

# THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Philippines 

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 02 Volunteer Stories
- 03 A Worthwhile Experience
- 04 Helping Where Help Is Needed
- 05 Editorial

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# Volunteer Stories



Being a volunteer for three weeks has been a wonderful and amazing journey. Coming to the Philippines was for me going to this unknown part of the world, which seemed completely different from other places I have ever been before. Before I came and on my way I was still not expecting to meet such amazing people, and have this amazing adventure. When I arrived, I was ushered by Sir Aki, this very friendly, hilarious and nice man that knows everything about the history of the world and especially in the Philippines. He was so open and interested to know me; it was a warm welcome. From Cebu City to Bogu City, I experienced different environments; from the gigantic and crowded city with buildings everywhere, lots of cars and traffic, to this little city full of nice and caring people, with a significant amount of tricycles and a huge amount of dogs. Working at Bogu Central School 1 has been a wonderful experience. Playing with the children, dancing, singing with them, helping them with their writing and helping Ms. Flores, was great.

I discovered things about myself such as being patient with the children, being creative, working under the supervision of someone, communicating with the children even if we don't speak the same language and so on. I had so much fun with these children that are so full of energy, curious, enthusiastic and excited about everything and anything all the time. It was funny, interesting and quite weird to know how my hair amazed the entire school and how all the children wanted to touch it. I became the attraction of the school and had so much new friends that came everyday say hi to me, such lovely and loving children.

Outside the school I met really nice people, the other volunteers; doing different projects to me but with who I socialized with all the time, with whom I went out on weekends visiting the beautiful islands of the Philippines, had fun and interesting conversations with. We built relationships that I hope will last more than those three weeks and it is mainly due to Projects Abroad and I am really grateful for that. My host family has been so nice to me. I was the youngest daughter of my host parents and the youngest sister of my host sisters, Crisnessa and Arlett. They take good care of me by feeding me, always asking how I am, if I need anything and as they were always saying, "Feel at home, you are our youngest daughter". One of their sons invited me to his house to meet his wife and his son. One of my host parents' daughter invited me to her aunt's house where she lives. It was really like being part of their family, meeting all the people that they care about, family and friends, and everyone every time was more than nice to me. It was really great staying with this family.

To conclude, this journey has been simply amazing. Every moment spent here brought me something. The smiles of the children and the people of Bogu in general, the kindness and generosity of my host family, the great moments spent with the other volunteers, the experience of teaching and being around such amazing children and a super supervisor, all the social events with the Projects Abroad staff and the special kindness of Thea and so on. The Philippines have been so good to me and I will never forget my time here, all the people that I met and I hope I could come back in the near future.

**Selena Souadou Batchily (France)**

Care Volunteer



# A Worthwhile Experience

After quitting his job in Denmark as a carpenter, Oliver Bokk joined Projects Abroad as a Disaster Relief volunteer. He wanted to travel the world while doing something meaningful. He did some research and found ten organizations which offered volunteering, but only Projects Abroad offered a Building Project, which he was interested in. He chose to travel to the Philippines because aside from the Building Projects, he wanted to learn about the Philippine culture he wanted to learn about the Philippine culture, and he knew that the people were suffering greatly from typhoon Haiyan last year.

The Disaster Relief Project aims to help communities who suffered as a result of the typhoon in the northern part of the country. Volunteers assist in returning facilities back to working order.

Oliver was assigned to Dakit Elementary School and he enjoyed it. He was a carpenter for four years in his home country so he wanted to see the difference of how it is done in the Philippines.

“It was the best eight weeks of my life,” he said. “Volunteering with Projects Abroad has been a rewarding experience because aside from rebuilding, I also built lasting friendships and beautiful memories. I shall truly cherish the volunteers that I have worked with and the local people that I got to know.”

At the Disaster Relief Project, Oliver plastered walls, painted, mixed cement and did foundation work for the classrooms. He was happy and productive since he got enough responsibilities. He learned that everyone should seize the day and enjoy every single day working or volunteering.

At first, adapting to the culture of the Philippines seemed too much for Oliver. He thought he wouldn't be able to handle it, but he was surprised. He was living a Danish lifestyle but as the days went by, he was able to appreciate the Philippine culture. He liked how hospitable the people are, especially how they make somebody feel welcomed. He also found joy in playing with the children at his placement. He was surprised that the local children would talk and play with him even though he was a stranger to them.

“My experience was really fantastic! I liked the people, the accommodation, my host family, mangoes, rice, the sea, and the small islands! It is a great kind of experience here. Everything that happened to me is priceless.”

Like Oliver, to the future volunteers, let the experience surprise you!



**Oliver Bokk (Danish)**

Disaster Relief Volunteer



## “Helping where help is needed.”

When typhoon Yolanda, the world's strongest typhoon ever recorded hit the Philippines on November 8, 2013, it ravaged most of the Visayan region. Be it big or small houses, residential and non-residential buildings, government and non-government owned infrastructures, business establishments and schools had been damaged. It's as if a monster devoured a whole prey. This was a nightmare for the Yolanda victims. The damage it caused was unimaginable. Roofs flew; walls ruined and made homeless. Despite of what had happened, though homeless, the people in the area were never hopeless. Local and international support came. Various rehabilitations have been initiated.

Among of the various organizations who came to the Philippines and extend their hands, in an effort to rehabilitate, is Projects Abroad. It's a leading volunteer abroad organization founded in 1992 and believes in helping where help is needed. Projects Abroad Philippines is the newest unit of Projects Abroad. It was introduced in June 2013 in Talisay City, Cebu. After typhoon Yolanda, it focuses on Disaster Relief and Care Projects, thus transferred the office in Bogu City, Cebu, a small city that was badly hit by the typhoon. The Disaster Relief Project is geared towards reconstruction and repair of the school and educational infrastructure in Northern Cebu. As reported by the Province of Cebu, a total of 874 classrooms were devastated. With our young and dynamic volunteers, Projects Abroad Philippines has reconstructed four elementary schools and a day care center and still looking forward to reconstructing more; helping the children shape their future.



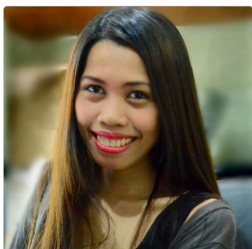


# Editorial

## See you in Cebu!



Cebu is a small island located in the Visayan region. Being one of the most developed provinces in the Philippines, it is one of the best places to do business because of its wide array of telecommunication facilities. Cebu also prides itself as the premiere province in the country because of its vibrant economy. It has been active in many aspects that deal with the province's development. In the tourism industry, Cebu keeps the record as one of the best provinces rich in history because it is where the Philippine history began. It has a trail of heritage structures such as centuries old churches, giant cartels, watchtowers that serve as a remarkable remembrance of our forefathers. What else? Cebu has a lot of photogenic scenes, bountiful natural resources, and hospitable people. Being one of the major destinations for both Filipinos and foreign tourists, it is also rich in holiday amenities, making it the tourism hub in the country. For those adventure seekers, Cebu has outstanding mountain ranges and plenty of cascading waterfalls. One can also enjoy its pristine white beaches that attract tourists from all over the globe. Another interesting fact about Cebu is, it is the Festival Island of the country due to the popularity and the number of festivals celebrated throughout the province. Come and experience Cebu!



**Ma. Ludette Ruiz Cambal**  
Communications Officer