



The Gateway

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Picture Galore!

2 Week Specials

Our first batch of 2 Week Specials volunteers have arrived in Cape Coast this month and have since participated in several worthwhile activities at their placement.

The volunteers Constanza Marraffio, Francesca Motta both from Italy, Edward Bofinger from the UK, Sophie Palumbo and Carly Dominguez both from the US were placed in Kakumdo Basic School in Cape Coast and have painted a two classroom block in the school. During the school breaks, they found time to play with the children and during instructional time, they taught the children. Here are their summaries of their experience:



"Even though it was a bit hard to communicate with the children, we taught them songs, the alphabet, we drew with them, we painted a tree on a white canvas and made hand prints on them which was a good experience for us. Playing with them was a great way to get to know them."

Constanza, 18, Italy.



"On the weekend, we were taken to a beautiful resort called Safari Beach. It was amazing because it was in the middle of nature. The sea, the sand, lots of coconut trees. It was really fun and relaxing."

Francesca, 18, Italy.

Edward, 19, UK.

"Everyone really seems helpful here. When we are trying to move our chairs between the office and the classroom, we get about ten kids fighting each other to determine who gets to move our chairs. Here people are friendly. You get on the street and everyone wants to talk to you."



Sophie, 16, US.

"I think if I compared Ghana and the US, the people in Ghana have less than us yet they make so much of it and they seem happier and livelier."



Working with our supervisor Charlie is really fun. He keeps it up beat. We ask him about a million questions about their culture and lifestyle. His door is opened and he answers everything.

Carly, 19, US.

Twenty students and four teachers from Grangemouth High School in Scotland travelled to Ghana to The Hills to experience the culture, the warmth, the sights and sounds that the country has to offer.



They painted two basic schools in the Hills and brought back the brightness that had been missing on the walls of a building that houses growing minds. Their teachers and Projects Abroad staff assisted this worthwhile activity.



They donated toys, baby clothes and other items to the Adom Day Care Center



As part of their programme, they spent quality time with children at the Adom Day Care Centre. They taught them rhymes and poems and they played with the ever curious under five year olds.



Painted faces, wooden ladles, beats and drums and spectacular traditional dance moves from a young dance troop embodied and defined the rich Ghanaian culture and heritage. The volunteers relished the artistic dance moves and its accompanying language that these young dancers have mastered and that perhaps was too inviting for anyone to be left out of. They joined the dance train and danced to the beats of African traditional drums. White and black harmonized to produce a spectacular world of beauty in diversity.



The regular volunteers in The Hills may have been deceived by the longer time they had stayed in the Hills. They may have believed that they were better acclimatized to the conditions in The Hills and on the sandy and unlevel playing field. They seemed to be bluffing. They hardly expected a shocker from the 2 Week Specials volunteers.

Teams arrived, a coin was tossed, the whistle was blown and a ninety minute match was underway. To cut the long story short, on the final blow of the referees whistle, it was 5 goals to nothing. Yes, nothing. The 2 Weeks Specials had mauled the regular volunteer into pieces. Congratulations to them for a battle well fought.



Induction! Accra



Kwame Nkrumah
Circle

Ghanaian Food of the Month



Red Red is a beans stew served with fried ripe plantain. It earned its name “red red” because of the palm oil that reddens the stew and the crispy golden yellowish orange colour of the fried plantain that combines to make for a perfect Ghanaian dish. It is chilly sometimes.

Tip

When you are chartering a drop taxi, bargain with smiles and light-heartedness. Never be angry if the taxi driver starts with a ridiculously high price.



“I hope to gain a better insight into the Ghanaian culture.”

Laura Smith, UK.
Care & Teaching volunteer

Human Rights Outreach in Abokobi

The Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) partners with Amnesty International to consult local communities on the inclusion of capital punishment in the laws of Ghana.

This project is a parallel consultation process organized by the partners to consolidate public views on the outcomes and recommendations of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) that seeks to repeal capital punishment in Ghana.

Our volunteers Lydia Leather, Clara Muscat and Charlotte travel to Abokobi, a small town in the Ga-East District in the Greater Accra Region to collect views from participants in a focused group discussion. The discussion consisted men, women and young people selected in the town.

The participants argued from a biblical point of view and some maintained that biblical principles of forgiveness must apply and that capital punishment must be abrogated from the statute book which is in line with the report by the CRC.

The participants recalled stories about unlawful killings of innocent people during military regimes in Ghana and many of them support the abrogation of the death penalty.



One participant believed that if the death penalty is repealed, the crime rate might go up. "The removal of the death penalty will make the crime rate go up because the current prison system we have in Ghana is not deterrent enough," he argued.

Another young participant bemoaned the fact that Ghanaian citizens do not have adequate information on the prison

system. "Human rights information should be brought directly to the local communities because the radio stations sometimes distort information that are of public interest," he suggested.

After the focused group discussions, the volunteers and staff administered questionnaires to the participant to gain direct opinion on the subject of capital punishment.

Medical Outreach



Pain that *heals*...

The team of medical volunteers in Accra travelled to some rural communities in the central region to offer basic treatment of wounds, skin infections and ringworm affecting children.

The volunteers, together with the Accra Medical Coordinator, made new contacts in the surrounding yet unexplored communities that lie further ahead of the traditional community that they render services in. These are clear signals that more effort will be needed to expand the services into the deeply outlying communities that the team keeps exploring.

Nearby in the village of Bentum, education for the children is a matter of concern. The enthusiasm with which the children learn and play is indicative of the unyielding determination for these young children to dream and achieve. The four teachers' tenacity to stay with the children to open their hearts and minds to knowledge and the bigger world perhaps has kept the

school running.

Yet, the harsh reality of a school structure that stands on sticks and roofs of old zinc slates keeps sounding the red alarm. Any average storm is capable of sweeping the structure off its footing and rendering school closed for days if not weeks.

The inconsistency of education for these children will keep drawing the children back until a better structure is put up to safely grow and develop the minds of these children.

About three kilometres away

from Bentum is the village of Kwe where similar stories abound. Two teachers handle several children in all primary classes.



Quick Read

Acceptable Behaviour

Ghanaians are very keen to share food at meal times and being offered water or food when you visit someone's house is usual. If you are with someone who is eating they are most likely to invite you to share the food with them. In this situation or when you are visiting someone's home, it is polite to eat or taste some of the food or rather say "thank you" instead of "no". "Thank you" if you intend to decline the offer. It is polite to say "you are invited" if someone meets you while you are eating.

PAHO launches legal support center for a slum community in Accra

Projects Abroad announces the introduction of a legal services center in the slum of Old Fadama to assist the community people with human rights information in order for them to be empowered to demand their rights.

At a short meeting with the sub-chiefs of the different Northern Ghana tribes living in the slum, Frederick Opoku Executive Director of Women in Slums Economic Empowerment explained the long term benefits of the partnership with Projects Abroad in the development of the community. "Unlike other NGOs that come into the community and take pictures and later make money with those pictures, I can vouch for Projects Abroad and state that for the past 10 months of their work here, they have come clean," he told the chiefs.

He further announced that a past volunteer with Projects Abroad has taken a significant



step to provide solar power to the community to reduce the outbreak of fires that occur frequently in the slum.

The Country Director Emmanuel Abaaja introduced Projects Abroad to the chiefs and explained the purpose for choosing the slum as one of the key settings to run a legal service and that he believes contributes to the development of Ghana to a state that we all want.

Our professional volunteer Jennifer Croker, a practicing lawyer, officially announced the establishment of the center.

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.



As part of the event, Projects Abroad donated items such as milk, rice, plastic chairs and canopy valued at GHC 900.00 (equivalent to US \$ 450) to the residents of the Old Fadama slum.

Weekend Trips?

Cape Coast Castle

Cape Coast Castle is a popular historical monument which was built by the Swedish merchants and later used during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in the mid 1650s.

Today it is one of Ghana's top tourist destinations that have attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors worldwide including U.S. President Barack Obama and his family.



Kumasi Update

Our Australian volunteer Emily Leben sponsors and registers 440 children onto the National Health Insurance Scheme in some communities in the Amansie West district in the Ashanti Region.

The registration exercise was organized in collaboration with a Christian NGO called Grenet. The beneficiary communities include kwakoso, Abodom Domi and Keniago. Our medical team of staff and volunteers treated children with rashes, wounds and ringworm as the registration exercise went on.

The community people showed appreciation for the gesture from Emily Leben and Projects Abroad. The Head Pastor of Grenet thanked us and said they hope there will be more collaboration and that the help was really important to the people as they would now be able to seek free medical care.

The collaborative exercise exposed several challenges facing these remote communities and we hope that more volunteers will take up time and resources to make a positive and meaningful impact in such communities.

In a separate development, Emily Leben donated 1000 Cedis worth of Medical items to Kumasi Children's Home.



Medical volunteers in Accra distribute the National Health Insurance cards for the 95 children that were registered onto the scheme by our past volunteer Vicky May through a fundraiser she organized.

This brings greater and freer access to healthcare for these children in the deprived community of Bentum in the Central Region of Ghana.

Journalism Accra

Jack Simpson, our journalism volunteer at Ghana's oldest and biggest selling newspaper the Daily Graphic has managed to get his articles published in the paper's centre spread.

His feature article published in the June '13 edition of the paper highlights Accra's chronic parking problem. The article featured views he collected from people, facts about traffic that people hardly knew, pictures of wrong parking in Accra and he highlighted important steps to take to solve the problem.

Another story of his earned yet another centre spread page exactly a week after the first. This feature story seemed to make a definite and conclusive statement: "Ghana attractive to voluntourists." In that article, he interviewed volunteers working in and touring Ghana. He places emphasis on the growth of voluntourism, why people chose Ghana and the positive and not so positive impact of voluntourist activities in Ghana.

Also at the same newspaper is our Italian volunteer Francesca Annicchiarico whose article about the launch of a legal service center to support the slum dwellers in Old Fadama with information and legal advice on domestic violence, child maintenance, rental disputes among others featured in the June 26 edition of the paper.

In her report, she mentions an energy project that Projects Abroad alumnus from the UK plans to execute in the slum in order to prevent the frequent fire outbreaks that destroys the livelihoods of these slum dwellers.



Volunteer Story



University of Colorado student Yelin Lee provides medical assistance to local communities in Ghana

23-year-old Yelin Lee from Morrison in Colorado travelled to Ghana to assist local communities with basic medical treatment in the country's Ashanti Regional capital, Kumasi.

After completing her undergrad in Neuroscience and Philosophy, she decided to take a break from school and look for a worthwhile experience before applying for medical school in the United States.

Yelin decided to embark on a 6 month adventure in Ghana with the Projects Abroad Medical Project. Part of her duties as a medical volunteer included participating in medical outreaches, organized by Projects Abroad.

Yelin had the opportunity to work both in disadvantaged

communities in and around Kumasi and in a local hospital to gain knowledge and skill of medical practices.

"During the medical outreaches, other medical volunteers and I could provide basic medical treatment to the children. We would check if they had wounds, cuts and ringworm and we would treat them for free. Sometimes we would create public health awareness within the schools that we worked with."

At the hospital, Yelin checked in with the nurses and helped them to manage the wards. She also had the chance to do rounds with the doctors as they checked on their patients. "Sometimes I would help them fill the injections and occasionally do the vital signs;

blood pressure and temperature."

Yelin is convinced that she has improved her communication skills tremendously as she interacted with different people from different cultures.

"I have become more independent because this is my first time away from home. I learnt to enjoy the moment and take it one day at a time. This experience will be very useful for my future; I saw so many things in the hospitals in Ghana that I could not see in the US. I hope to study global health science and practice that as well."

"Come open-minded with an open heart. If you are open, good experiences will come to you. If you have expectations, Ghana

may not grant them to you. If you want the full experience then stay for three months. After the first two months, I began to get the cultural experience."

Aside from the medical project she worked on, Yelin independently initiated her own project that will connect underprivileged schools in Ghana with privileged schools in the US in order to develop relationships between the two countries, by providing teaching and learning materials as well as mentorship to develop their Ghanaian sister schools.

Picture Galore!



Representing Grangemouth School in Scotland – ladies in shades.



2 Week Specials in Cape Coast draw and paint with kindergarten children at a Kakumdo Basic School.



The take-off – the sack race way.



They volunteered to carry their coordinator to the football pitch before the match



Grangemouth student volunteers do the musical chairs at Adom Day Care Center



Our medical volunteers can make fun too.



Klass and Carlum donates a wheelbarrow to our building project.



Dancing the black and white way.



The tight team of volunteers on the building project. Fitness matters!



The Scots invade the Obruni Castle in the Hills.

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 June.



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.

Visit us:

