

VOLUNTEER



ECUADOR
GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

ProjectsAbroad

Global Impact Report 2019-2020



I'm proud to present the 2019-2020 edition of the Projects Abroad Global Impact Report.

During the last two years, our dedicated staff and volunteers took further strides on the journey we began in 1992. With each step taken this year, we've continued to meet our goals and combat urgent global issues, from inequality in education to climate change. We've supported the education of more than 6,000 children, removed nearly 30 tonnes of litter from the environment, and planted over 18,000 trees.

I'm also pleased to announce we launched a new initiative to support the fight against climate change. To offset carbon emissions from long-haul flights, we now plant mangroves for every flight booked through us. This initiative, built with input from scientists and other specialists, guarantees that we can successfully calculate how many mangroves we need to plant to ensure a guilt-free trip for you.

In addition to this initiative, we saw the birth of a new type of project: our Ethical Consumerism Trips. Responsible travel is at the core of these pioneering trips, and we've focused on connecting people to everyday products, like chocolate and fashion. Our goal is for people to see the social, environmental, and economic impact of their purchases, and make informed decisions to become more responsible consumers.

Every year, I'm amazed by our staff and volunteers' willingness to go the extra mile in supporting vulnerable communities and protecting the environment. 2019 and 2020 were no exception. We've actively demonstrated how much we can achieve when diverse groups of people from around the world work together.

With your help, we can make an even bigger impact in 2021!

Greg Thomson
Projects Abroad CEO



Highlights

Thank you to all of our volunteers who joined us on our journey to make a difference. Together, you helped us:

Plant **over 18,979 trees**, including **4,167 mangroves**



Collect **over 21 tonnes** of plastic litter and **8 tonnes** of mixed litter.

Raise awareness and do waste management training with more than **50,000 people**.



Release **128,300 turtle hatchlings**

Run **117 feeding programmes** that provided **26,800 meals** to the vulnerable, including children and the homeless population.



Discover a **new species of snake** in Peru.

Provide focused literacy programmes for **3,271 children** and **21 adults**.



Build, renovate, and improve the learning environments of **37 schools** and other institutions, directly benefiting more than **7,000 students**.

Give interest-free loans and business training to **41 disadvantaged entrepreneurs**.

Reach **more than 6,600 people** through hygiene workshops and lessons in **4 countries**.

Our young volunteers also made an impact on our High School Specials (HSS). 1,545 High School Special volunteers across 25 destinations, helped us:

Support the education of more than **4,200 children**.



Plant more than **4,330 trees**.

Do basic medical checks for more than **10,100 people** during 212 community healthcare outreaches.



Protect over **12,000 turtle eggs**.

Clean up over **730kg of garbage** (more than 230kg of this was plastic), and 6,000 cigarette butts.



Assisted with the care, protection, and/or monitoring of various animals, including giraffes, lions, elephants, Nile Crocodiles, and more.

Build or renovate **7** playgrounds, **1** multi-sensory garden, **2** reading rooms, **1** computer room, **4** classrooms, **1** sports area, **1** school, **1** bathroom, **2** parking spaces, and **1** house.



Paint **20** schools, **17** murals, **2** offices, **1** perimeter fence, **3** playgrounds, over **150** pieces of furniture, **1** elderly care home, **3** community centres, and **7** houses.





Index

Our Environmental Impact

UN SDG 12: Responsible Consumption & Production

- Improved waste management
- Clean-ups and recycling
- Responsible food production and consumption

UN SDG 13: Climate Action

- Combating carbon emissions
- Climate change awareness
- Assessing the impact of climate change

UN SDG 14: Life Below Water

- Reducing marine pollution
- Coral reef protection and restoration
- Marine species protection

UN SDG 15: Life on Land

- Conservation and restoration of forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands
- Wildlife protection
- Species monitoring and biodiversity studies
- New species discoveries

Our Social Impact

UN SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- Feeding programmes in schools
- Feeding programmes in the community
- Nutritional health programmes
- Encouraging local production

UN SDG 4: Quality Education

- Providing learning opportunities and teaching English
- Literacy programmes
- Special Needs Education
- Holiday Camps
- Improving the learning environment
- Teacher training

UN SDG 5: Gender Equality

- Empowerment through financial independence
- Empowerment through education
- Standing up for women's rights
- Supporting single mothers with their children
- Supporting women with disabilities in Mongolia

UN SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- Access to sanitation facilities
- Hand washing initiatives

UN SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth

- Encouraging the formalization and growth of micro-enterprises through access to financial services
- Providing productive employment
- Achieving decent work through the provision of employability skills



Impact of Our High School Specials

Childcare & Community and Sports Volunteers

- UN SDG 1: No Poverty
- UN SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- UN SDG 4: Quality Education
- UN SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Medicine and Public Health Volunteers

- UN SDG 3: Good Health & Well-being

Culture and Conservation & Environment Volunteers

- UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities
- UN SDG 12: Responsible Production and Consumption
- UN SDG 13: Climate Action
- UN SDG 14: Life below Water
- UN SDG 15: Life on Land
- UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

OUR

Environmental Impact

This year was one of the warmest years on record. Great news for those who enjoy long, hot summers; but it's indicative of a more sinister revelation: we're in the grip of a climate crisis.

There's overwhelming consensus that global warming is mostly man-made, and that governments aren't doing enough to prevent it. This led to a series of international strikes and protests to demand action last September. During this 'Global Week for Future', people of all ages from 150 countries were involved in staging around 4,500 protests.

Our teams and volunteers at Conservation Projects worldwide work tirelessly to support climate protection efforts year-round. We worked toward four United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- Responsible Consumption and Production
- Climate Action
- Life Below Water
- Life On Land

To address these goals, we focused on collecting data, raising awareness through community education, and taking direct field-based action to fight environmental harm and protect ecosystems.



Responsible Production and Consumption

Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Raising awareness about the environment has always been a priority for us. In 2019, we focused on the message of reducing, reusing, and recycling solid waste, and continuing to promote avoiding single-use plastics. We put more effort into cleaning up activities and promoting proper disposal practices within local communities.

▶ HOW DID WE WORK TO IMPROVE WASTE MANAGEMENT?

Clean-ups and Recycling:



Our volunteers

Conducted over **180 clean up activities**

Picked up over **21 tonnes** of plastic litter and **8 tonnes** of mixed litter

Did waste management training and sensitisation with more than **50,000 people**

Created or maintained more than 15 organic gardens in 3 countries

Volunteers collected
26,688
cigarette
butts

In **Argentina**, volunteers cleaned a large lake in the city of Cordoba, Villa Carlos Paz. The lake is used extensively for social purposes, like picnics and swimming. Cleaning and maintaining the lake shore goes a long way in preserving marine life and ensuring that people can enjoy visits.

In **Ecuador**, our volunteers raised awareness in towns and schools and did weekly ocean clean ups to help reduce the amount of solid waste destroying marine life. These projects inspired more careful disposal of waste by the locals.

In **Kenya**, volunteers did multiple clean up activities along the fragile wetland ecosystem of Lake Elementaita (home to an astonishing 69 bird species). These activities are crucial in reducing the human impact on the ecosystem.

In **Madagascar**, our volunteers built 30 bins around the village of Andasibe and cleaned up the village. Previously, the village didn't have public bins. As there wasn't any proper waste management system in place, this helped contribute to proper solid waste disposal. Some villagers previously disposed of solid waste on their land. They now have access to bins, so this space can be used for gardening or a more environmentally friendly activity.



In **South Africa**, volunteers conducted more than 10 beach clean up activities to protect the sea from pollution. We also targeted local youth with waste management awareness activities.

In **Sri Lanka**, volunteers conducted beach clean up activities and waste management awareness events. This drew the attention and interest of the local government who then introduced waste disposal signs and coastal guards on the beach!

In **Fiji**, volunteers ran a recycling project with more than 1,000 kindergarten children. We used plastic bottles, caps, pencil shavings and other solid waste to promote recycling and repurposing of waste.

In **Mexico**, volunteers recycled approximately 1 tonne of polyethylene terephthalate plastic bottles collected on the beach. This litter collection and recycling project helped to reduce pollution and increase awareness around the issue.

Country highlight

SAMOA

In Samoa alone, the team collected approximately 20 tonnes of plastic litter and 5 tonnes of mixed litter. As Samoa prepared for the hosting of the South Pacific Games, there was a significant community and government-driven push to educate people and improve the solid waste situation on the island. We assisted local communities and organisations, and ran our own clean up activities and waste management education seminars.

A group of Australian students who joined us for two weeks focused on waste management education in a local school. They taught children how to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste. In addition to cleaning up the school, our volunteers also provided new waste bins, and shared how to sort waste for disposal.



OUR APPROACH TO RESPONSIBLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

In **Costa Rica**, volunteers from the Young Farmers Group built an organic garden to benefit 500 students at the Corralillo School. This initiative promotes environmentally friendly practices through education and produces fresh, chemical-free vegetables for the school's canteen.

In **Ecuador** and **Madagascar**, we created 14 vegetable gardens for a mixed group of beneficiaries. These gardens provide a sustainable food source for community members and encourage healthier eating.

Country highlight

THAILAND

Millions of people enjoy eating fresh fish everyday. However, there's a hidden threat hiding in the stomachs of fish and other marine life: micro plastics. In 2019, our volunteers dissected 72 marine animals collected from popular grocery stores, fish markets, or found dead during survey dives. A whopping 86% of them contained micro plastics!

Our findings highlight the harm being done to marine life, and the potential harm to people who consume seafood. We shared our findings with the local community through a public education campaign. Our goal was to help locals understand how poor solid waste management impacts marine life and the availability and quality of their food source.

How did we repurpose waste in Thailand?

- Our volunteers collected all the solid waste they generated during their visit, and used it to build 124 2L eco-bricks.
- We collected over 1.5 tonnes of litter during 13 beach clean ups at a survey site in Longbeach. We separated the litter, and handed recyclables over to a local recycling station.



No to Cigarette Butts

Sift through the sand on a beach, and you're more likely to come up with a handful of cigarette butts than a pretty seashell. We ran 7 cigarette butts campaigns, and gathered 26,688 cigarette butts. We've been doing this for years with the goal of not only cleaning affected areas, but influencing governmental policy to implement a smoking ban on Ao Nang's beaches.

Knowledge is Power

Empowering locals is key to ensuring our efforts are sustainable for the long-term. Our staff and volunteers shared their knowledge about responsible production and consumption with more than 30,000 people!



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Climate Action

Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts

Climate change has disrupted ecosystems and people's lives globally. Taking urgent climate action is critical, and it's what we do as an organisation. We aim to reduce carbon emission by engaging in climate change awareness, and actively assess and reduce the impact of climate change.

COMBATING CARBON EMISSIONS:

Constructing Eco-stoves to Reduce Firewood Usage

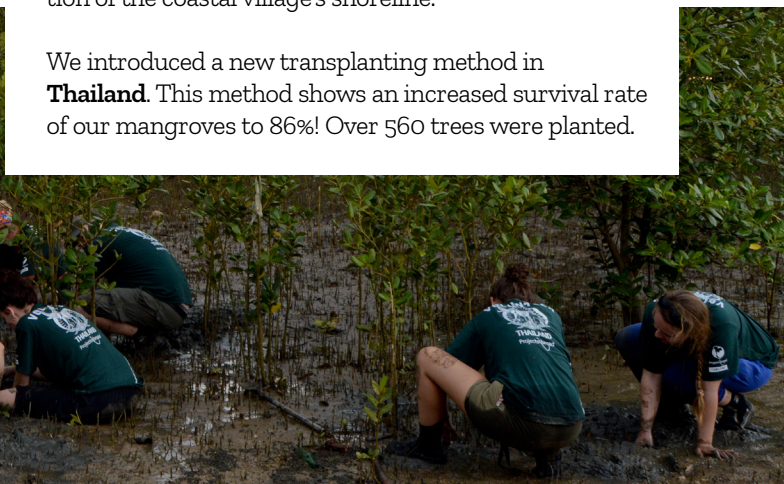
Volunteers in Kenya built 313 eco-stoves in the communities neighboring a conservancy that supports close to 37,000 people. **Installing eco-stoves enabled them to use 41% less firewood!** Reducing firewood usage also cuts back on deforestation and air pollution, and empowers women and children who spend most of their afternoon collecting firewood for cooking.

Planting Trees in Samoa, Fiji, and Thailand to Offset Carbon Emissions

In mid-2019, we partnered with an initiative called "Two Million Trees" in Samoa. Through this partnership, our volunteers planted over 2,000 trees to help offset their emissions.

The Lourdes Hill College group planted 500 mangrove trees in Saweni Village, Fiji to help with the preservation of the coastal village's shoreline.

We introduced a new transplanting method in **Thailand**. This method shows an increased survival rate of our mangroves to 86%! Over 560 trees were planted.



Outfitting Plant Nurseries in Madagascar

In support of the government's trust to rebuild Madagascar's rainforest, 18,924 plants from 44 different species were planted at the tree nurseries. We also reforested empty land with 2,920 trees.



Move to Stop Using Single Use Plastics

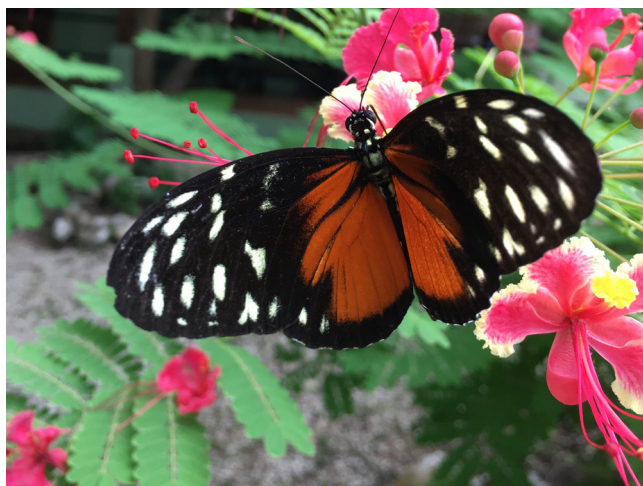
In Samoa, we discontinued our practice of supplying volunteers with single use plastic bottles and encouraged them to travel with their own reusable bottles. All our host families and our office were equipped with filtered water refill stations so volunteers could avoid purchasing plastic unnecessarily.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Using Butterflies as Bioindicators in Costa Rica

Our staff and volunteers investigated climatic variables in the Barra Honda National Park using the butterflies as bioindicators. In an initial report covering the first six months, we were able to associate the presence of different species at different altitudes and temperatures. With continuous monitoring we could identify variables in different species' locations.

This research yielded info that can help make decisions regarding forest management and educate people about climate change.



Did you know?



As an international organisation, **Projects Abroad** also commenced the practice of giving our volunteers reusable eco bags. As a responsible volunteer organisation, we promote responsible consumption and practices among our staff, volunteers, and alumni.

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS

In 2019, our volunteers and staff engaged with:

- More than 8,500 students and other community members in environmental awareness sessions around the ecology and protection of the Galapagos Islands and the Galapagos National Park in **Ecuador**.
- 1,000 community members in **Samoa** to talk about how they can tackle climate action through responsible use and disposal of waste, as well as sustainable eating habits and farming practices through our Nutrition Project.
- Over 1,000 community members in climate change awareness sessions in **Costa Rica**.
- 70 community youths in **Madagascar**, focusing on climate change awareness. We talked about the importance of protecting the ecosystem, and showed young people how they can become champions for climate action in their communities.

Country highlight

PHILIPPINES

Like many other countries, climate change knowledge is limited among several communities. As a result, we ran climate change awareness drives in six villages, reaching an audience of over 6,000 people. Working with us, community members were able to come up with ways to prevent or lessen damage to their surroundings! to sort waste for disposal.



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Life Below Water

Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas, and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development

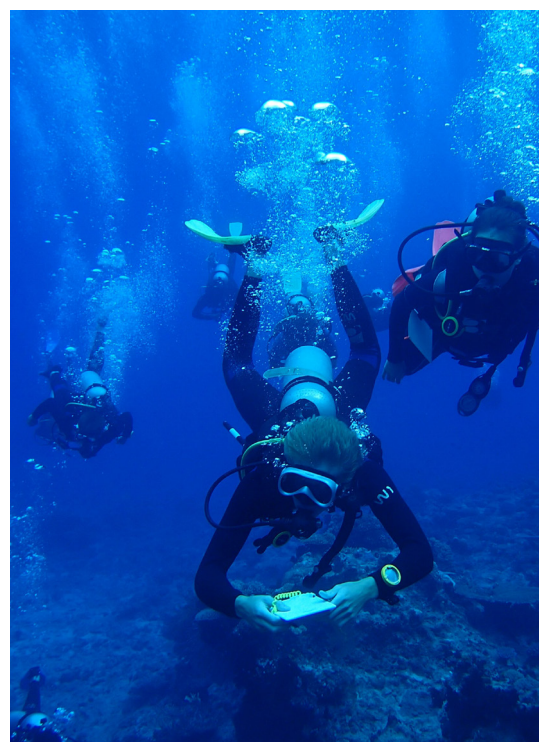
Three quarters of the earth's surface are covered by the ocean, and it's home to nearly 200,000 identified marine species. Unfortunately, climate change has had a devastating impact on marine life, which in turn affects the people and animals who rely on oceans as a food source. Pollution, mainly from microplastics and plastics, is especially harmful to marine animals. Our staff and volunteers on Marine

▶ CORAL REEF PROTECTION AND RESTORATION IN THAILAND

Want to hear something scary? **Scientists report that 16% of the world's coral was lost during the first recorded global bleaching event in 1998.** That was more than two decades ago, and another 40% of coral has been lost since then due to bleaching and natural disasters. Coral reefs are more important than you know:

- They're home to thousands of marine species, acting as an important breeding and nursery ground.
- They play a critical role in the protection of coastlines.

Climate change and other direct human action has threatened the survival of coral reefs. Given the magnitude of this destruction, Projects Abroad given its support to activities geared at studying, protecting, and engaging in coral reef restoration and propagation.





What research are we doing?

Coral Watch: Our volunteers and staff conducted 152 coral watch surveys. During these surveys, we recorded the health of 19 corals per survey on average, totalling approximately 2,900 individual assessments. We sent this data to the University of Queensland to be part of a global study on coral bleaching.

Anemone & Symbiont

Survey: We conducted 43 survey dives, observing the different combinations of organisms living within around 700 individual anemones. We'll analyse this data in 2021 to determine the relationship between specific symbionts and host anemone.

Substrate Cover Survey:

During 161 substrate cover dives, our volunteers collected data from approximately 650 square meters of reef. In 2021, we're aiming to use this data to create a map of the local islands, showing what areas are most in need of attention and restoration.



What solutions did we implement?

Mooring Lines:

We helped set up around 20 new temporary mooring lines around the Ao Nang islands. These mooring lines offer an alternative to anchoring for the longtail boats that transport tourists to snorkelling spots; reducing the damage done to the coral reef.

Cultivating Coral Colonies and Coral Propagation:

In partnership with Phi Phi National Park, our staff and volunteers participated in 9 coral propagation activities, resulting in a total of 1,021 coral fragments. Thanks to small adjustments to our technique, the survival rate has noticeably increased throughout the year from 50% to 80%! Our nursery is now home to over 1,000 healthy coral colonies. Exciting plans are afoot to expand this to 2,000 colonies with twice the current surface area, as well as starting a new nursery.

MARINE SPECIES PROTECTION:

Our volunteers played an important role in protecting endangered turtles in Mexico and Peru. As part of this work, we collect eggs from newly laid nests and relocate them to a conservation centre. This protects them from poachers and other hazards. In total, we collected eggs from over **1,880 nests** and released over **128,300 turtle hatchlings**:

In **Peru**, we engaged in anti-poaching efforts for a freshwater turtle species known as the yellow-spotted river turtle. Our volunteers successfully:

- Released 985 turtles, bring our total number of turtles released to 16,000 since the start of the project 15 years ago.
- Released an additional 1,800 turtles as part of an education programme held in 7 schools in Puerto Maldonado.

Having successfully run this project for many years, it's yielded significant results in helping maintain the population of this species in this part of the Amazon. It contributes to our overall efforts to maintain the ecosystem and food chain within this region.

In **Mexico**, we assisted at the El Tortugario Nature Centre. Our committed volunteers collected eggs for safe incubation, then released:

- 28,000 Olive Ridley Turtles
- 300 Black Sea Turtles
- 80 Leatherback Turtles

This year, volunteers in Mexico and Peru collected eggs from over **1,880 nests** and released over **128,300 turtle hatchlings** into the ocean.

Of these:

80 were
Pacific leatherback
turtles

300 were
black
turtles

28,000 were
Olive Ridley
turtles





Life on Land

Protect, Restore, and Promote Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainably Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and Reverse Land Degradation and Halt Biodiversity Loss

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF FORESTS, WETLANDS, MOUNTAINS, AND DRYLANDS

Maintaining Green Spaces in Cities

In Cordoba, **Argentina**, our volunteers assisted with the maintenance of La Gota Square. They:

- Collected seeds of several species that are in their fruiting period
- Planted indigenous trees
- Removed invasive species
- Improved the pots to increase rainwater infiltration
- Gathered litter

Reforesting Drylands

Our conservation efforts in **Costa Rica** are concentrated in the tropical dry forests of the Barra Honda National Park. Here, we planted 1,007 trees, all native to the dry tropical forest ecosystem. The goal was to:

- Protect aquifer mantles
- Produce food for wild species
- Create paths for wildlife to travel

Through this initiative, three points of groundwater recharges were protected through tree planting.

Our volunteers
planted over
18,979 trees,
including over **4,167**
mangroves.

Fighting Climate Change to Improve Food Security

"Let's go for the maximum impact!" This was the thinking of our volunteers in Jamaica as they sought to plant indigenous fruit trees at a mental healthcare residential facility for homeless men. This has a dual benefit: not only do the trees help prevent soil erosion, they provide a source of fresh fruit for staff and residents! These yielded their first crops in 2020.

In Peru, we focused on reforestation with the goal of not only improving food security, but also reducing carbon emissions. Our volunteers planted over 150 fruit trees and other plants. The area relies heavily on produce being trucked in, which doesn't help the environment, and is costly for local consumers.

Preserving Endemic Plants in a Biodiversity Hotspot

The Galapagos Islands are a premiere biodiversity hotspot, with thousands of unique wildlife and plant species that can only be found here. Unfortunately, local plants and trees are under threat because of people importing invasive species. We worked with the Galapagos National Park to plant more than 1,000 endemic trees, which were grown in a local nursery. This is critical work, as it helps protect a precious ecosystem, maintains the food chain, and increases animals' survival rate.



Planting Trees in Lake Catchment Areas

In Kenya, around the Lake Elementaita catchment area, we planted more than 6,300 indigenous trees. The lake is a part of a wider catchment basin where the human population has been increasing rapidly in recent years.

Why is the lake important for local ecosystems?

- The lake contains large numbers of microorganisms, like types of plankton
- Animals like the Lesser Flamingo feed exclusively on the plankton found here
- Great White Pelicans use the lake as a breeding ground

Planting indigenous trees helps to mitigate high siltation in the catchment area and prevent soil from getting into the Mbaruk River and eventually ending up in the lake. This lake has seen a drastic decline in the amount of water it contains. The reforestation of the catchment will go a long way in fixing this situation and helping to preserve the area as a biodiversity hotspot.

Reforesting Land to Aid Recovery after Fires

In the wake of a series of devastating fires in Madagascar, we partnered with three organisations to build and refill their tree nurseries. Our volunteers planted approximately 3,000 trees to help reforest areas destroyed by bushfires and to increase forest density in other areas. To support the regeneration of the forest, volunteers also removed invasive species. This is critical, as some endemic species of trees are close to extinction.

Giving Trees to Local Communities

In Mongolia, our volunteers planted 15 Alder trees in the yard of the Child Smile Community Centre. These trees will help reduce air pollution and fight against global warming, as well as provide shade for the kids.

WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Animal Rescue and Release

A big part of the work we do in the **Amazon Rainforest in Peru** is to return animals that have previously vanished from the region, to help address imbalances in the ecosystem.

Through our Animal Rescue Centre (Taricaya), we released more than 25 individual animals back into the wild in 2019. This includes:

- Macaws
- Monkeys
- Toucans
- Sloths

These animals were rescued from various situations, cared for or treated, rehabilitated as needed, then carefully released by our staff and volunteers. A problematic jaguar from the outskirts of Puerto Maldonado was captured and safely returned to the national park.

Unfortunately, not all animals can be returned safely to the wild. In these cases, we nurture them back to health and provide a space where they can live in peace. This is an extremely engaging and rewarding experience for our volunteers, and they're able to support the survival of species such as spectacled bears, pumas, ocelots, and more.

Did you know?



In 2019, Taricaya was recognized by the Peruvian government as the Best Wildlife Rescue Centre in Peru!

Taricaya is a private nature reserve located in the Peruvian Amazon along the Madre de Dios River, a major tributary to the Amazon River. We've been running Taricaya since 2004, and the reserve has a great reputation for solid research, strong work ethic and dedication to conservation.

Case study



SPIDER MONKEYS THRIVE

A few years back, our team in Peru reintroduced spider monkeys in an area where they were previously extinct. Through our monitoring efforts, we documented three wild births in 2019; a clear indication of the project's success! This takes our wild population to more than 25 individual monkeys. Another group of spider monkeys will be ready for release in 2020. We anxiously await their release.

The research and wildlife reintroduction models we use here are being adopted by others all over Peru and in other countries. Action is being taken with howler monkeys in Belize, and the spider monkeys in Colombia. We're thrilled to see examples of how others have learnt from us and are adopting our approach.



SPECIES MONITORING AND BIODIVERSITY STUDIES

Proving high biodiversity is a significant tool in convincing institutions and governments to protect an area. We've been conducting research for several years, and in Peru and Kenya for example, we're recognised for our studies and discoveries.

Our partnerships with local conservation organisations and government departments play a key role in this, by allowing us to collect and share valuable data on plant and animal species. We flag vulnerable species and give insights into how to best protect the different animals we study. This data is used by our partners and other stakeholders to create reports, drive policies, and determine necessary conservation actions.



• Giraffe Surveying

The Soysambu Conservancy in **Kenya** is home to 9% of the world's endangered Rothschild's giraffe population. The overall aim of our project is to provide an accurate and scientific overview of the ecology of these giraffes.

This data helps solve the biggest challenge in giraffe conservation: the lack of baseline information. Baseline data is crucial in helping the wildlife management agency make informed decisions which are necessary for protecting Rothschild's giraffes.

We undertook a total of 290 surveys with over 1,015 hours in the field, and shared this data with various stakeholders to support scientific research and conservancy management decisions.

• Bird and Bat Monitoring

In **Peru**, we used mist nets, sensor cameras, pitfall traps, and transects to monitor local bird and bat species. We've increased our species lists to 514 birds and 69 bats, which is the biggest increase we've ever had.

• Carnivore and Lion Monitoring

Our staff and volunteers in **Kenya** monitored carnivores and a pride of lions that live in the conservancy. Understanding their distribution and habitat use is an important aspect in managing



these predators to ensure they coexist peacefully with humans. We undertook 180 surveys, amounting to 540 hours in the field.

• Wildlife Census

In **Madagascar**, we conducted wildlife censuses on amphibians, reptiles, birds, and lemurs. These censuses support wildlife and are important in assisting with developing effective conservation interventions, if needed, especially for species increasingly threatened by poaching and climate change. They also assist with ensuring eco-tourism activities in habitats are data-driven and animal-friendly.

Based on data collected, we've determined the need to do vegetation stratum to create an inventory of plants central to the diet of some lemur species.

• Anti-Poaching Action

Poaching remains a major challenge to wildlife conservation in **Kenya**. It's one of the major contributors to biodiversity loss and species extinction. Our volunteers work with local conservationists to remove snares set by poachers to kill wildlife for bush meat.

• Monitoring of Monkeys and Butterflies in Costa Rica

Through field research, we monitored monkeys and butterflies on a weekly basis. We determined the points of greatest concentration of wildlife along a 12km trail in the Barra Honda National Park. Four new butterfly records have been found!

This project was implemented because we need to know the extent of how the forest has been impacted by climate change, forest fires, and other human activity. The behavior patterns of monkeys and butterflies also provide context for the forest's condition.

Case study

MEDICAL PLANT CENSUS

In **Madagascar**'s Malagasy culture, the concept and practice of healing diseases using native plants is widely practiced. We've worked to identify medical plants and collected data to better preserve these species. We share this data with the people who continue to use plant-based medicine.

We ran at least **60** anti-poaching expeditions, where a total of **445** snares and wires were recovered, extending the lives of hundreds of animals!

In the medium term, our research provides a stable database which highlights wildlife hotspots. Identifying biodiversity hotspots is critical as they carry higher value for other important ecosystem services. These services include water conservation, carbon storage, and general scenic beauty. In the long term, we intend to make policy recommendations regarding the conservation and general management of these hotspots based on the scientific information we obtain.

• Wetland and Terrestrial birds Monitoring

In **Kenya**, we monitored more than 400 bird species of both terrestrial and wetland ecosystems to ensure that the conservancy and Lake Elementaita provided a safe haven for threatened bird species. The lake has a fragile ecosystem, and it provides food, water, and shelter to fish, birds, and mammals, as well as serving as a breeding ground and nursery. Close monitoring is essential.

We conducted a total of 82 surveys to document and assess the ecological changes taking place. The data we've collected helps to determine actions necessary for the management, protection and restoration of the lake.

NEW SPECIES DISCOVERIES

Our biodiversity surveys helped us discover a number of species never before reported in our research areas. This year, volunteers discovered a new species of snake in the reserve in **Peru**!



OUR

Social Impact

As we continue to add value to our projects, our volunteers are able to make greater contributions to the communities we serve. We continued on our journey to strengthen community-based projects designed to support families and marginalised groups. We also supported the health and wellbeing of local communities, as poor quality of life and a lack of services and opportunities can hold people back from achieving their full potential.



ProjectsAbroad



Zero Hunger

End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improve Nutrition, and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

FEEDING PROGRAMMES IN SCHOOLS

Hunger affects millions of children around the world, and it directly impacts their education. School feeding programmes are hugely beneficial, because they increase attendance and children can better concentrate on a full stomach. This is how we worked to end hunger in schools:

- In **Sri Lanka**, more than 18,000 meals were provided for children in pre-schools and holiday camps. A number of these kids regularly attended school without food, and we found this initiative improved student retention, and bolstered registration rates at these preschools for the following year.
- In **Kenya**, volunteers organised and ran feeding programmes at our partner childcare placements. The monthly number of students who benefitted doubled from 50 to 100!



This year we:

Ran 117 feeding programmes that provided more than 26,800 meals to children, the homeless community, and others in need.

Did nutrition assessments for more than 13,000 people.

Created or enhanced 33 vegetable gardens, which directly benefited 260 people

Held 78 healthy cooking classes for 460 people.

- In **Madagascar**, 44 children ate fortified porridge provided by Projects Abroad twice a week to subsidise their diet. In addition to this, we facilitated monthly nutrition classes for kids and parents, and each child received a full check up at the clinic.

- In the **Philippines**, 30 children from Yolanda Village and 30 from Caritas Village benefited from feeding projects.

- In **Tanzania**, children at the Masai School (owned and operated by Projects Abroad) were given fruit up to 3 times weekly. This initiative started because we wanted to:

- Increase kids' vitamin intake to strengthen their immune systems and overall health.
- Encourage parents' to adopt healthier diets for their children to sustain the progress we make.

FEEDING PROGRAMMES IN THE COMMUNITY

Our community feeding programmes benefited:

Low-income families, including parents of young hospital patients, in **Argentina**.

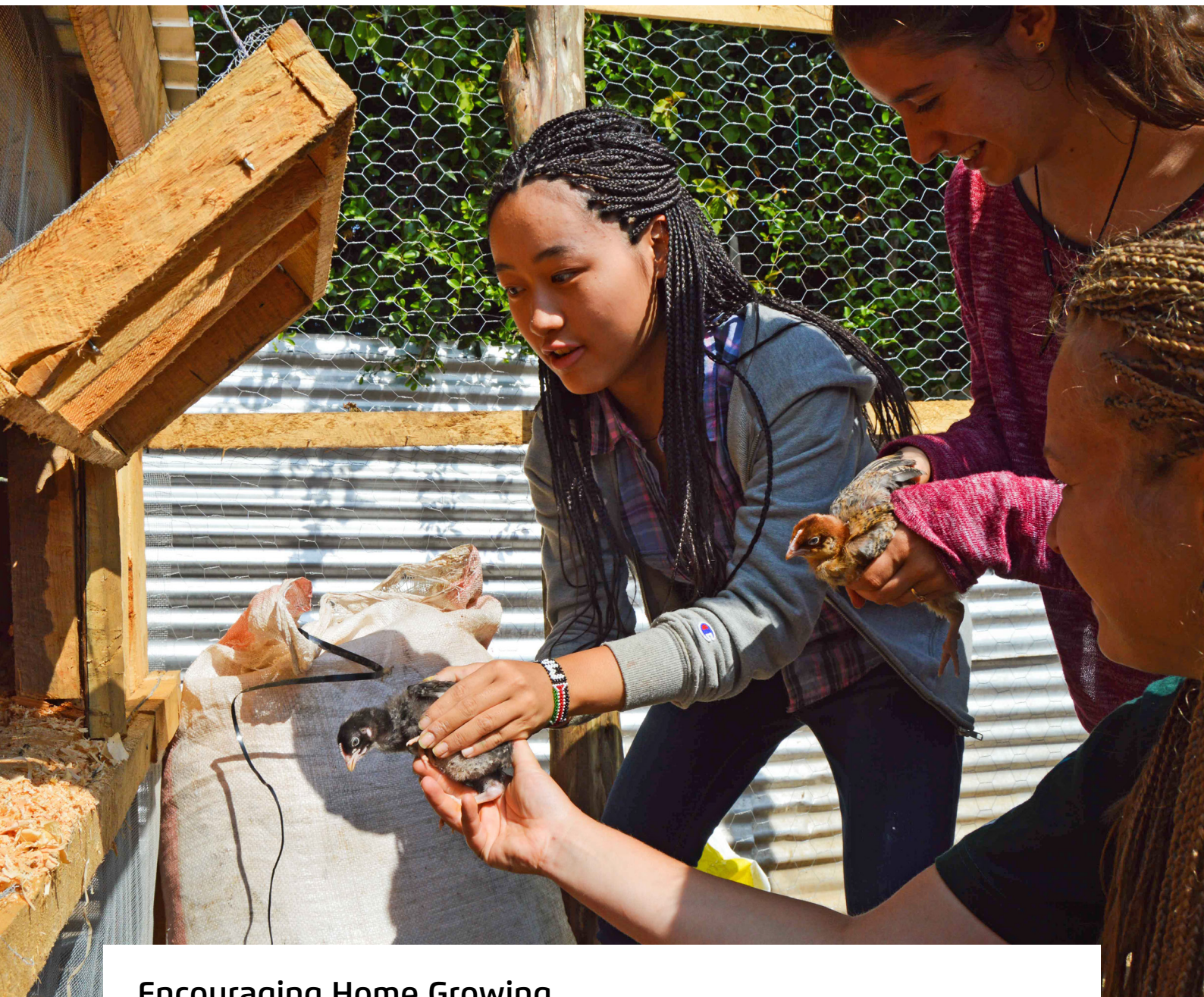
Families displaced from a township in **South Africa** after a fire, as well as members of the homeless population

Elderly and the mentally challenged in **Jamaica**.

How We Support Nutritional Health and Awareness

Our Nutrition and Public Health volunteers have led ongoing nutrition monitoring and health programmes to educate and support families. Our specific goal is to improve child and maternal nutrition.

- In **Fiji**, volunteers worked to prevent malnutrition through 377 outreaches with more than 10,000 people, by taking basic vitals and calculating BMI for adults. We also provided suggestions to improve meals' nutritional value. In addition, schools benefited from our Nutrition Project: we planned a weight loss challenge for teachers at a school. Based on its success, the school continued to offer monthly health checks for teachers to promote awareness, management, and prevention of non-communicable diseases like diabetes.
- The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) levels in Laikipia County in **Kenya** shows a concerning level of malnutrition, mainly among boys. Due to poverty, children don't get the nutrition they need to develop properly. We did home visits and nutrition assessments with 60 children under the age of 5, and referred malnourished children to a local hospital for care.
- In **Madagascar**, 300 people benefited from nutrition assessment and education. This includes 74 young children and their families. Through close monitoring and support, we found the nutritional state of all the children improved. **17% no longer have nutritional problems today!**
- In **Peru**, our volunteers ran workshops and demonstrative sessions directed at 150 local mothers whose children suffer from anemia. Moms were taught how to prepare meals with high nutritional content to help prevent malnutrition. Health professionals in clinics also benefited from our workshops on malnutrition and anemia.



Encouraging Home Growing

One way to discourage the consumption of heavily processed foods has been to show communities how they can easily grow and produce their own food:

- 33 vegetable gardens were planted for low-income communities, schools, and childcare facilities. This directly benefited 260 people in countries like **Costa Rica, Fiji, Madagascar, and Kenya.**
- 78 cooking classes were offered, benefiting more than 500 parents and caregivers in countries such as **Ecuador, Costa Rica, Fiji, Philippines, and Samoa.**

These cooking classes taught locals - mainly mothers - basic recipes for nutrition-rich, balanced, and low budget meals. We've observed that due to poverty, the nutritional value of meals became secondary to the need to eat. By learning how to provide balanced meals on the same budget, families are better equipped to care for their health.



Quality Education

Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All

Our volunteers continued working towards ensuring that boys and girls had equal access to quality early childhood and primary school education. Many of our projects focused on slower learners, understaffed schools, marginalised and other vulnerable children. We also made efforts to upgrade school facilities and build capacity among local teachers and other caregivers.

PROVIDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND TEACHING ENGLISH

Our goal was to promote inclusive and equitable quality education by providing direct support for Early Childhood Development, literacy, numeracy, and English.

Speaking English is a critical skill: it can open up employment opportunities and advance careers, especially in tourism. In countries where there's a lack of strong English teachers, English-speaking volunteers contribute significantly to the conversational ability of both local teachers and students.

Our volunteers:

Supported the education and development of more than 6,000 children.

Provided extra educational support to 472 children with special needs, mainly intellectual disabilities.

Ran 10 non-residential holiday camps for more than 430 kids, giving them safe spaces to learn while parents are at work.

Highlight of what we did to support education:

- Volunteers in **Cambodia** worked with two non-profit partner organisations and eight daycare centres to provide free English lessons for 610 students.
- In **China**, volunteers taught 250 eighth graders over 200 English words, 8 English songs, and 1 opera at a school in rural Jiangxi Province. We also created a WeChat group to facilitate video teaching in 2020.



- Volunteers in **Costa Rica** and **Ecuador** taught English in pre-schools and primary schools to support local teachers who don't speak English, or where English teachers aren't available. They also supported slower learners in overcrowded classes. More than 1,100 children from low-income backgrounds were supported.

- 165 children from vulnerable communities in **Kenya** learned English from volunteers. Our volunteers focused primarily on children whose parent(s) are living with HIV.



- In **Peru**, we continued to support public education institutions like kindergartens, elementary, and special education schools, where we focused on kids with learning challenges. Children often enter high school with no English knowledge, and the syllabus normally requires previous knowledge. Our Teaching Projects help bridge this gap by teaching English vocabulary.

- In **Madagascar**, our volunteers conducted a needs analysis in a village, and found that children needed extra educational support. As a result, we offered free early childhood care services to more than 220 children. This gave parents more opportunity to focus on work while their kids learned in a safe space.

- In **Argentina**, our volunteers worked at a daycare centre for low-income families, caring for infants and kids up to age four. They also supported local teachers in six public education institutions that were overcrowded and understaffed. Our volunteers' efforts not only reduces the teacher-student ratio to a more manageable number, it also facilitates cultural exchange and sharing of best practices.

- In the **Philippines** and **Samoa**, volunteers worked with local teachers in overcrowded and under-resourced classes. We focused on giving slow-learning students small group support, helping 310 Filipino and 350 Samoan students. We noted an improvement in their confidence and ability to speak English.

Volunteers supported
the education and
development of over
6,000
children



Case study



6TH GRADER RE-ENGAGED IN FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CHINA

A 6th grade boy at a rural Chinese school wasn't recognized by the school as being able to function at his grade level. People thought he was mentally challenged because of his behaviour and academic performance. He was isolated and wasn't encouraged to learn. As a result, his test scores weren't entered in the school's system, which would've prevented him from furthering his education after primary school.

In cases like this, children fall out of the formal school system and are left to pursue low skill jobs in the village. Our volunteers recognised that with a bit more attention, he demonstrated the ability to quickly grasp academic content, sports, and music.

The team leader of our volunteers, who's a psychologist and trained teacher, brought this to the attention of the school's principal and the child's mother. She encouraged them to spend a bit more time, possibly after school, to aid his development. This was very good news for all as he can now gain a better education to increase his employability as an adult!

LITERACY PROGRAMMES

Reading and writing are the basic foundations for further learning and development, which is why structured literacy programmes are the cornerstone of several of our Childcare and Teaching Projects. Our volunteers run these programmes in the form of remedial lessons to help students reach the required level for their grade. Our volunteers:

- Continued to provide literacy support to slower learners in **Belize**. One institution supported by our volunteers has more than 500 students. 60 of these students need special attention. This year, 85% of the children enrolled in the literacy programme advanced to a higher level because of the additional support!
- Successfully increased the literacy and numeracy levels of children aged 4-6 in Fiji and aged 3-12 in **Jamaica**. We achieved this by providing in-class support to teachers and sessions for the slowest learning children. Our volunteers also introduced additional learning aids, including flash cards, books, and stationery.
- Ran special literacy programmes in other countries that focused on facilitating small group engagement. The following number of people benefited from literacy support:
 - 370 in **Cambodia**
 - 830 in **China**
 - 220 in **Ecuador**
 - 140 in **Kenya**
 - 60 in **Madagascar**
 - 38 in **Peru**
 - 158 in the **Philippines**
 - 70 in **Samoa**
 - 1,000 in **Sri Lanka**
 - 70 in **Tanzania**



IMPROVING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Studies have shown that learning environments can have a dramatic impact on students' engagement and learning. With the aim of offering a positive learning environment our volunteers helped:

- In **Kenya**, we renovated three classrooms, built a sandbox play area, and planted 500 trees to provide shade at four primary schools.
- This year, through the 999+ Helping Giving Serving Sharing Campaign in **Mongolia** we organised a "3 Dreams" fundraising event to raise USD 1,500.00 to install high volt electricity at the Child Smile Community Centre. The centre is now able to connect with an electric heating system, reducing air pollution generated from burning coal fires for warmth!

We **built, renovated, and improved** the learning environments of 37 institutions, directly benefiting over 7,000 students



TEACHER TRAINING

We shared knowledge with and provided training to 123 teachers and care workers.

In many developing countries, the resources available for further training are often limited, costly, or not available, particularly in rural areas. Many teachers are usually eager to improve academically. This not only benefits the students but also the teacher in his/her professional development.

Our volunteers provided training mainly through professional development workshops to teachers in **Belize, Cambodia, China, Ecuador, Fiji, Kenya, Madagascar, Peru, Samoa, and Sri Lanka**. These workshops were well received by teachers and provided skills that could be immediately adopted in their teaching practice to improve student outcomes.

We provided focused literacy programmes to 3,271 children and 21 adults.





ProjectsAbroad



Gender Equality

Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls

Gender equality is a fundamental human right. According to the United Nations, “1 in 5 women and girls between ages 15-49 have reported experiencing physical and sexual violence by an intimate partner. 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence.” Providing women and girls with opportunities greatly aids in the sustainable development of any nation. So in 2019, we continued to provide opportunities to empower women.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Financial independence is the best means by which women can become self-reliant. Through our Microfinance Projects, we’re providing women with business opportunities that enable them to contribute to their family’s income.



In **Tanzania**, we conducted training sessions geared at economic empowerment for women, and provided interest-free loans. Women, especially single mothers and widows, were prioritised for assistance. These widows suffered from acute poverty as a result of total financial reliance on their husbands prior to their death; leaving them without an alternative source of income.

Introducing these women to micro-entrepreneurship, providing business loans, and business management support, helps these women generate an income. We not only helped these women to start businesses, they were assisted with money management to ensure the sustainability and growth of their business and to finance their households for the long-term.

▶ EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

We continued to promote equal access to education for women and girls:

- Human Rights volunteers in **Argentina** held weekly education and empowerment sessions in a correctional facility for young girls. They taught the girls about women's rights and significant events such as the origin and purpose of International Women's Day. These girls also received cross-cultural education about how women are recognised and protected in other countries.
- Public Health and Medicine volunteers in the **Philippines** empowered 1,000 women from 19 villages in the municipality of Medellin with information about reproductive health and HIV. Another 1,035 students and teachers were engaged in talks about HIV, STDs and teenage pregnancy.
- To help achieve gender equality, Law & Human Rights volunteers in **South Africa** held social justice workshops on gender equality at juvenile care facilities for girls and boys respectively.

▶ SUPPORTING SINGLE MOTHERS

In **Mongolia**, volunteers supported single mothers and children ages 0-15 at the "Child Smile" Community Centre. This centre provides them with a safe place to live, free from poverty. These families are provided with support and the tools to find happiness, feel secure, and gain independence. Projects Abroad assisted the centre by expanding the building and providing additional resources to the children. The "If I Were Her" fundraising event was organised to raise funds to buy children's bookshelves. We also organised the "999+Helping" campaign to raise money to complete the building. The money raised - USD3,60.00 - was used to build and install roofing, windows, and doors.

▶ STANDING UP FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Human Rights volunteers in **Argentina** joined in various marches and protests in support of women's movements. These included:

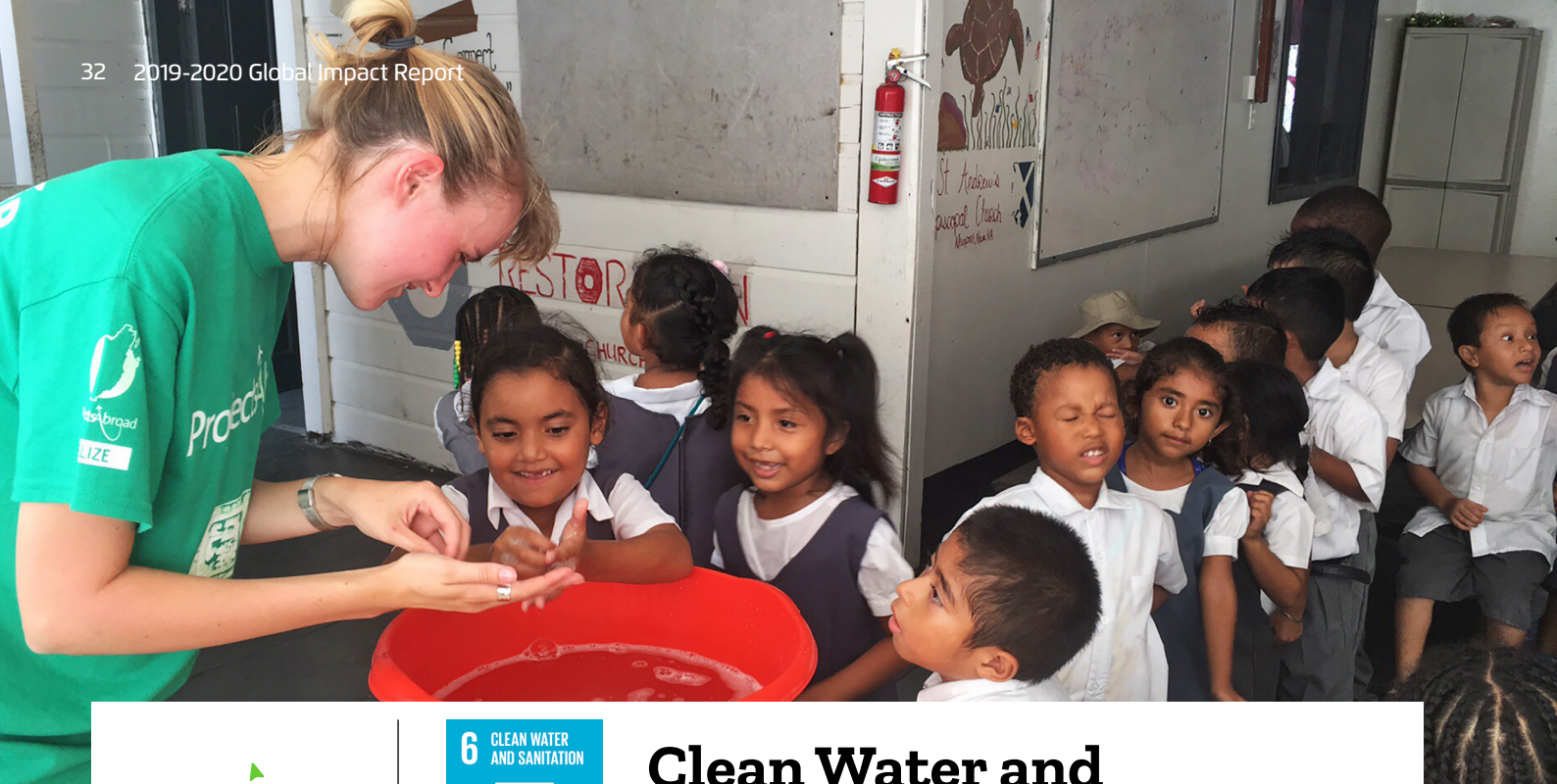
- The International Women's Day march, on 8 March, claiming the rights and protection of women under the theme "Balance for Better".
- The World Day of Action march, for access to legal and safe abortions, under the slogan "Sex Education to Decide, Contraceptives to Not Abort, and Legal Abortion to Not Die". To this day, thousands of pregnant women in **Argentina** still risk their lives with illegal and unsafe abortions.



▶ SUPPORTING WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN MONGOLIA

Our volunteers held fundraising events to gather funds for a woman with cerebral palsy, who dreams of becoming a fashion designer. Having completed a two-year sewing course, she was unable to start a business as she didn't have a sewing machine.

With our support, she was able to produce a collection, which was modeled on stage by our volunteers to help promote her designs. This promotion has gone a far way in bringing attention to her capabilities as a designer and seamstress, and has kickstarted her business!



ProjectsAbroad



Clean Water and Sanitation

Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All

Globally, there's enough freshwater on Earth to achieve the goal of providing clean water and sanitation for all people. Unfortunately there are still communities around the world who lack access to fresh water and proper sanitation. This year, we continued our work to make clean water and sanitation facilities readily available to marginalised individuals and groups, as this is vital to health.

ACCESS TO SANITATION FACILITIES

In 2019, our volunteers:

- Built two bathrooms for a single parent household of four, and an elderly man in Jamaica.
- Built or upgraded seven sanitation facilities in the Philippines, benefiting 137 people. The blocks were built specifically for families who have members with disabilities.

Case study



PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD AVERTED IN JAMAICA

A community-wide public health hazard was brought to the attention of the Public Health Department - and later Projects Abroad - in Jamaica. A single mother and her three children were living without basic water and sanitation facilities, therefore placing their neighbours at risk of health issues on account of poor sanitation. Improper sanitation practices can lead to infectious intestinal diseases and skin conditions.

Our volunteers built a bathroom and installed a water tank that would benefit not just the family, but close neighbours who also didn't have a bathroom facility or access to clean water.

Case study



PROVIDING SANITARY CONVENIENCE FOR THE MENTALLY DISABLED IN JAMAICA

Our volunteers built a bathroom for a 65 year old mentally disabled man who lives by himself in a single-room home. His house was in dire need of repair but community members couldn't afford to assist him, so the Parish's Poor Relief Department contacted Projects Abroad in Jamaica to seek assistance as their resources were stretched thin.

Upon inspection, we found the dwelling to be incomplete and structurally unsafe, with many leaks and cracks. In addition to reinforcing the structure, we noted the man had no bathroom. Given our commitment to discontinuing open defecation, which is a major public health concern, we prioritised the construction of a bathroom and sewage system in his home.

A group of students from Sweden worked hard to:

- Do a complete structural reinforcement
- Replace the roof
- Install concrete flooring
- Build a bathroom
- Install windows and doors

This project brought great joy to the community, who thanked Projects Abroad and the volunteers for answering the call to help. The elderly man said, "thank you all so much for this great help", one member of the community added, "we couldn't have done it by ourselves and your volunteers came and helped him and now he can live more comfortably".

▶ HAND WASHING INITIATIVES

In addition to improving sanitation facilities and hygiene resources, our volunteers are consistently teaching and encouraging good hygiene practices globally.

In 2019, we reached more than 6,600 people through hygiene workshops and lessons in four countries. Our volunteers also specifically looked to address children who are most at risk from gastrointestinal and skin disorders.

Childcare and Medical volunteers in **Ecuador, Ghana, Jamaica, and Madagascar** taught children how to wash their hands properly, and stressed how important this was before meals. Other areas of hygiene (including oral and general hygiene) were also covered. Kids learned simple songs about hygiene to reinforce lessons, and we found them to be consistent in washing their hands - and reminding their peers to do the same!

With older children and adults, we talked more about bacteria, viruses, and related diseases to highlight the importance of regular hand washing, and distributed hygiene packages to many of the kids.

Case study



PROVIDING TOILETS FOR HOUSEHOLDS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Projects Abroad continues to provide safe, sanitary, and private toilet facilities to households in the municipality of San Remigio, Cebu. These households didn't have sanitation facilities of their own.

Our volunteers first built Interlocking Compressed Earth Blocks (ICEBs), which they later used to construct seven toilet blocks. These cement stabilized soil blocks are extremely useful in dry stacked, low budget construction. Our 2019 beneficiaries included:

- Persons with disabilities (PWDs), like Mr. Perpetua, a 27 year old affected by polio. The construction of bathrooms for PWDs is significant as this group is among the most marginalised group of beneficiaries. A physical disability usually results in reduced mobility, so it becomes more difficult to access suitable sanitation facilities. Mr. Perpetua is now able to access these facilities with relative ease.
- The family of Mr. Cubero, who is 41 years old. The family includes his widowed mother and two adult siblings.
- The family of Mr. Rosareal, a simple carpenter, 30 years old. His family consists of his fiancée, nieces, and nephews.
- The students and teachers at the San Remigio Central Elementary School. With the newly installed toilet cubicle inside the classroom, kindergarten students and teachers find it easy to access a bathroom when they need it.

In addition to building these bathroom blocks, beneficiaries were also educated about its use and the importance of practicing good sanitation measures.



Decent Work & Economic Growth

Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment, and Decent Work for All

It's important to us to promote sustained economic growth and provide decent work for those living in poverty in the communities we support.

To do this, we:

- Provide interest-free loans
- Facilitate business development training and support
- Make personal money management guidance freely available
- Ensure beneficiaries learn employable skills

In 2019, **87** disadvantaged entrepreneurs received **interest-free loans** from Projects Abroad to support their businesses.



In continuation of our work in previous years, our overall aim is to grow household incomes, increase savings, and make community members more self-sufficient. Read on to see what this looks like in practice!

▶ ENCOURAGING THE FORMALIZATION AND GROWTH OF MICRO-ENTERPRISES THROUGH ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

In **Cambodia**, volunteers at our Micro-finance Project taught vulnerable members of the community about basic business management. Interest-free loans were given to 39 aspiring entrepreneurs, along with business ideas and business development support.

Our loan recipients were all previously unemployed, and living in low-income communities. We presented micro-entrepreneurship as a means of earning an income, and the opportunity to improve their quality of life.

Thanks to these loans, and the support of Projects Abroad staff and volunteers, beneficiaries started businesses in fishing and selling vegetables and cakes. As their businesses grow, our hope is that they'll be able to achieve financial stability, and better living conditions.

In **Tanzania**, we provided new loans to 48 women from low-income communities. In addition, from the end of 2019, to March 2020, we had a total of 98 active beneficiaries participating in the Micro-finance Project. They've all benefited significantly from business training and education, and are a step closer to securing financial independence.



▶ PROVIDING PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT

As part of our conservation efforts in **Ecuador**, and our exclusive partnership with the Galapagos National Park, locals were trained and provided with jobs helping to protect endangered species on the islands. Not only does this give people an immediate job and income, it helps them become more employable. We hope that from here they're able to transition to other jobs within conservation and sustainable tourism!

▶ ACHIEVING DECENT WORK THROUGH THE PROVISION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- In the **Philippines**, our volunteers established a Mobile Rescue Unit, which provided training to unemployed locals. The rescue unit facilitates community emergency medical services using medically equipped motorbikes. By participating in this project, unemployed locals (most of whom are recent graduates) are able to serve their community while developing a new skill in emergency health care. Based on the in-demand training and valuable work experience gained, participants have become more employable. Some have used their newly acquired training and skills to seek firefighting jobs!

- International Development volunteers in **South Africa** helped people learn new skills such as sewing and beading, IT, business management, and agriculture. This initiative gives people with little to

no education an opportunity to learn new skills and work toward starting a business or getting a job.

- The dedicated participants in our Surf Project in **South Africa** became surf instructors. As a result, job opportunities in the industry have become available to many of these young people.

"The surfing outreach has opened a lot of doors for me. I'm involved in the community, and get to focus on my surfing. I've also gotten the opportunity to teach the local kids and volunteers how to surf!"

Lele,
Surfing Project beneficiary.

THE IMPACT OF OUR

High School Specials



Each year, the high school students (ages 15-18) who volunteer with us play an important role in contributing to the UN SDGs and the goals of our individual projects.

This is what they worked together to accomplish in 2019:

► CHILDCARE & COMMUNITY AND SPORTS VOLUNTEERS



UN SDG 1: No Poverty

- In the **Philippines**, our young volunteers helped build a small house for a 64 year old woman and her three siblings. The family didn't have a safe home because they were displaced by a devastating typhoon in 2013.
- In **Senegal**, a group of teenagers worked together to build a dorm room and a shower room in a poor, informal school known as a "daara". These facilities support the street children known as talibés.



UN SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- In **Thailand**, volunteers helped provide meals for kids at two public schools.
- In **China**, volunteers visited a centre for the elderly, and helped distribute meals and keep the 500 residents company. Unfortunately, the elderly at the centre don't see their families often, so it helps to have visits from young people.



UN SDG 4: Quality Education

Our Childcare & Community volunteers ran various summer camps to give kids a safe space to learn and play while away from school. The camps blended sports, arts and crafts, educational games, and volunteers helped teach literacy, numeracy, and basic English.

- In **Cambodia** and **Nepal**, kids from three schools learned basic English.
- In **China**, we planned and ran a camp for 35 children. Our activities focused on general learning, improving basic computer skills, and swimming.
- In **Jamaica**, high schoolers helped run a camp for 21 children ages 2-6 years. We focused on sensory learning for numbers, letters, and simple words; arts and crafts, and outdoor play.
- In **Peru**, our volunteers learned about MONET (Orientation and Early Stimulation Modules), and successfully worked through it with groups of 10 to 25 children.
- In the **Philippines**, high school students worked with hundreds of kindergarten and Grade 1 students to support their education.
- Teenage volunteers in **Senegal** helped street children (talibés) improve their reading and writing skills, and taught basic English and French.

Country highlight

PHILIPPINES

We met a local teacher with an incredible passion for her work. Based at an underprivileged school, she used a lot of her personal funds to turn her kindergarten classroom into a literacy-rich and visual environment where kids could learn. However, she was advised in 2019 that she'd be moved to a different classroom to teach a higher grade. While she was happy to teach children at any level, she was sad that she couldn't afford to personally upgrade her new classroom like she did previously.

Our Childcare & Community HSS volunteers saw this as a call to encourage and reward a hard-working teacher. Her new classroom was an abandoned room which required upgrading, and Projects Abroad also provided wall fans and art work for the walls. This made the teacher happy and motivated her to do her best with her new class at the end of the summer!

In addition to teaching, our high school volunteers worked to improve learning environments:

- In **Cambodia**, volunteers repainted classrooms and other facilities at two primary schools.
- In **Fiji**, we painted numbers and the alphabet on walls at two Early Childhood Development Centres to create a more literacy-rich environment.
- In **Jamaica**, volunteers painted classrooms at two schools.
- In **Madagascar**, high schoolers repaired school furniture, a school's game courts, sporting equipment, and painted a library at two schools.
- In **Nepal**, we built walls for two classrooms at a school damaged by the 2015 earthquakes, and painted a mural.
- In **Peru**, a group of teenagers created a literacy rich environment by painting educational games on floors, painting playgrounds, and making floor pillows for comfortable reading sessions.
- In **Senegal**, we built a classroom for talibés from a daara in a very poor area.
- In **Sri Lanka**, volunteers teamed up to create a multi-sensory garden at an Early Childhood Development Centre, and paint a mural.

"I've watched my group grow from some being quiet and reserved to bold and energetic. They were very willing to learn and explore new ideas. They were loved not only by the children at the camp but also by the community in which they worked. The team came together which made the project flow smoothly as the team was highly motivated to work together. Everyone contributed to the success of the holiday camp, and each high school student showed personal growth and an improvement in their childcare and teaching skills."

High School Special Supervisor in Jamaica



UN SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

In 2019, our teenage volunteers worked together to:

- Run hygiene awareness sessions in **Jamaica, Nepal** and **South Africa**.
- Present interactive hygiene workshops with nearly 700 children and teenagers in **Tanzania**.
- Participated in handwashing sessions with young kids in the **Philippines**.



MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH VOLUNTEERS



UN SDG 3: Good Health & Well-Being

One of the main goals of our Medical and Public Health High School Specials is to promote good health and well-being within underprivileged communities. Our community healthcare outreaches typically provide:

- Blood pressure tests
- Blood sugar tests
- BMI calculation
- Rapid HIV testing
- Nutrition assessments

While public health education centres around raising awareness of:

- The importance of maintaining oral health and washing hands regularly.
- How to prevent non-communicable diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure, as well as mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria.

In 2019, our volunteers helped provide these basic services in multiple countries, including:

- 5 oral health outreaches and 4 diabetes testing campaigns in **Argentina**.
- 9 mobile health clinics and 1 health fair in **Belize**.
- 3 public health outreaches in **Cambodia**.
- 89 community healthcare outreaches in **Ghana**.
- 19 community healthcare outreaches in **Kenya**.
- 10 community healthcare outreaches in **Mexico**.
- 6 community healthcare outreaches in **Mongolia**.
- 25 health awareness events in **Nepal**.
- 15 community healthcare outreaches in **Peru**.
- 12 community healthcare outreaches and public health awareness events in the **Philippines**.
- 4 community healthcare outreaches in **Sri Lanka**.
- 16 community healthcare outreaches in **Tanzania**.

In several countries, our volunteers also toured local hospitals and healthcare facilities to shadow and learn from doctors. In Mongolia, for example, they observed various surgeries first-hand, went along on ambulance rides, and witnessed trauma cases, births, and general medicine practices!



"I was very impressed by the teenagers who wanted to become doctors. They tried to learn as much as possible from us. Most were very energetic, used their initiative, and learnt all the practical skills that we taught them during medical outreaches."

**High School Special
Supervisor in Mongolia**

Case study

HEALTHCARE IN SCHOOLS

In the **Philippines**, our teenage medical volunteers provided support with vision checks for 430 students and basic health checks for 246 adults in just three community healthcare outreaches! These numbers are significant because these checks were conducted at schools where students and teachers haven't been able to get themselves screened. These public schools don't have school nurses, or first aid training. In addition to screenings, Projects Abroad also donated basic first aid kits.

Case study

MALARIA

On our Medicine High School Special in **Ghana**, six volunteers and their project supervisors participated in a healthcare outreach at a school in Cape Coast. This took place after they gave a talk about malaria and cholera.

During their outreach, our volunteers and staff checked vital signs, screened for malaria and hepatitis, and treated minor wounds and skin infections. The group then decided to go around the school, and came across a child who was very weak, pale, and vomiting behind the school. The child was cleaned up, and we proceeded to test him for malaria. The result was positive.

Given his weakened state, he needed urgent clinical care. The school contacted his mother, and our group accompanied the family to a healthcare facility where he got the treatment he needed!

Case study

SUPPORTING THE ELDERLY

In **Jamaica**, our Childcare & Community volunteers regularly participate in a feeding programme for the elderly. After finishing work at a summer camp for local kids, our volunteers visited the elderly in the afternoons, bringing meals and companionship.

Projects Abroad heard about one elderly member of the community who was in great need of help. In addition to living in poor conditions, Ms. Jones (72) suffers from heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. As such, she takes a lot of medication which requires her to eat and drink lots of fluids.

Our volunteers visited her, bringing a food package with them. She was observed sitting outside her home, with a very sad demeanour. Upon seeing the volunteers, her expression lightened up and she started to smile before telling the volunteers that, "I've had nothing to eat since yesterday, and I prayed that God would send someone and see, he answered my prayer and sent you young people."

Our volunteers were touched, and happy that they were able to provide something for her to eat and drink. It was a pivotal experience for most volunteers as it caused them to truly reflect on their own situation and express gratitude for the things they took for granted prior to travelling to Jamaica. Before leaving, Ms. Jones thanked the volunteers again for the food and companionship, and said, "It really means a lot to me."



PRESERVING CULTURES AND SUPPORTING CONSERVATION EFFORTS



UN SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities

In **Peru**, high school students working at the Archaeology Project helped to:

- Protect and safeguard the Sacsayhuaman complex in the Suchana sector by maintaining 77 linear metres of an Inca water channel and 30 linear metres of Inca wall (including four niches).
- Contribute to ancient Inca research by cleaning and registering almost 30 Incan (c.1427 - c.1532) and Moche (c.100 - c.700 AD) ceramic artifacts. They also assisted in the excavation of 12 square metres at the Onoqochayoq site and the extraction of almost 2.5kgs of ceramic fragments which we believe to belong to the Imperial Inca period (c.1427 - c.1532).

One of our volunteers enjoyed her project so much that a few days after she completed the programme, she returned to visit the excavation site at Onoqochayoq with her parents. After introducing the staff and other volunteers, she gave her parents an explanation of the current excavation works being undertaken at the site. Her parents were impressed with the project and with the service that their daughter received during her time with Projects Abroad in Cusco!



UN SDG 12: Responsible Production and Consumption

In 2019, teenage volunteers on Conservation & Environment Projects helped ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns by:

- In **Kenya**, volunteers joined in the clean-up of the fragile wetland ecosystem of Lake Elementaita, and planted 3,000 trees. They also build 24 eco-stoves for the locals, which helps cut down on the amount of wood people burn.
- In **Madagascar**, teenagers worked together to build 10 eco stoves for 10 families, and created a vegetable garden for a community.
- In **Fiji**, volunteers built and planted a vegetable garden that has benefited approximately 200 students at a local school.
- In the **Philippines**, volunteers taught children how to reuse and repurpose waste.



UN SDG 13: Climate Action

In the process of tackling a serious subject like climate change, our teenage volunteers had to learn and develop new skills, such as:

- How to manage a plant nursery, and how the tree planting process works.
- How to properly clear land and manage invasive plant species.
- How to do a census for plants and animals.

Armed with these skills, our Conservation & Environment staff and volunteers took urgent action to combat climate change and its impact in the following ways in 2019:

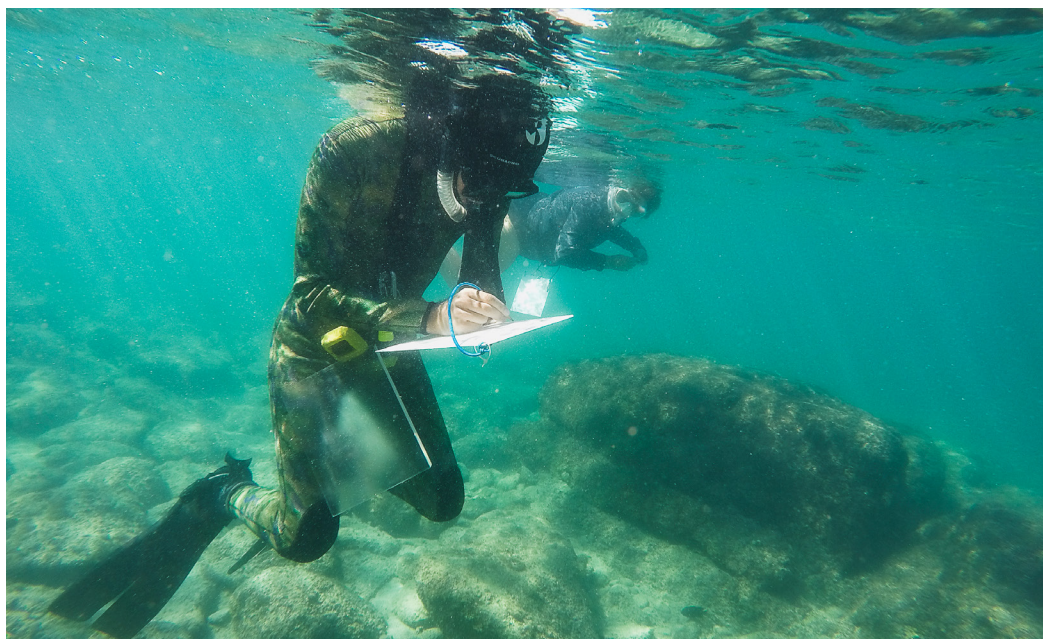
- In **Costa Rica**, we planted 700 trees in the Barra Honda National Park.
- In **Madagascar**, volunteers helped to:
 - Maintain a tree nursery
 - Plant 1,080 seedlings
 - Remove invasive plants
 - Clean a 500 square metre area
 - Dug 400 holes to plant trees
 - Collect data for vegetation and medicinal plants
 - Do censuses for birds, lemurs, amphibians, and reptiles
 - Maintain paths in the forests
- In **Thailand**, teenagers planted 15 trees in order to protect the coastline of Klong Prasong from further erosion.



UN SDG 14: Life below Water

Many of our teenage Conservation & Environment volunteers were also hard at work on the coast and in our oceans.

- Helped build an incubation area for turtles' eggs, collected data for a bird census, and helped to clean beaches in **Mexico**.
- Gathered a considerable amount of data on coral reef bleaching from approximately 196 survey dives (3,920 individual surveys) in **Thailand**. The data was given to the University of Queensland to be part of a global database.





UN SDG 15: Life on Land

A significant part of our conservation efforts focus on how we can:

- Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of ecosystems on land
- Responsibly manage forests
- Fight desertification
- Stop and reverse degradation
- Stem the loss of biodiversity

In 2019, our teenage volunteers become part of these efforts by:

- Conducting biodiversity surveys in **Botswana**. The data collected will support an application for the legal protection of a reserve. Our volunteers also helped build a new dam (water hole) in a rocky outcrop. In an effort to reduce the carbon offset, the dam was constructed using only manual labour.
- Monitoring butterfly populations in **Costa Rica**. We use the butterflies as a bio-indicator for climate investigation.
- Doing a range of conservation activities in **Kenya**, including:
 - 12 giraffe surveys in Soysambu Conservancy
 - 6 field expeditions to monitor carnivores and a pride of lions
 - Removing 11 snares set by poachers
 - Monitoring over 400 species of birds
 - Over 24 wetland and terrestrial surveys



UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

- In **Argentina**, our young volunteers learnt about the military dictatorship that took place in the 1970's and 80's, and the current human rights situation. After this, they worked together to promote human rights awareness in local communities through workshops and outreaches.
- In **China**, high school students developed skills like public speaking, research, and debating. They also visited various law firms where they learnt about China's legal and judicial system, including:
 - Corporate law
 - Intellectual property law
 - Labour law
 - Industries of consultancy
 - E-commerce
 - Offline business
- In **Ghana**, our volunteers benefited from educational sessions at various national organisations. These organisations are responsible for promoting and protecting human rights. Later, their main task was to increase the public's knowledge of women and child's rights within impoverished areas. They also covered topics like:
 - Domestic violence
 - Child marriage
 - Patient rights and responsibilities
- In **South Africa**, young volunteers participated in a moot court. These are highly interactive simulated court and arbitration proceedings, which meant students got practice drafting court or case documents and engaging in oral arguments.

"It was genuinely an amazing experience to be there with the volunteers and see them enjoy every single moment of being in Kenya. From working at the hospital, to the medical outreaches, to going for the safaris; it was phenomenal to watch them learn, grow, meet new people, have fun and most of all share their lives and time with the children and generally the people they met. It is for me, an unforgettable experience."

**HSS Supervisor
in Kenya**



Project highlight

HUMAN RIGHTS

During the Human Rights Quiz session in Ghana, a teacher informed the team that they learned a lot about their rights and responsibilities as patients. A student said, "Anytime I go to the hospital I'm afraid to ask questions, but now I know I can ask questions because it's my right".



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Another year has come to an end. With that, we look back on what we achieved, especially in how we fulfilled the UN SDGs and our own goals. We couldn't have done it without the intense commitment and collaboration shown by our staff and the thousands of volunteers who joined us in 2019. We'd also like to thank our host families, who consistently go above and beyond to provide a home away from home for travellers, and our project partners. None of this would be possible without you.

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