



The Gateway

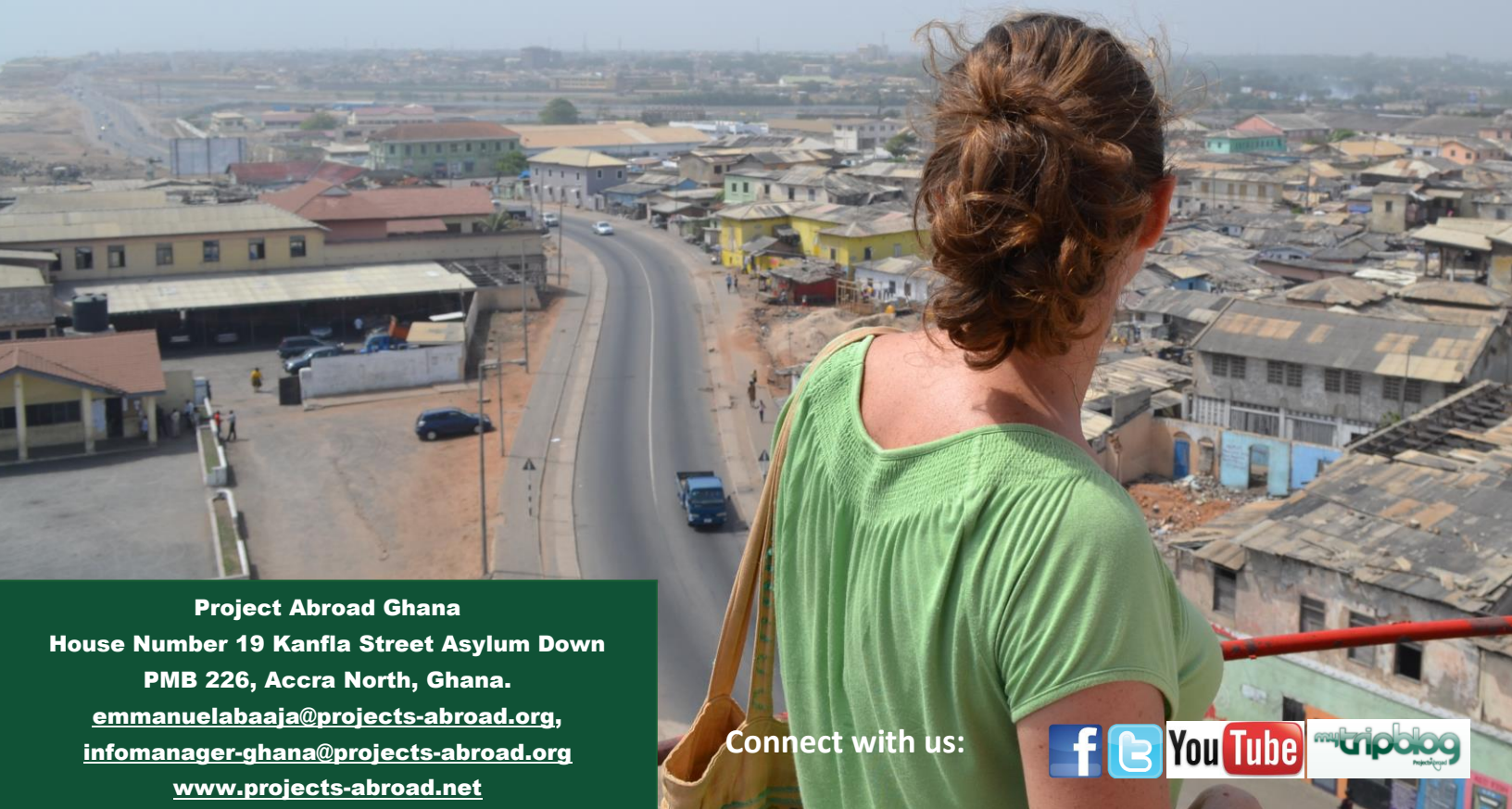
Official Newsletter - Projects Abroad Ghana

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ProjectsAbroad

Ghana awaits you.



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2013 Review

Human Rights Office Outreach in Dodowa

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Our Human Rights volunteers and staff moved office for a week from Accra to Dodowa to offer valuable human rights information to children and adults living in certain communities within the Dodowa district.

This unique programme provided an opportunity for our volunteers to interact and train the children at the Presbyterian Basic School. The volunteers worked in two separate groups – Human Rights Defenders and Girls Empowerment School groups.

Human Rights volunteers achieved a milestone in the slums of Old Fadama. Volunteers Jennifer Croker (Lawyer) and Kristine Mikkelsen mobilized funds to build the much anticipated Fadama Legal Assistance Program (FLAP) Center and it was officially opened in September. The event was graced by a Justice of the High Court Rebecca Sittie, Vice Consular of the Australian High Commission to Ghana Johanna Weaver, Amnesty International, STAR Ghana, UNDP and WILDAF. Frederick Opoku of WISEEP has been a strong partner of Projects Abroad and has worked assiduously for the volunteers' dream of creating free and easy access to legal services for the slum community to come true.



FLAP Center officially opened.

Volunteer with us!

Ghana is an exciting and popular place to spend some time on a volunteer project or work experience placement. Projects Abroad has many projects available to volunteer in Ghana, based in Accra, Cape Coast, Koforidua, Kumasi and the Akuapem Hills.

Volunteers in Ghana work on a wide range of projects including Teaching, Care, Community – including Building and IT Projects, Medical & Healthcare Projects – including Medicine, Physiotherapy, Nursing, Midwifery and Dentistry, plus Journalism, Veterinary Medicine, Sports, and Human Rights.

Vacation classes on Human Rights were held

In July, human rights volunteers Jessie Poon, Simon Holmes and Katherine Macleod facilitated different sessions that were designed to equip the students with human rights information. They introduced the children who are junior high school graduates to basic human rights, how it has developed over the years and how it is applied in Africa and in Ghana. The children benefited immensely from the free classes.



Akokoa School library was commissioned

The Akokoa School library was commissioned in March by our Country Director Emmanuel Abaaja at Akokoa, a Projects Abroad village. It was funded by a volunteer and built by the building volunteers. The library serves as the depository of donated books from volunteers.



Microfinance Project was born

After a series of meetings and discussions between staff members, volunteers and potential business partners, Projects Abroad proudly announced its newest project in Ghana - Micro Finance.

With the aid of volunteers and local insight, the objective is to secure funding for underprivileged entrepreneurs with marketable ideas and businesses. This is achieved through direct contact with locals of Koforidua and the surrounding communities and towns. The aim of the project is to kick start small enterprises and make them self-sustaining. Several small scale traders and farmers have benefitted from project since it started in the second quarter of this year.



Malaria Campaign was run in Summer

Throughout June, July and August Projects Abroad offered free malaria testing to hundreds of most at risk people, pregnant women and children under the age of 5. This was done with donations from volunteers as well as through the medical volunteers who went on outreaches in communities in Kumasi, Koforidua, Cape Coast, The Hills and Accra.



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Journalism volunteers had their articles published

Jack Simpson, a journalism volunteer at Ghana's oldest and biggest selling newspaper the Daily Graphic had his articles published in the paper's centre spread. His feature article published in the June 13, 2013 edition of the paper highlights Accra's chronic parking problem. The article featured views he collected from people, facts about traffic that people did not know, pictures of wrong parking's in Accra and he highlighted important steps to take to solve the problem.

2 Week and 1 Month Specials trooped to Ghana in summer

The summer was a remarkable period as students, individuals and groups trooped into Ghana to experience a different culture. From Grangemouth to Ackworth High School students, and from 2 Weekers in Cape Coast to 1 Month Specials in the Hills, Projects Abroad was delighted to receive young people who were full of energy, passionate and a strong desire to impact the communities and schools they worked in. From painting schools and hospitals, planting trees and building, caring for orphans and toddlers, to playing football with the locals and traveling to Safari Beach, the 2 Weekers and 1 Month Specials knew they were in for a remarkably brief period.





Several volunteers donated

Several volunteers went out of their own will to donate generously to different projects and placements. Charly Ainsworth and Erin Curtis donated to the Underprivileged Children's Center; Justine de Noirmont and Andréanne Béguin donated to New Life Orphanage; Accra 2 Weekers donated to Madina FC; Laura Van Rooyen donated to Apostolic Basic School in Mamfe and Trine, Liz, Lisa and Stephanie donate to leprosarium in Cape Coast. These names are not exhaustive as many other did generous donations in the communities and placement they worked in. Ghana is thankful for your kind hearts.

Projects Abroad GLOBAL SHARK CAMPAIGN

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Global Shark Campaign

1 Raising Awareness

2 Research/Fieldwork and Raising Awareness

1 CHINA
1 VIETNAM
1 PHILIPPINES
1 SAMOA
2 CAMBODIA
2 THAILAND
2 FIJI HQ
1 INDIA
1 SRI LANKA
1 KENYA
1 SOUTH AFRICA
1 TANZANIA
1 GHANA
1 TOGO
1 SENEGAL
2 MEXICO
1 COSTA RICA
2 ECUADOR - Galapagos Islands

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Since I joined Projects Abroad a year ago, I have become richer in my appreciation of life. It was interesting to speak to and interview over 60 volunteers within the year. This provided very good information on how foreigners or Obrunis perceive my country - Ghana. Most of the volunteers I interviewed reassured me that Ghana is one of the most hospitable places to be in the world and that the locals are supportive, open and helpful, "but sometimes too helpful," a volunteer once told me.

One of the projects that I loved to visit is the building project in The Hills. I like the working spirit of the building volunteers. I think they are arguably the happiest volunteers. One can visibly see the energy, team work, cross cultural understanding and efficiency among the volunteers and the building coordinators and I must be quick to mention Callum Larkins from Scotland who stayed for half a year. His drive and persistence was remarkable.

It is difficult to come across Ghanaian females engaged in building and construction and it was always refreshing to see obruni women and men throwing their shovels to mix mortar to put up structures that will support the education of the children in The Hills. I say a very big congratulation to all the building volunteers who worked in The Hills this year.

Another set of volunteers I want to talk about are the young lawyers - the human rights volunteers. My frequent visits to the Projects Abroad Human Rights Office in Accra were very fruitful. One can see the burning passion in the volunteers who keenly research social, economic and cultural issues and prepare presentations to empower children, women and young people with information to protect and demand their rights.

I was heavily touched by the persistency, resiliency and determination of the volunteers who initiated the Fadama Legal Assistance Program - FLAP. From Australia to the United States, energies synergized and resources were mobilized to birth a legal assistance program and center within the slum community.

I was honored to follow and document human rights outreaches in the slum that provided the platform for volunteers to share information on the rights of suspects, domestic violence and other important issues with the slum settlers since they have lots of young people doing drugs, taking to stealing and robbing and are under a constant threat of eviction by the city authorities.

Within this delicate community, the volunteers built trust and confidence in the people and it is something I want to congratulate Jennifer Croker, Kristine Mikkelsen and other volunteers who made FLAP a reality. The other outreaches to Dodowa, Abokobi, Teshie and other communities were indeed useful exercises that I believe have made a difference in the children and women who attended the outreaches.

As a lover of nature, I was privileged to visit the Projects Abroad Demonstration farm in The Hills to watch the plants grow and see the pigs, guinea pigs and rabbits.

The best part of that was when I had the opportunity to interview an Italian farming volunteer Simone Salmin whose philosophy impacted me a great deal. He explained better what sharing means and he couldn't put it better than this: "The most important thing is to share; teach others what you know and you will grow up together." Being on the farm feels very refreshing with all the trees and lush greenery over the horizon but I was more refreshed when Simone expressed his love for the work he came to do and the people he came into contact with: "Every day is a spiritual working. I am a part of what I do now – taking care of nature today and tomorrow... the smile of the children; the beautiful trees around everywhere and the beautiful people. God is inside everyone here."

I periodically visited the other regions. It was fascinating to see the commitment of volunteers in caring for children in our care placements in Kumasi (Children's Home), Koforidua (Akwadum), Cape Coast (Children's Home of Hope) and Accra (New Life Orphanage). My chats with the home managers reveal that volunteers have offered tremendous support to the growth and development of the children through spending quality time with the orphans to donating towards projects such as building classroom blocks and acquiring teaching and learning materials for the schools and homes.

One group of volunteers I developed a lot of respect for are the medical volunteers whose enthusiasm to learn and help at the same time brought a lot of relief to deprived communities in the regions we work in. Ghana has progressed but this is only evident in the big cities and regional capitals. Many villages still struggle to access medical care. Our team of medical volunteers and staff entered several deprived communities and schools to offer assistance and it was amazing to witness the signing of over a hundred children in the Bentum community onto the National Health Insurance Scheme by Vicky May, a British volunteer.

Congratulations to all the medical, pre-med and public health volunteers who did similar donations as well as those who offered medical treatment to children in those communities.

The year wouldn't have been complete without the amazing energy that the 2 Weeks and 1 Month Specials volunteers brought. From painting schools in Kumasi, through playing football in The Hills,

planting trees in Cape Coast to the exciting weekend trips to Safari beach, the summer season brought a lot of change to schools and communities, thanks to the volunteers. It feels good to be able to connect with someone within two weeks and that only reinforces the role of Projects Abroad in developing a global family no wonder we hosted the Holstein Family in The Hills.

Thank you to all the volunteers I filmed, interviewed, took pictures of, wrote about, tweeted about and featured in the Newsletter.

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all the volunteers who came to Ghana in 2013. Medaase! Yedaase! (I thank you! We thank you!)



Happy New Year!

Social Media

Our social media platforms remains a powerful tool that connects volunteers, friends and family of Projects Abroad though status updates, tweets, pictures, blogs and videos. Our Facebook groups were as active as always in providing information on volunteer experiences and that informs the expectations of volunteers who are coming to Ghana and prospective volunteers as well. Our different Facebook groups – [The Hills](#), [Koforidua](#), [Accra](#), [Cape Coast](#), [Kumasi](#) and the [Projects Abroad Human Rights Office](#) were active throughout the month of December.



An opportunity to relive

For many of our volunteers, our social media platforms provide the opportunity to continuously relive the valuable moments they once had in Ghana and it becomes their space for expressing the heartwarming satisfaction they gained from volunteering to affect the lives of people in need.

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