family.