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July 2013

## Editor's Note

Bula!

July has seen the greatest number of volunteer's grace our shores as it is their summer holidays back home and what better way to spend them then by helping out with Projects Abroad Fiji in one of our many placements in and around the island. This has been an incredibly busy month for our Projects Abroad team who have also been scouting for new placement locations for the volunteers. As mentioned in one of my earlier notes, the various projects are now increasing in size and more volunteers are applying to come to Fiji. There is still much excitement in the air regarding our Shark Conservation Project (beginning January 2014) and we are looking forward to an intense few months of applicants and even mounted local interest in helping out where possible. Projects Abroad Fiji is also expanding in the sense we have extra staff onboard to help with the influx of volunteers who are steadily coming in to gain their much needed work experience. We can only imagine the hype our social media presence is creating overseas and are extremely grateful to the positive feedback from everyone. This has also been our Two Week Special month and we have learnt much from our foreign friends, and vice versa. Look out for our photo section for all the awesome captures of the great work being done by everyone in Projects Abroad Fiji! Until next month, happy volunteering!

*"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing" - Helen Keller*

Vinaka

Michelle Ali

Information Coordinator

Projects Abroad Fiji



## **Animal Protection: teach your children well – mytripblog**

I have done significant research on how different countries perceive animal cruelty and what sentences they have in place to combat this. What I discovered made me think about what we are doing in Fiji to solve this problem.

A common sight on our streets and roads are the large number of strays about. They are left to rummage through garbage to survive. The seawalls are rife with stray dogs and it is very disheartening to see them beg for scraps while an obviously overweight child snacks on junk food and disposes the rest in the garbage as the dog looks on. What is wrong with this picture? You guessed it! Society has failed in so many ways. Parents have failed. Our children have failed. And we sit back and do nothing to try and stop this from ever happening again. I take my hat off to the noble few who do their very best to ensure that animals are taken care of. The one thing that people overlook is that having a pet is the same as having a child in the house. They need to be fed and bathed and vaccinated on time. Animals are more loyal to us than human beings themselves. This is my personal opinion and I write this having experienced it first-hand.

Fiji does have a law in place: [http://www.paclii.org/fj/legis/consol\\_act/poaa227/](http://www.paclii.org/fj/legis/consol_act/poaa227/) but the issue here is enforcing it! Lawmen are so lax in their attitudes if you walk into a station with a complaint about your neighbor harassing your pets. Those of us with pets lose hope in the system and keep our animals within our properties, scared to take them out for a walk for fear of someone provoking a confrontation and nothing gets done about it. I, for one, am a proud supporter of animal rights! My parents instilled in me the values of a decent human being and I am grateful to them for teaching me respect for all beings. I am not afraid to be the voice for our silent friends. It is our duty to protect them and there is nothing stopping us from doing the best we can. By this, I do not mean that you should adopt a pet when you yourself are not in a situation to provide for the animal. The smallest gestures are usually the kindest. Call your local animal shelter and have them pick up the stray. You are not only clearing your streets but preventing unnecessary trauma to the already suffering animals.

Be kind to these creatures. After all, you have but one life to be the best you can be.





## **Volunteer story – Sylvester Toldsted**

Sylvester Toldsted is a 20-year-old volunteer from Denmark who was placed at a Teaching Project at Assemblies of God Primary School in Suva. Sylvester had a cheerful personality and was always a joy to speak to. He tells us of his experiences while volunteering for Projects Abroad Fiji.

A few weeks through his placement, Sylvester was able to make important observations regarding the structure and the education system that the school had in place. He remarks about the need for volunteers at the school - "It is a school with limited resources that can use assistance when it comes to helping pupils with difficulties".

Sylvester adds that by sending volunteers to schools such as the one he was placed in, Projects Abroad is providing extra help and assistance for overlooked pupils. This is of extreme importance to the growth of the child and the school as a whole. Not only is Projects Abroad helping at grassroots level but it is building a strong foundation for the future of the children.

As part of his daily routine, Sylvester assisted students with learning difficulties, supervised and taught fifth grade while also marking exercise workbooks for the students. He says he was given a lot of responsibility but not more than he was comfortable with. Sylvester's assistance in class was very much appreciated as he was able to help the students struggling with learning difficulties.

In response to me asking him about what he learnt/improved on, this was his response – "I improved on my English skills, I learnt how to be more open-minded, and I learnt how to adapt to another culture and other norms and values." Sylvester feels that he has made a huge difference – "I have been able to help some of the students with difficulties and who are overlooked."

Sylvester believes that this volunteering has given him another perspective on life and taught him valuable lessons when it comes to adapting to different environments. He is now more than capable of turning unexpected negativities to positives. When asked about his most memorable experience, Sylvester said "I was very happy when the students started asking me to sit with them and help them out in English and mathematics." It made his stay worthwhile.

Sylvester's advice to future volunteers would be to have patience and most importantly, take initiative when trying to do something at their placement. Adapting to situations is a very good skill to have. Comparing Fiji to Denmark, Sylvester says that although the work ethics and discipline is low, the friendliness of the people and the amazing scenery is beyond magical.

We wish him well with his travels and thank him for volunteering at Projects Abroad. We hope this inspiring story encourages others to help Projects Abroad continue to make a difference, and by doing so, learn something themselves along the way.





## Project updates

### Care and Teaching

As this has been our busiest month to date, we have been seeing our largest number of Care and Teaching volunteers come in to help. We have had to locate new placements for our volunteers and they are doing exceptionally well. The Projects team have been hard at work with our volunteers ensuring they are receiving all the assistance in regards to resource materials for the children and lesson planning.

### Community project

The village has been a hive of activity as many of our volunteers are keen on completing their stints there. The response has been great and it has been keeping our Community Coordinator on his feet as more and more interest builds for this project.

### Sports project

As our baby project has just kicked off, we have welcomed another volunteer on-board and things are taking off very well. As Fiji is a sport-mad nation, majority of the schools dotted in the suburban areas are, now more than ever, keen on welcoming help and advice from our wonderful volunteers. The influx of volunteers to this project is definitely due to increase in the near future.





### Photos Galore!

