

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Fiji



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VOLUNTEER STORIES

Alex expresses his love for Fiji

“Bula” everyone! Here’s a brief story about my experience. I chose to be a volunteer because I love to travel but I don’t like to be a tourist. Volunteering gives me the opportunity to live the “real” Fijian life while making a positive impact on people’s lives.

Volunteering in an educational capacity allows me to have these experiences while meeting a huge variety of people. I chose Fiji because it is nice and close to Australia. I aim to experience as many different cultures as possible, and Fiji has a unique culture that is significantly different to what I am used to.

My experience staying with a host family was fantastic as Ollie was incredibly accommodating and helpful. I couldn’t have asked for a better place to stay or person to stay with. From my overall experience, I have learnt to use my own initiative and be confident in implementing programs at school.

My best experience so far was when I spent a day driving up to the highlands and then white water rafting for 3 hours with another volunteer, Amanda. It was an incredible experience and a beautiful day as I got to meet some really interesting people and go to some amazing places.

My simple advice to future volunteers would be to feel confident right from the start; I found that little help was offered at the school in terms of advice, planning and information. However, I was allowed to create and follow my own lesson plans.



Alex (left) with a local student

Alex Carpenter (Australia)
Teaching Project

Mandela Day in Fiji



Lautoka Volunteer gives out food items to the needy

Mandela Day was celebrated to the fullest by Projects Abroad Fiji.

As part of the Projects Abroad #SpreadMadibaMagic campaign, volunteers and staff dedicated 67 minutes to helping the community. These 67 minutes represented the 67 years that Nelson Mandela fought for the freedom of his country from the oppressive apartheid regime.

Project Coordinator, Ms Mere Gaunavou, shared how “10 volunteers gave food hampers to 19 residents of Navakai Hart in Nadi, who were very excited to receive these kind donations.”

“The food hampers consisted of potatoes, tuna, rice, flour, salad, oil and other basic food items. We wanted to do something special on Mandela Day but also meaningful since he was a man of his people,” she added.

In addition, 7 volunteers based in Lautoka gave food hampers to the Sandalwood Hart. Project Coordinator, Mr Maika Raisilisili, felt that “it was a learning process for the volunteers as they became aware of Housing Assistance Relief Trusts existing in Fiji. They haven’t seen that part of Fiji before.”

The shark conservation volunteers based in Pacific Harbour held a workshop on environmental awareness for the children and staff of the Multi-Cultural School. This was followed by a beach clean-up where the team collected over 20 bags of trash.



Shark Conservation volunteers plays with students.

Two Week Special project: Young volunteers experience the village lifestyle



First 2 weeks Special Volunteers arrive at Yako Village

Eleven volunteers between the ages of 16 and 19 years old came to Fiji to take part in the Projects Abroad Two Week Special project, designed to help the villagers of Yako.

The volunteers experienced the everyday life of the locals and helped the villagers on a grass roots level.

Project Coordinator, Ms Irene Lily, was impressed with how the volunteers got stuck in. “The children are very keen to do the fun activities provided by the volunteers and the number of children attending the programme

almost doubled within the first two days,” she explained.

Projects Abroad volunteer, Ms Vanessa Chow from Hong Kong, expressed her feelings towards the children of Yako village: “When I stepped into the classroom, all I could see were these energetic excited faces from the children who are always eager to learn. I guess that is what keeps me going every day,” she shared.

“Apart from the children, everyone has been very supportive and friendly, especially our coordinator and the villagers. I never felt like I was away from home because of the way our host parents and family have treated us,” she added.

Ms Irene Lily describes how “the playgroup students have learnt so much already from the volunteers. We have repainted the village community hall for meetings and created a colourful and vibrant section for the playgroup to use,” she enthused.

Projects Abroad volunteer, Ms Charlene Chen, says she was happy to be made to feel at home. “I expected to feel very homesick during my stay in Fiji but I was made to feel very welcome and the entire experience was worthwhile and meaningful,” she shared.

“Everyone was delighted to have us stay at Yako village. The cultural experience was unforgettable and I will miss the villagers,” she added.



Emma teaches alphabets and numbers to the children

Projects Abroad Involves in Bula Festival: Dirty Day

Projects Abroad Fiji was involved in one of Fiji's biggest festival, the Bula Festival 2014. Projects Abroad conducted free health checks for the general public and prepared a fun day with free fun activities & prizes for the children of Nadi. We ended the week long festival with an awesome float made by the Shark Conservation volunteers and Nadi volunteers.



A Word from the Editor



It's all about "Bula" this month. Projects Abroad Fiji was involved in one of the biggest festivals in Fiji, called the BULA Festival. We were excited to be part of this charitable festival and to give back even more to the community. Other highlights include our Two Week Special volunteers who have just left the country and have done a tremendous job at Yako village. Read on to find out what they got up to. We would also like to acknowledge all our volunteers across different projects that have become part of the Fiji family. We really appreciate all of your hard work.



We'd also like to kindly remind all Fiji volunteers that 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 to come join us too.

Please read on to find out more about our Two Week Special project, our Nelson Mandela Day event and our volunteer stories :-)



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