

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Philippines 



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Volunteer Stories

The Bliss of Witnessing Newborns



To learn more about medicine in developing countries and to expand her medical knowledge is what made Jenna Cosentino, 20 years old from the USA, to volunteer in the Philippines through Projects Abroad.

She was a medical volunteer in the Cebu Provincial Hospital-Bogo City. Like any other volunteers, she also assisted the doctors and nurses and worked with volunteers in the hospital. In the morning, they made rounds, taking patients vital signs: blood pressure and temperature. Projects Abroad volunteers increase the productivity in the hospital as the volunteers are able to do some tasks while the doctors and nurses are still busy attending to the patients. She noticed that Projects Abroad helped in fixing the hospital to make it more appealing and clean. "While I was there Projects Abroad was working in the Pedia-ward and they re-painted some walls and ceiling and also replaced the doors of the comfort rooms. Many volunteers also donated supplies to the hospital. Two of my fellow volunteers and myself bought and donated 4 fans to the OB ward as there were no fans in there prior to that day, with the new babies and suffering from heat", she said.

Jenna worked at the hospital starting from eight in the morning to three in the afternoon. Upon arriving in the morning, she accompanied a nurse or a fellow volunteer and took all

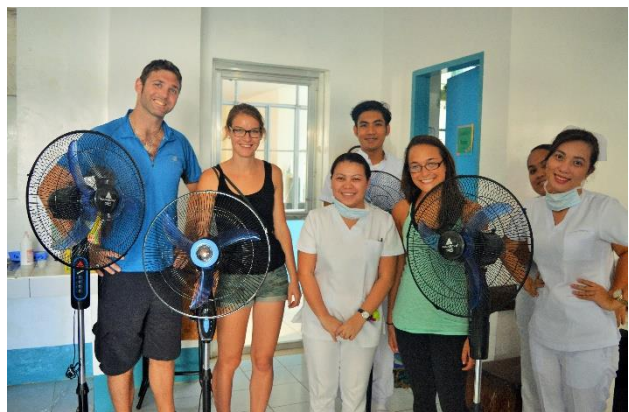
of the patients' vital signs. They checked if the patients' blood pressure and temperature have change much from the day before and try to advise them what to do to try to make them better. She was able to assist in many departments at the hospital too. She enjoyed being in the delivery room as she was able to witness many deliveries, and also liked to be in the emergency room as it was always a surprise what she should see.

For her, she learned an immense amount of information during her short stay in the Philippines. From the way things were run in the hospital, to the way that the locals lived, to the stories shared over dinner with her host family. "From my first day in the Philippines, my host family made me feel right at home and as if I was a part of their family. My host brothers and sisters always made sure that I had everything that I needed and if there was anything that I needed they would accompany me into town and show me where to go to get what I needed", Jenna said.

"One of my most memorable experiences in the Philippines was watching a mother gave birth and assisting the doctor and nurse in this process. I stood with the nurse while the baby was born and after the baby was born, I remember being the first to tell the woman that it was a little boy and the smile on her face was priceless. I was then able to assist in cleaning the baby and giving him his vaccinations and then carried him over to his mother. Seeing her face light up when she saw her son for the first time was priceless and a moment that I will never forget", she added. Another one of her favourite moments was donating the fans to the OB ward with two fellow volunteers and seeing how happy the mothers were by being given by simple little fan was amazing and they knew right then how happy they had made them. Jenna loved how every single member of Bogo City community was so kind and welcoming and they all helped her to make Bogo feel like home to her. "I will forever miss the heart-warming smiles that I saw every day on the streets of Bogo and from my host family. For any other volunteers I would advise them to make most of their time, try new things and always keep an open mind! Your time in Bogo will fly but the memories will last forever"!



Jenna Cosentino (USA)
Medical Volunteer



Building Blocks of Memories

It has been a pleasure to see foreign people come to the Philippines to help those who were affected by super typhoon Yolanda. To date, it was last November 8, 2013 when it hit the Philippines. The massive destruction it brought made most of the people living in northern Cebu and neighbouring provinces, homeless. Until now, several people are still in the recovery process. Projects Abroad with the help of its volunteers has been extending help to rehabilitate schools and build houses.

Among of the volunteers who came and helped at the building project was Emmanuel Clerc, 31 years old from France. He came to the volunteer for he wanted to make a difference for the people affected by the typhoon and therefore was a disaster relief volunteer. He was assigned in Maño, San Remigio, Cebu, a 20-minute ride from Bogu City at the relocation site of the typhoon Yolanda survivors living in San Remigio. A total of 300 houses to be built at the site and it really needs help from the volunteers to reach the target.



At the site, Emmanuel was given enough work along with his fellow volunteers from other countries; also local tradesmen and each of them have assigned tasks to do. He have experienced putting roofs on, mixing cement and making window and door jambs. Aside from that, he also helped setting floor foundation. It was a fabulous experience for Emmanuel being able to help the local community in the Philippines. He also enjoyed his stay with his host family. "My host family is very nice and kind. In the evening I played with a lot of children and experienced their way of living. In disaster relief, I got to know very nice locals, Amid, Dante and Gabriel. Life in Philippines is somehow not easy especially for those who don't have much but what I admired is that they are always smiling and they enjoy and take the time to have a good time. In my country everybody are always busy, and most of people keeps on complaining. It was a really good human experience for me to be in the Philippines. ", Emmanuel said.

"My advice to the other volunteers is to enjoy all the time they will spend with their family. Sometimes I was tired after the work, but I played for 4 hours with the children and it was very fun. For the disaster relief, my advice is to work a lot towards helping the local people. Sometimes the weather is very warm and sometimes rainy but it was not a problem for me. The most important is to enjoy and find a personal satisfaction", he added.



Emmanuel Clerc (France)
Disaster Relief Volunteer

Volunteer's Campaign to Nutrition



54 year-old Lisbet Keis is a nutritionist from Denmark. She came to the Philippines and joined the public health project of Projects Abroad because she wanted to do something that works with health and care since she have worked her whole life dealing with food.

On the first two days as a public health volunteer, she was assigned to a clinic in the city's health office and worked with TB patients. She wanted to do more than being in the clinic and assisting the local staff so she talked to Maam Billie, the nurse in the city health office if she could do a demonstration on nutrition instead. She have also seen and read the books from the government office that Philippines have a lot of nutritious food but many does not know how to make them. She met the mothers from few of the barangays in Bogu and decided to make a campaign on nutrition through demonstration together with Jasmine, another volunteer from Germany who is a nurse.

According to Lisbet, Projects Abroad could be a big part of the Bogu and the whole Philippines in making a huge difference through nutrition project as it is facing a big problem with diabetes and high blood pressure since most of the people here eat white rice during breakfast, lunch, dinner and eat only few vegetables. She also suggested to Projects Abroad to start a big nutrition project so people may learn the importance of nutrition and to lessen diabetes. As she started and made the campaign on nutrition in a small way, she felt that the mother's; especially young moms, listened to them and are happy with what they have done as they also tasted the final product on her menu on that day.



Aside from the nutrition project, she also suggested to have a sports project so people will be inclined to having regular exercise and will have a better understanding of the health benefit it brings. "The difference we have made is not a different now. It is a very big surprise for the mommies I have spoken with, which are more than 500 mommies. All the mommies started to taste carrots very little and after how many hours, they ate our salads, raw carrots, moringa and our healthy doughnuts. I have learned that here, money is not the most important thing. I have seen that the mommies take care of their children and I haven't heard children asked for money to buy something." "I will never forget all the mommies that I have spoken with as well as Maam Billie for such great help while I'm here. We have a great time!" she said.



While in the Philippines, Lisbet learned that there are so many trikes and laughed about it on her first three days. She felt safe and going out in the evening is not a problem. She admired what Projects Abroad did after typhoon Yolanda. In as much as she would want to visit all the schools repaired through Projects Abroad volunteers she wasn't able to make it for she lacked of time.

Her advice to the future volunteers is to come to the Philippines with a very open mind and look for what they can do while showing respect for the people around them.

Lisbet Keis (Denmark)
Public Health Volunteer

Mois à Bogo, Nord Cebú

Ces 3 mois ont été remplis de belles rencontres et de découvertes enrichissantes. Les Philippines sont un pays qui mérite le détour non seulement pour ses magnifiques paysages mais surtout pour ses habitants qui sont extraordinairement accueillants et gentils. Ils méritent qu'on vienne les aider car ils ne cessent d'être touchés par des catastrophes naturelles. Et malgré cela, j'ai rencontré des gens contents de ce qu'ils ont, vivant simplement, et ayant une énorme reconnaissance pour notre soutien.

Ce voyage était attendu depuis longtemps et il était excitant d'arriver enfin à destination. En même temps, c'est un peu l'inconnu qui nous attend. Qu'il est agréable et réconfortant d'être accueillie dès la sortie de l'aéroport par un large sourire ! Puis l'organisation veille à tout ce qu'il faut pour un bon départ : des explications sur le mode de vie, un petit tour de ville pour situer les principaux endroits utiles, l'accompagnement pour l'achat d'un moyen de communication, l'utilisation du moyen de transport de la ville, le tricycle, comment revenir à l'office, etc.

Suivi des instructions pour le lieu de travail choisi. On peut poser toutes les questions qui nous tracassent et nous voilà rassurés, prêts pour le séjour. C'était très utile et très sympa. Leur soutien a été constant durant toute la durée du séjour.



J'ai eu l'immense plaisir de pouvoir aider Ma'am Cheryl dans sa classe de kindergarden. La journée commence à 8h avec l'équipe du matin. Après la prière et quelques chants, les enfants commencent leurs exercices de syllabation. J'adore les entendre répéter les sons tous ensemble. Pendant ce temps, je corrige leurs devoirs et note celui du lendemain. Les enfants alternent les moments collectifs oraux avec les moments où ils doivent écrire dans leur cahier. C'est ainsi que je peux intervenir pour aider ceux qui en ont besoin ou pour corriger leur travail. Parfois, je prépare quelques tableaux nécessaires à la suite du programme. J'ai pu proposer quelques activités que l'enseignante a acceptées avec plaisir. Etant aussi enseignante, Plusieurs points m'ont surpris, comme le fait de manger plein de sucreries à la récréation, et il était très intéressant de pouvoir échanger sur nos différences. J'ai également pu aller quelques jours dans la classe de Ma'am Doren dont j'admire la pédagogie et la patience qu'elle déploie afin que ses enfants intègrent les notions de base.

J'ai également pu aller enseigner à la classe de grade 4, qui correspond à l'âge de mes élèves. 46 élèves dans une seule classe et des enfants tellement attachants que c'était un vrai bonheur de pouvoir partager un peu de mon pays, un chant et des bricolages avec eux.

Mon passage dans cette école a été un vrai bonheur car les enfants ont de très beaux sourires et vous accueillent avec un 'hi'. Ils viennent pour vous prendre la main pour la porter à leur front ce qui est un signe de respect. Ce geste me touche à chaque fois. Je l'introduirais bien chez nous !

Mon séjour dans ma famille d'accueil était exceptionnel. Je suis leur première volontaire et Michelle, la maman s'est pliée en quatre pour me faire plaisir. Elle est d'une très grande modestie, d'une timidité et d'une gentillesse extrême. Autant dire qu'elle m'a chouchoutée. Comme j'avais rempli ma valise de divers jeux, il était important d'avoir des enfants pour jouer. Ce qui s'est passé a dépassé mes espérances car je n'ai pas joué seulement avec ses filles, mais petit à petit tous les enfants du quartier passaient après l'école à la maison. Quand j'arrivais un peu plus tard, ils m'attendaient et m'accueillaient avec un "Hi Miss Jacquie" et couraient vers moi. Ensuite, nous enchaînions les parties de uno, de triomino, d'élastiques, de badminton. Finalement, nous avons rétabli le terrain de volley en achetant un nouveau filet et une lampe afin de pouvoir jouer après la tombée de la nuit. Ces soirées restent des moments inoubliables pour moi.

J'ai aussi pu passer quelques jours sur le chantier de construction. C'est une nouvelle expérience pour moi et j'ai adoré l'endroit qui était magique, ainsi que le travail. Il était très intéressant de voir comment on peut construire une maison en ayant de simples outils. Quel courage !

Les weekends, j'ai pu profiter de visiter les îles alentours avec les autres volontaires. J'adore ces paysages, ces champs de cannes à sucre, ces champs de riz, les cocotiers, les plages de sable blancs, les chutes d'eau et les magnifiques couchers de soleil. J'ai pu faire de très chouettes connaissances parmi les autres volontaires et c'était très sympa de côtoyer tous ces jeunes venant de pays différents. Il n'était parfois pas facile de suivre leur conversation car les anglophones parlaient vite et oubliaient qu'on puisse ne pas tout comprendre. Néanmoins, il y avait un tout petit groupe de Canadiens et de Français qui me permettaient de m'exprimer avec mes propres expressions. J'ai eu la chance de cohabiter avec deux super volontaires avec lesquels je vais garder contact.

Ces 3 mois dans cette petite ville de Bogo resteront inoubliables. Je garde dans mon cœur tous ces gens, ces enfants avec qui j'ai partagé un sourire, un repas, un jeu, une discussion, un anniversaire, un voyage,... C'est grâce à ces Philippins si gentils, si reconnaissants, si chaleureux et si attachants que mon séjour restera extraordinaire. Merci pour tout ! Vous êtes fantastiques !

Jacquie Matthey (Switzerland)
Care Volunteer

