

High
School
Specials

Impact Report 2016

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Introduction

Between June and August 2016, over 1,600 volunteers from 48 different countries travelled across the world to take part in our High School Special programmes.

These are specifically designed for 16-19 year olds, and offer an eye-opening travel and cultural experience while working to support local communities in the developing world.

The programmes cover a wide range of activities, from Conservation to Medicine to Building, and many more in-between. This ensures that our High School Special volunteers have the chance to do something that really interests them, while learning new skills and, most importantly, putting their energy and optimism into making a constructive difference where it's needed the most.

Each High School Special group worked towards achieving a specific goal during their time abroad, whether it was renovating a building or meeting one of our Care objectives – so that long after they leave, the community will continue to benefit.

From interviewing local tradesmen in rural villages in North-Eastern Romania, to mapping “chulpa” burial chambers in Peru, and visiting iconic landmarks such as Angkor Wat and Machu Picchu, volunteers taking part in High School Specials not only benefit local communities, but also get the opportunity to expand their horizons through truly immersive cultural experiences.

These projects run over a short period – two or four weeks. The results of our 2016 High School Specials show the tremendous difference that can be accomplished when we all work together, no matter how short the time.

JENNY PUYO

Head of Programme Development



Our Social Impact

Care & Community

In 2016, 670 volunteers participated in our Care & Community projects which allowed more than 2,900 children to directly benefit from our Care activities, across 15 countries.

Through these projects, High School Special volunteer groups directly contribute towards key goals from our Care and Teaching Programmes:



Improve the Learning Environment:

- More than 50 classrooms and community centres were repaired, renovated and decorated by our volunteers.
- Our groups painted more than 50 educational murals as visual aids to education.

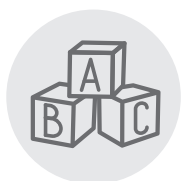


Raise Awareness of Healthy Living and the Environment:

- 9 vegetable gardens and gardens made from recycled materials were created to benefit partner placements as a sustainable food source, for recreation or to build life skills.
- Over 450 community members participated in awareness campaigns led by volunteers around environment and conservation efforts covering topics such as the importance of recycling and sustainable fishing.

"We really appreciate the vegetable garden. It's working well and we've already started eating the little tomatoes! We'll need to buy less so save more. The soap volunteers taught us to make in a workshop has saved us a lot as well. I've already bought ingredients to make more."

– SISTER JOYCELINE
from Centre Orphelinat La Renaissance, partner in Togo



Increase Literacy:

- Libraries and bookshelves were built for schools in Togo and Ghana to create a literacy-rich environment.



Improve Hygiene:

- A toilet block was constructed to benefit over 100 students in the Likii Slums in Kenya.
- Volunteers built a basin to provide running water for 90 children at a daycare centre in Cambodia where the children previously had no place to wash their hands. The installation of the basin was accompanied by lessons in good hygiene practices such as proper hand-washing and tooth-brushing techniques.

"Another amazing highlight was when the principal said that she is so happy about the High School Special group because they help with literacy and maths classes and they could see such a big change in the children's progress."

– ASHWIN
Projects Abroad Care Coordinator in South Africa



Promote Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Improve Stimulation:

- Volunteers in Fiji took part in ECD Week, an event involving kindergartens from all across the country. Our volunteers played an important role supervising and stimulating the children targeting the development of motor, cognitive and social skills. The main purpose of the week was to focus on the child's progress and share ECD tips and information with their families.

Among these initiatives, we also ran a number of feeding programmes that benefited over 500 community members across 4 destinations, including 350 homeless people in Argentina.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

During their Care & Community placement in Kenya, volunteers constructed a cowshed, a calf pen and feed store. This cowshed will make a huge difference in the lives of those at the Huruma Hospice, which cares for elderly and terminally ill patients. The cost of purchasing milk on a daily basis was quickly adding up. By installing this new cowshed, the hospice has been able to more than triple the number of cows they own, thus allowing them to provide additional milk to supplement their patients' diets. Furthermore, the cow manure is now used to fertilise their crops on the hospice farm, which will help to increase food yields. A small yet sustainable project that would not have been possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers!

Medicine & Healthcare

Volunteers on our Medicine & Healthcare and Public Health programmes worked towards our Medical Programme goals, to improve access to basic healthcare for disadvantaged groups.



- We ran 145 medical outreaches (including awareness campaigns and basic health care treatment) in 9 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. These outreaches reached up to 8,000 community members, primarily from rural communities that have very limited access to healthcare facilities due to remoteness or financial constraints.
- The main topics covered during our awareness campaigns were non-communicable diseases, nutrition, sexual health and mosquito-borne diseases.
- First Aid training and medical workshops led by local specialists gave our volunteers the tools to actively contribute towards these outreach days.

Building

FRESH START FOR JAMAICAN FAMILIES

Our volunteers took part in a number of different small projects to help make a difference in the lives of local families. An interior bathroom was built for a single mother of 12 – prior to this, family members including teenage girls had to take their baths outside in the open. A house was also completed for a single father of four, whose family had all been sharing one room in another family's roofless home. The new two-bedroom house allowed the family their own space, with separate sleeping arrangements for the boys and girls. Finally, a bathroom and kitchen were built for an elderly woman who lived in a single room without these amenities. Brick by brick, our volunteers made a positive impact in a big way!

Law & Human Rights

VOLUNTEERS TACKLE HIGH COST OF PUBLIC SERVICES

During their Law & Human Rights High School Special in Argentina, one of the volunteers' main focuses was the high cost increase of public services, referred to as the "tarifazo" problem. Volunteers designed and conducted interviews, gathered and analysed data from respondents, and presented proposed solutions to the problem. They also took part in a public awareness campaign against the tariff hikes for basic necessities such as water and electricity.

"No words can do justice to accurately describe the eye and mind opening things I experienced during my two short weeks in Córdoba. This project has instilled goals in me to further my education in international affairs and social work so that I may continue to expand the knowledge that I gained during this incredible trip. Every moment and person I met had a large impact on me and none of them will be forgotten."

– DANIELLE LOPEZ CECETAITE
Law & Human Rights volunteer in Argentina

Our Environmental Impact

In the short 3 months that our Conservation & Environment High School Special groups were in the field, they were able to:



- Plant 1,500 trees and clean 3 km of hiking trails in Costa Rica.
- Help anti-poaching efforts in Kenya by clearing snares and other traps from approximately 1,000 acres of a conservancy.
- Collect over 290 kg of rubbish during clean-ups in Mexico and Belize.
- Assist a local fishermen cooperative in Belize with the planting of seaweed as an economic and sustainable alternative to fishing.
- Build a dam wall in Botswana to catch scarce summer rains when they arrive.
- Find 5 new bird species for our reserve, as well as collect and relocate over 1,000 freshwater turtle eggs to our artificial beaches in Peru to ensure their survival and preventing them from being poached for food. This was a significant contribution to the 10,000 turtles that we've already been able to release by working with the Peruvian government since 2005.



Conservation & Environment High School Special groups
planted 1,500 trees and collected over 290 kg of rubbish
during clean-ups.

Our Economic Impact

Our High School Special volunteers didn't only make a direct contribution through their project work. They also made a significant contribution to some of the poorest and most economically underdeveloped areas in their destination countries simply through living and working in the local communities.



Between June and August 2016, our High School Special programmes:

- Created employment for over 90 new seasonal local staff.
- Supplemented the incomes of more than 70 different host families.
- Supported business and income for hundreds of local enterprises, who benefitted from the purchases made by our volunteers during their stay including: hotels, restaurants, drivers, translators, guides, market sellers, and many more.

Looking Back

Alice Bowman first volunteered with Projects Abroad when she was 17 for four weeks on our High School Special Care & Community project in Cambodia in July 2015. In a country where access to disability care is limited, Alice worked at a local care home, with the rest of the group, spending much of her time looking after local residents, starting a vegetable garden, and improving the sensory room designed to provide a more stimulating environment for the inhabitants of the home. Following her trip, for her 18th birthday, Alice generously asked for donations in lieu of gifts to further her goals.

For these efforts on her Care project, Alice won the Volunteering category at the Young Scot Awards 2016 which celebrate the remarkable achievements of Scotland's youth in twelve different categories, ranging from sport to excellence in education.

Alice has recently returned to Cambodia with Projects Abroad, this time for a stay of eight months, working at the same centre. Ultimately, she hopes to create a long-lasting positive impact for the home and the people they care for.

Thanks Alice!

During Summer 2016, Projects Abroad High School Specials:

Led Care activities for
more than 2,900 children

Repaired and renovated
more than 50 rooms

Ran 145 medical outreaches
benefiting 8,000 community members

Planted more than 1,500 trees

Collected over 290 kg of trash

Saved more than
1,000 freshwater turtle eggs

Created employment for
90 local seasonal staff

We believe a more compassionate world begins with connecting cultures. By exploring and learning from each other we will create a generation of global-minded leaders.