



The Gateway

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Project Abroad Ghana

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Projects Abroad founder visits Ghana

The founder and director of Projects Abroad Peter Slowe visited Ghana to meet the entire staff working to make volunteers have the best experiences possible in the country.

In his keynote address, Peter acknowledged the resilience of Ghanaians and the unyielding faith that he believes have contributed much to the successes of Projects Abroad in Ghana. "Faith helps us in the work we do," he said.

Projects Abroad is 15 years old in Ghana. Ghana has been the trail blazer in human rights and has contributed in developing several other model projects.

He referred to the challenges of the world economy. "The world is in its fifth year of recession and Projects Abroad cost of operation has increased to about sixty percent from the past five years.



Peter Slowe delivering the keynote address at the staff general meeting in the Projects Abroad Head Office premises in Accra.

However, the organization has restricted volunteer fee to only twenty percent."

This has been so because Projects Abroad believes that volunteers make immeasurable contributions to developing communities and therefore must be supported to keep making a difference while they gain cultural knowledge as well as work experience in a developing country. He encouraged the staff to reflect on the successes and challenges in order to think about innovative approaches

to making volunteer experience memorable, culturally relevant and worthwhile.

Peter addressed about forty four staff members of Projects Abroad Ghana and assured them of his commitment to remain fair to every single staff. He encouraged the staff to avoid complacency and be innovative.

He thanked the staff for the past, present and future of Projects Abroad.

Meanwhile, Anne Buglass the operations manager announced the restructuring of social events such as the Quiz Night that allows volunteers to integrate with each other to form a social bond and a lifetime friendship. She suggested that the regions should organize more creative social events such as dancing and drumming lessons, lectures on African/Ghanaian history and culture and so on.



Operations Manager Anne Buglass announcing the restructuring of social events for volunteers.

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You know you are in Ghana
when everybody is called Charley.



Peter Slowe interacting with Harry Kent (Dept Dir.), Katy Woolie (Care Coord. RIGHT) and Shoshana Court (Desk Officer LEFT) after the general



Peter Slowe in a hearty conversation with Andrew Agana (Asst Coord. Accra). Peter took turns to share innovative ideas with many staff members in order to improve service quality to volunteers.

Regional Coordinators receive first aid training in Accra



Coordinators from all five regions of Projects Abroad in Ghana participated in a first aid training course by St John Ambulance. The objective of the training is to equip our coordinators on first aid procedures in order to offer basic life support to volunteers in case of emergency.

The trainer introduced the coordinators to effective improvisation of available items in any emergency situation in order to properly handle emergencies before a professional medical service is reached.

The regional coordinators and some of their assistants were taken through first aid in accident situations, heavy bleeding, shock, seizures and choking.



Koforidua

The new microfinance project gets its second volunteer Siena Hickey after Irish volunteer Frankie Bates kick-started the project.

The project has been progressive from the beginning and the volunteers have had preliminary discussions with the local men and women who are applying for small loans to start a new business or grow their already established enterprises.

Most of the potential beneficiaries of the microfinance project are women who are engaged in small businesses such as the sale of tomatoes and other vegetables, salted fish, fried fish, cassava, pepper as well as plastic wares. Others were engaged in dressmaking and farming.

The two volunteers Frankie and

Microfinance project progresses

Siena offered business counselling to the potential beneficiaries in order to maximize their profit potential on the businesses they are already undertaking before the loans can be granted to them.

Lydia Oparebea, a vegetable seller requested a loan to restart her trade of

salted fish, plantain and cassava. She travels to buy and transport her foodstuffs to the community she lives in. She was then counselled on the best business approach she could use to maximise her profit and eliminate substantial losses.

Ghanaian Food of the Month



Fufu is a Ghanaian delicacy especially among the Akans. Cassava is boiled together with unripe plantain and pounded with a wooden pestle in a mortar till it forms a strong starchy paste.

Fufu can be taken with different spicy soups such as light/pepper soup, groundnut soup, palm nut soup or okro soup depending on your preference. It can be taken with meat, chicken, mutton, grasscutter, deer and others as well as with dry fish and tilapia.

***Kindly ask for specific ingredients used to prepare the soups to prevent allergies.**



Human Rights Outreach in Dodowa

The Human Rights office weekly outreach to the peri-urban town of Dodowa engaged the local communities on human rights issues.

Volunteers like Frances Young from the UK travelled to educate and raise awareness on domestic violence issues and how women and children should feel empowered to report any unfortunate cases of domestic violence to the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service.

The human rights team visited about five communities in Dodowa. An assemblyman in the area Daniel Odotor regularly partners the volunteers and staff to raise awareness on sexually transmitted infections and assists volunteers with translation of the human rights messages from English to their local dialect – Dangbe – a variant of the Ga language.



Quick Read

Overcoming culture shock

The most effective way to avoid or get over culture shock is to throw yourself into the new situation – Do not try to hide from it. If spend two hours every day on the internet or telephone talking to family or friends back home or spend all your time with other western volunteers, you simply make the problem worse. Instead make conversations with your host family and try to go out with people from your work people who are Ghanaians.



Malaria Campaign in Ghana this summer!

Dear cherished volunteer and potential volunteer,

I hope you are looking forward to coming to Ghana as much as we are looking forward to having you here with us. As we enter the rainy season here, we wanted to share some facts with you about malaria and let you know about a program that we are running this summer.



Malaria is still the biggest killer in Ghana and from June until September we will be gearing our outreach efforts towards reducing deaths caused by Malaria in Ghana. The main methods to prevent malaria are sleeping under a treated net and getting tested in order to get the right treatment. This is what we will be focusing on this summer and WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Throughout June, July and August we will be offering free testing to 2000 most at risk people, pregnant women and children under the age of 5.

We will be starting our 'Donate Your Net' campaign aimed at encouraging volunteers to leave their old net when they finish in Ghana, as well as giving you the opportunity to donate money to buy an additional net whilst you are here.

Keep in mind that One net can save Two lives for Five years! The nets our volunteers bring will then be distributed on our outreach projects saving thousands of lives!

We sincerely hope that you will be able to help us tackle this deadly disease and look forward to your contributions.

See you soon!

Projects Abroad Ghana.

Donations

Charly Ainsworth from Canada donated \$200 towards the malaria campaign. You can also donate by e-mailing ghana@projects-abroad.org for guidelines on how to donate to make a difference in people's lives in Ghana.

Malaria kills, let's kill malaria!

Malaria

Dirty Day!

The Hills

Volunteers in The Hills traveled to a small village to support a community school - Otwetiri D/A Primary School - with both labour and building materials. The volunteers with the help of Projects Abroad staff and professional masons mixed cement and mortar and screeded one uncompleted classroom.

This was done because dust gathers in the classroom and this disturbs the school children's effective learning.

Projects Abroad thanks all volunteers who donated their labour and money to support the community's education.



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.



Weekend Trips?



Mole National Park is located in the heart of the pristine Guinea Savanna woodland which is in the Northern Region of Ghana. It is the country's largest wildlife refuge. Several elephants roam this natural grassland savanna. The Park's entrance is reached through a nearby town of Larabanga. It is about 670 km from the country's capital Accra.

Photo courtesy: Projects Abroad Volunteer, Yelin Lee.

Also in The Hills...



Our professional volunteer/social worker Teresa Roth from Germany handles children with special needs in a mainstream community school in The Hills. She pays special attention to each child who suffer different brain deformities.

Einar Lovdal gathers experience

while volunteering on a football project in Ghana.



Twenty year old Norwegian Einar Lovdal travelled to Ghana to volunteer as a coach of an Under 17 football team – Cantoments FC.

Prior to his coming to Ghana, Einar has discussed with his teachers in school his plans to start a football academy. He had also thought about travelling and working to gain some experience. He finally decided to travel to West Africa and specifically Ghana because of peace and stability that the country enjoys. He plans to apply to do a one year pre-course on engineering after which he will start his full engineering degree.

Einar believes that his presence as a foreign volunteer in the football club is significant to one of the goals of the academy which is to support the youngsters to

achieve their dreams of playing in the top leagues in Europe.

"I think with me and other volunteers around, we have a different influence on the boys. The kids are learning how to express themselves in English, the coach told us. Sometimes when the main coach is not around, I coach the senior level team," he said.

Einar expresses his convictions about the significant difference that Projects Abroad is making at the soccer academy. "When volunteers come around, we bring new ideas to the team. We sometimes clean the pitch. Volunteers bring cones, footballs and boots and so on to keep the academy running."

Einar handles the Under-17 team and trains them on

shooting, finishing, goalkeeping, handling techniques, tactics and strategy.

He admitted that his first week at the academy was hard for him because he was assigned by the manager of the team to just coach. However, he stated that he has been motivated such that he has become much better over the weeks. "I always spot their mistakes and correct them. I have improved on my public speech because I'm able to stand in front of the team and motivate them."

He believes he has made some difference in the team. "I think from the beginning, the boys weren't so strong but now they thank me for providing good physical training."

"I am going to get a testimonial

To show that I've been here. When I apply to university, I think they'll look for people who are open to try new things."

His remarkable experience in Ghana was evident for him when a fourteen year old boy walked up to him. "I thought all the things I was doing wasn't great until this boy came to me and asked if I could personally train him."

The one thing Einar loves about Ghana "is the idea of group, of community instead of individual."

"My advice for future volunteers is to always keep an open mind, be flexible and smile," he stated reassuringly.



Bremer Institute of Physiotherapy graduate Anton Schomerus gathers tremendous experience in Ghana.

Twenty-one-year old Anton Schomerus, form Bremen in Germany, travelled to Ghana to volunteer at the Physiotherapy Project at the Ankaful Leprosarium in the country's Central Region. Prior to his coming to Ghana, he had completed training in physical therapy and had wanted to experience life abroad and also gain practical experience as a physiotherapist.

Anton worked in Central Regional Hospital in Cape Coast as well as the Ankaful Leprosy Camp which is a small settlement on the edge of Ankaful where people suffering from leprosy, who are no longer contagious, live together.

"At the hospital I worked together with other physiotherapists, so it was a place of knowledge exchange. At the Leprosy Camp people have open wounds that must be treated every day and that heal very slowly. They can go to a nearby hospital but in the settlement itself there is no medical care," he explained.

Anton believes the physiotherapy department does not need as many volunteers as the leprosarium. He narrates his daily routine and responsibilities at both the hospital and leprosarium: "Usually, in the morning I go to the leprosy camp. At the camp we treat the wounds of the patients. After that I head to the hospital and I

support the other therapists.

I operate the electrotherapy devices, give massages, and assist the patients to exercise to enhance the strengths of the muscles, to mobilize their shoulders, to correct behaviour in everyday life such as bending and lifting or to improve their gait."

Aside from volunteering in the hospital and leprosarium, Anton joined other volunteers on a Projects Abroad activity dubbed 'Dirty Day.' "Other volunteers who work in Cape Coast painted the huts in Ankaful leprosy camp. It was a lot of fun and in my opinion something like this should be organized more often."

Anton experienced Ghana to be beautiful and Ghanaians to be warm and friendly: "I am mostly impressed by the landscape and also by the experience that the majority of people are very open." He advises future volunteers to "bring an open attitude and some patience." He continued: "If you need help ask for it. Generally people like to help."





Callum Larkins travels to Ghana to volunteer on a building project in deprived communities.

Nineteen-year-old Callum Larkins, from Edinburgh in Scotland, travelled to the hilly towns of Akuapem in the Eastern Region of Ghana to volunteer on a Building Project for disadvantaged schools in the surrounding communities.

Before travelling to Ghana to volunteer, he had always had plans of travelling outside Europe. Two of his friends had already come to volunteer with Projects Abroad in Ghana and they assured him of a worthwhile experience if he did same.

Many communities in the Akuapem Hills lack basic social amenities including proper classroom structures to support the learning of the children. Projects Abroad, with the immense support and contribution of its volunteers, assists needy communities to put up proper classroom blocks for the children in several villages in The Hills. Callum believes that the more volunteers who come to volunteer on the building project the more classrooms

can be built, the more schools can be renovated and the more children get an education.

He is convinced that Projects Abroad is making a significant difference in these local communities by providing free schools. He is happy that he has provided a pair of hands to support and speed up work on the building projects.

“A typical day on the building includes filling floors, making mortar, building bricks, plastering walls and sometimes even painting walls.” Callum believes that he has gained valuable knowledge of different building techniques used in Ghana. “Back home everything is done with machinery but here in Ghana, most things are done by hand.”

Callum plans to apply to the police force in Scotland after he is done with his project. “Policing is community work. I think my CV will stand out of several applicants because I’ve been involved with community work.”

He admits to experiencing a culture shock the first time he arrived to Ghana; As time

went on, I got used to the culture. Edinburgh is a more closed society but Ghana is very open. A lot more people seem very welcoming in Ghana. You can meet people and greet them and have a chat.

For Callum, the weekends offered very memorable experiences. “I travelled to the Wli Waterfalls in the Volta Region of Ghana with other volunteers. It was incredibly beautiful! The other volunteers, too, are amazing people, from different parts of the world.”

“My advice for future volunteers would be to get ready for hard work. Don’t expect it to be a holiday because you are coming to work. If you expect that, it will be a big reality shock for you.”

Projects Abroad hopes great stories like these inspire others to help Projects Abroad continue to make a difference, and by doing so, learn something themselves along the way.

Kumasi Updates



In the month of May, Kumasi received fifteen volunteers who worked on different projects.

During the school break our Care volunteers spent quality time with the children at the Kumasi Children's Home. Both teachers and Care volunteers spent time with Children and helped them to learn and play.

The Public Health Program and medical outreaches were held in the markets in different communities such as Suame Garage, Moshi Zongo, Asuoyeboah, Abuakwa and Christ the King of Kings School. The volunteers checked blood pressure, body mass index, body fat level, sugar level of adults and Hepatitis B. There was an education on Hepatitis and the importance of vaccinating to prevent infection. The volunteers treated the cuts, wounds and skin infections and diseases that the school children were suffering from.



A motivated alumnus of Projects Abroad Willemijn de Bruin made the third hepatitis vaccine available for the children at the Kumasi Children's Home through her fund raising initiatives.

Our veterinary volunteers were busy with normal vet work at Amakom Catena Veterinary Clinic as well as helping to give medical care to pets and farm animals on outreaches where they treated pigs, sheep, goats and poultry.

Quiz nights were amazing as volunteers and staff participated in quizzes. There was a cooking lesson for volunteers. They learned how to prepare Jollof rice. In a summary, Kumasi has had a very busy and exciting month and we look forward to a happy June.



Cape Coast Updates

Cape Coast hosted 15 volunteers in May. Medical volunteer worked both at the hospital and at outreaches at the leprosy camp. Sport volunteers in rugby and care volunteers worked both at New Life and Children's Home orphanage.

In the first week of the month, we had a Fanti lesson for the first time. All the volunteers participated fully and enjoyed every part of it till the end of the lesson. They were happy that they were given an opportunity to learn and get more integrated into the Ghanaian society through the learning of the local language.

In the third week of the month, we offered cooking lessons as part of our social night activities. The lesson was fun and educative and we encouraged them to prepare Ghanaian dishes with their family when they go back home.

Some volunteers at the Covenant Day Care did some painting and drawing at the school.



Fanti Lessons



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 May.



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:

