

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Fiji



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VOLUNTEER STORIES

By Victoria Murphy from the UK and Lindsay Benster from the USA.

Bula everyone! We are the nutrition and medical volunteers for Projects Abroad Fiji. We have learnt so much from the project and it has been an eye-opening experience for the both of us. We were shocked at the results we have obtained within this short period of time, with only 15% of the population living above the age of 55. Our help has been much needed and appreciated and we are so grateful to be a part of such a life-changing experience for everyone involved.

We are able to expand our knowledge on our subjects and completely immerse ourselves in a totally different culture, which was really awesome. We also have a lot of control with the programme as we were allowed to design our own programme and explore our ideas, which definitely made this project worthwhile. The Fijian people have been such a joy to work with and they are very eager to learn and apply the new knowledge they receive from us. We look forward to continuing to work with the village for the next couple of weeks and see how the programme progresses.



Lindsay Benster checks high blood pressure



Victoria Murphy explains about a Nutritional Diet

Love Tori and Lindsey

World Ocean Day

World Ocean Day was celebrated by the Shark Conservation Project, which has opened mini-projects to help marine life grow for Fiji. They conserve sharks in Fiji by using the BRUV (Baited Remote Underwater Video) system to keep track of the shark population, shark feeding and shark tagging. The replanting of mangrove propagules and the recycling project has developed the mangrove population for the Galoa village. This helps the villagers keep their environment clean while also increasing the amount of marine organisms along the coastline.



Care Project

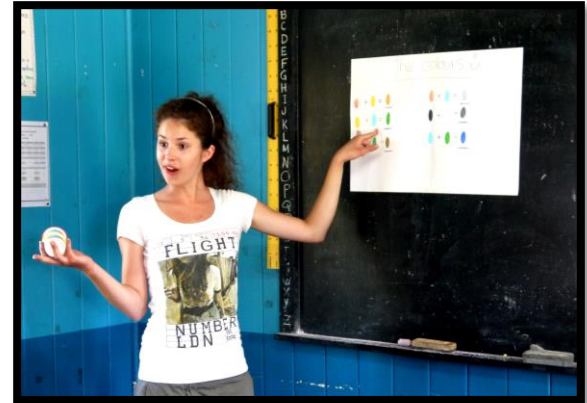
Our care project focuses on orphanages and worthwhile kindergartens that are based in the villages. The care project currently has 16 volunteers, who are enjoying their various placements. Below you can read about our former care volunteer, Elisa Hofmann.

Care Volunteer Loves Real Life Fiji

Elisa Hofmann (18) came all the way from Germany to volunteer at the care project in Fiji. Elisa had recently completed her studies and she chose to take a gap year to do some travelling and social work.

Working with children with special needs has always been one of Elisa's interests.

"I chose to work with disabled children because I previously worked in Germany at an institution for disabled people and I wanted to gain further experience in this field," she shared.



Elisa believes that more volunteers should be encouraged to help out at the Nadi Centre for Special Education.

"I definitely think this placement needs a huge help from Projects Abroad in terms of more volunteers. I recognized this problem on my first day," she attested.

Daily tasks for Elisa would include "assisting the teacher in projects, lessons, games, and also coming up with arts & crafts ideas."

"Recently, I've recognized that some students have difficulty with reading so I have sessions with students to improve their reading skills," she added.

Elisa fell in love with the Fijian culture the very moment she arrived.

"We were greeted by a small band at the airport. They were smiling, singing and welcoming us with 'Bula!' It was something I've never seen before. From the first second you step into the airport, you feel welcome," she enthused.

"The people are so friendly and the country is amazing but I have to admit I really miss the food in Germany," she added.

Her best experience would be at the holiday school where "I taught two girls an English rule which didn't make sense to them. After explaining for more than 20 minutes, they understood clearly which made me feel so good," Elisa shared. "I'm so proud that I had the patience to go through it all," she added.

Elisa concluded with her thoughts about her overall experience in Fiji.

"I love that I experienced a difference in culture. We are not here as tourists because tourists usually get to know the best side of the country, whereas volunteers live the real Fijian life with the locals."

Project Day at Dratabu Village – Nutrition Drive

Today, Projects Abroad Fiji staff and volunteers planted 11 gardens at Dratabu village to help provide residents with superfoods. The villagers have become more health conscious and they are already making the necessary changes to improve their health thanks to a recent survey undertaken by the Projects Abroad Nutrition Project.

These gardens will help villagers have easy access to nutritious food for their daily lives. The volunteers planted saijan, eggplant, bele, sweet potato, turmeric and pawpaw (papaya); all which are dense in micro-nutrients and important for healthy living.



A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



Bula! We have landed safely in the month of June. April was definitely our peak period and we were flooded with volunteers from everywhere.

We thank you for choosing Fiji as a destination for volunteering. You have helped our country grow and we hope we have helped you in one way or another.

A kind reminder to all Fiji volunteers: we would love to hear from you so please send us your photos, videos, articles or briefs to tell us how you enjoyed your time with us and we will share it with the world. It is thanks to your experiences that others can be inspired.

Until next month...

Have a joyous June :-)



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