



May Edition 2014

BULA NEWS

## May Newsletter Draft 2014

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## Editor's Comments

We welcome you to the month of May. We are already approaching the middle of 2014 and more volunteers have arrived to become part of our island and culture. They all leave a piece of themselves behind whether it is in our children's hearts, our respective projects or with anyone they have met during their stay. We truly appreciate your love and your assistance in helping Fiji grow.

A kind reminder to all of our Fiji volunteers, we would like to hear from you so please send us your photos, videos, articles, briefs or anything to tell us about your time with us and we will share it with the world. It is thanks to your experiences that others are inspired.

Please read on to find out more about our projects, our project day of the month and our photo competition winner for May. Enjoy our updates and be sure to send us your own update for the world to see.

Here's wishing you all a successful month!

Tagi Koroivuki

Communications Officer

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## Country Director



Howdy Volunteers!!

Volunteers will sometimes hear me say, is:

‘We ourselves know that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.’

Each day when I think about the depths of these words, I am inspired to continue with the vitally important work we do. It gives me the courage to face all challenges head on and herenot let them hinder our efforts.

This month, we celebrated Project Abroad Fiji’s 5th Anniversary. I have only been in the role of Country Director since November 2013 but, in that time, I have seen this destination grow from strength to strength.

These past six months have gone by so quickly for me. Now I understand how time flies for the volunteers when they are here. Often one month seems more like one week! As our projects are running all year round, the volunteers sometimes don’t get to see the fruits of their labor and may not realize just how important their contribution has been both on a local and a global scale.

As our number of volunteers increases each month, I feel excited to meet all of the future volunteers who never fail to impress me with their unparalleled commitment to our efforts and initiatives.

I am very much looking forward to seeing what the next 5 years has to offer and will achieve.

“We will move forward, we will move upward, and yes, we will move onwards.”

Dan Quayle

(Note: I don’t normally like to quote politicians but this one is fitting!)

So finally this month, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the staff and volunteers, past and present, which have enabled Projects Abroad to have had such a successful 5 years in Fiji.

Until next month’s issue!

☺ + ♥ + :)

Ingrid





## Project Update by Karishma Nandan

This month has been an amazing rollercoaster ride for all of our staff and volunteers alike. Our projects have been running at full speed as our peak period approaches. We have been blessed with incredible volunteers who are dedicated and passionate about the work they do, whether it be with children, adults or animals. Our volunteers are taking the initiative to improve on lesson plans, while adding to the daily curriculums in their classroom.

Our Teaching and Care Projects have had a wonderful month with all of our volunteers working with zest and energy at the Holiday School. There was also the additional opportunity for the children to have PEMAC volunteers dedicated to planning their outdoor activities.

This was the first time that Projects Abroad Fiji held a Holiday School in two locations, and the response from the children in Lautoka was phenomenal. The children of Lautoka Central Primary School had such a great time learning and playing with our volunteers. Not ones to be outshined, the Namaka Public School in Nadi also had a wonderful time with our volunteers. We ended the Holiday School on a very positive note.

Our Animal Care Project is moving locations and our volunteers are now assisting with the packing, along with making sure that the animals are receiving their daily share of cuddles.

May has been an exciting month and the Project Team in Nadi is looking forward to bringing you more great updates over the coming months.



By Maika Rasilisili

## PEMAC – Physical Education Music & Arts and Craft

Projects Abroad has started to stock up on PEMAC project materials. This includes soccer balls, volleyballs, baseballs, tennis balls and other basic sporting equipment. We believe that equipping volunteers will ensure a worthwhile experience in their placements, as well as give Care and Teaching volunteers the opportunity to put this equipment to good use in general. We are also grateful to Frederik Grille and Wouter Van-Toorn for their kind donations, which have helped a lot; especially with the sports lessons at the Holiday School this month.

### Holiday School Sports

Projects Abroad currently has 4 Sports volunteers in the country. James David from Australia, Matthew Carrington from England, Charlotte Stamer and Jonas Goetz from Germany. All four volunteers had fun at Holiday School, teaching lessons such as soccer, rugby, volleyball and other fun games like skipping. The school term, which starts this week, will see the start of the Rugby 15's season in high schools and athletics preparations in primary schools. Projects Abroad looks forward to making a difference with PEMAC; especially given the encouraging number of volunteers arriving into Fiji.



## Projects Abroad Signs MOU with Medical Centre

The Sarada Medical Centre, Viseisei Sai Health and the Diagnostic Specialists Medical Centre, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Projects Abroad Fiji to empower proactive health programs on the island.

Projects Abroad encourages people from all over the world to volunteer for worthwhile work in developing countries, in the hope that this will, in time, become the norm.

Rosan Lal, who is our Medical & Health Consultant as well as the Executive Director of our partner projects, Action for Children and the Aged Trust Fiji, said that it is imperative to get as many hands as possible on board to fight the Non-Communicable Disease crisis that Fiji faces. Government resources are currently heavily burdened as deaths and disabilities due to non-communicable diseases are the biggest health concern in Fiji.

To quote statistics from the Ministry of Health, around 11 people die daily due to NCD related complications like heart disease, cancer, and cerebrovascular injuries. Two thirds of all deaths in Fiji are NCD related and 82% of all NCD related deaths are at an early age.

“The social and economic burdens due to non-communicable diseases are huge and continue to rise; with no major signs of improvement in health attitudes and behaviors amongst the general population,” said Rosan.

As well as providing their professional expertise, Projects Abroad volunteers will also be involved in conducting attitude and behavior surveys for public and private healthcare providers, analyzing and presenting outcomes to help improve the concept of wellness in Fiji.

The Projects Abroad team will also be conducting holistic health empowerment programs in villages to address the gap in nutritional knowledge, start low-maintenance super food gardens for families, encourage villagers to be physically active and foster a positive environment.

Rama Krishna Mission Secretary, Swami Tadananda, said that the Sarada Medical Centre is thankful for the partnership, which will provide them with valuable human resources.

“The Medical Centre, to date, has seen over 10,000 patients and it provides medical service to the remote populations and the poorer communities in the West,” said Swamiji.



**(L-R) Swamiji, Project Manager Sophie Birtwistle**



Meet our Bula Face for May Project Coordinator Mere Gaunavou who handles Care and Community Project for Projects Abroad Fiji.

**Name:** Mere Gaunavou

**Nickname:** Meme G, MG, Meme

**Age:** Young at heart...

**Birthplace:** Nausori Maternity

**Relationship Status:** Single mother



**How would you describe yourself?** Happy and spontaneous!!! You can hear me before you see me :0)!

**Favorite food and drink?** A \$1.00 meal and fresh lemon juice

**Favorite color? Why?** Green because it represents nature and life

**What is your most attractive feature?** - Unique sense of humor.

**How long have you worked with Projects Abroad?** Two and a half years

**What were your best achievements while working with Projects Abroad?**

Turning Dratabu Village into a worthwhile community project and being the first village to have a Playgroup Center (0 to 4 years old). We now use Dratabu Village for our Dietitian Project.

**What do you enjoy about your work? Why?** I'm not only in the office but I'm more hands on with volunteers. I love it. Talking and listening to them makes me feel like I'm on a jet plane and travelling the rest of the world in one day. It is interesting to learn about different cultures and the different ways we think and speak. And volunteering is the one thing that brought them together in Fiji. The best gift God ever blessed Fiji with.

**What would be your guilty pleasure?** Seeing Mr P sad and hosting family and friends.

**Where do you see yourself in ten years from now?** Country Director in Fiji or another region

**Favorite quote?** Don't be shy, just do IT!



## Monthly Photo Competition Winner

The winner for May's Photo Competition goes to Ms. Charlotte Stamer who was a former sports volunteer of Projects Abroad Fiji. She has recently left the project and had submitted this awesome photo which depicts the essence of volunteerism and the multi-cultural friendship in Fiji. You will be truly missed Charly.

**Here's a short description about the photo from Charlotte herself:** This photo was taken at Arya Samaj Primary School in Nadi during a Sports lesson with my lovely kids from year 2. I'm really grateful that I got the chance to work with them and I had such a great time. A big Vinaka to Projects Abroad for making this wonderful experience possible.





## Projects Abroad Fiji Marks 5 Years in Fiji

Projects Abroad Fiji celebrated their 5 years in Fiji earlier this month. Projects Abroad was established in 2009 with a few staff and a small office, in Nadi. Today, Projects Abroad Fiji has seven successful running projects within the country. All in all, it has become a success throughout the years and has attracted over 400 volunteers into Fiji annually. The Deputy Director, Mr Prashneel Goundar expressed his gratitude towards the hardworking team. "We have achieved a lot and grown immensely within our 5 years of operations in Fiji and it has been hugely due to the perseverance of the whole Fiji team. Our dedicated staffs have been motivated and each month set up new projects and placements," he shared.

