

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Ghana 



Laurentian Nursing student attending to an aged man in a small mining community in the Ashanti Region of Ghana

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VOLUNTEER STORY

Volunteer Julien Mattys learns to use his hands to make a difference

Nineteen year old Belgian, Julien Mattys, travelled to Ghana to volunteer at our farming project in the east of the country. Normally referred to as The Hills, this area is renowned for its lush scenery and a spectacular undulating landscape that offers rich farming opportunities. However, poverty is still one of the challenges facing many people who live there.

Julien has always wanted to travel to an African country and, true to his hopes, Ghana is a country that enjoys stability and welcomes all foreigners. He also loved volunteering.

Back home in Belgium, Julien has never worked with his hands and decided, therefore, to choose farming from the array of volunteering opportunities that Projects Abroad has to offer. "I was a person who never worked with my hands so I decided to give this a try," he said.

The farm has pigs, guinea pigs and rabbits. It also produces maize and cassava. "There's a lot of work to do. I take care of the plants and animals. We have to clean the pigs and feed them every day and also feed the rabbits and guinea pigs," he explained.

The other unique component of the farming project is the weekly community outreach. Julien recounted: "We go on outreaches to schools to talk about the importance of eating fruit and vegetables."

He is happy that he learnt how to use his hands to work and also thankful to the Farm Manager for teaching him.



"He taught me about plants and animals and I have gained a lot of knowledge from him."

For Julien, experiencing Africa has made him appreciate a different culture. "Africa is different from Europe, from the food to the way people behave on the streets." He is confident that this volunteer experience will be extremely useful for his résumé. He remarked: "I have matured after spending 6 months with Projects Abroad in Bolivia and then three months in Ghana."

"Discovering Africa and meeting local people has been very memorable. It is something I am proud of. If you've never been to Africa, it may be very shocking for you but don't be scared," he advised future volunteers.

Julien fell in love with the friendliness and hospitality of the Ghanaians. "I think Ghana is a beautiful country. I saw the most beautiful landscapes that I've ever seen," he added.

Projects Abroad hopes that stories like this will inspire others to continue making a difference overseas.

Highlights of the month

Laurentian Nursing Students volunteered in Kumasi

Nursing students from Laurentian University spent some valuable time volunteering in Kumasi. Along with their professor, they embarked on public health outreaches to communities in and around Kumasi. They screened patients' blood sugar levels and blood types, checked blood pressure and educated the community on sexual and reproductive health, with a focus on contraceptives.

Watch this [short video](#) of their community outreach.



University College Dublin (UCD) Veterinary Student Group provide animal care services in Kumasi

Courtney Scairpon, Cameron Keller, Gina Hoppe, Stephanie Abramczyk, Whitney Cockburn and James McHaffie from UCD in Ireland travelled to Kumasi to volunteer at our veterinary project. With the support of our staff, the volunteers embarked on several animal care outreaches in communities in and around Kumasi. They vaccinated animals as well as performed castrations on pigs and dogs. Stephanie, the group leader, was excited about the communities' increased interest and awareness in the work that they did. She is proud that each member of her group got their hands dirty and did a great job.



Accra volunteers paint New Life Orphanage

Volunteers in Accra painted the walls of New Life Orphanage to brighten the children's world and reflect how vibrant they are. The orphanage is a Projects Abroad placement where our care volunteers spend quality time with the children, help them with their homework and play with them. The volunteers also took the time to visit the children at the school run by the orphanage.



French volunteer donates to New Life Orphanage

Justine de Noirmont from Paris makes her third visit to Accra to volunteer at New Life Orphanage. The children had won her heart and she came back with a bag full of new clothes, which she distributed amongst everyone. Projects Abroad thanks Justine for showing these children so much love and generosity.



Volunteers make their mark for World Day Against Child Labour

Our Human Rights volunteers observed World Day Against Child Labour at a local school in the Old Fadama slum. They prepared presentations for the school children and shared important information on child labour. The volunteers interacted with the school children and explained instances where work done by children can be classified as child labour. After the interactive sessions, the volunteers presented posters with strong messages against child labour.



Volunteers at our building project started constructing a poultry house

Volunteers working at our building project focused their energies on building a poultry house at the newly relocated farm in The Hills. The Tore Eikland Foundation partnered with Projects Abroad to provide a not-for-profit poultry project in The Hills. The poultry farm is intended to provide an opportunity for underprivileged women in the community to earn money by selling eggs from the farm. The women will be expected to pay back the actual price of the eggs to the foundation but will keep the profits for themselves. The chickens that are reared for their meat will also be donated to orphanages when possible.



Farm project relocates to a bigger site

The Projects Abroad farm in The Hills relocated to a bigger site to provide enough space to grow crops as well as to rear livestock. Interested volunteers who would like to volunteer on this project will learn Ghanaian farming techniques and will teach school children about gardening and the importance of eating organic fruit and vegetables.

Click [here](#) for more information about the farming project and how to apply.

From the Editor

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It has felt like a long time since Africa hosted the World Cup four years ago in South Africa. Now the global soccer fiesta is in the south of another continent and the FIFA World Cup 2014 has so far kept us entertained with spectacular goals, fantastic players, shocking surprises and nail biting moments.

No one could have possibly predicted that the first goal of the tournament would be an own goal by the host nation, which is strongly considered by sports analysts as one of the favourites to lift the trophy.

Soccer fans in Africa seem to be united in support for the five participating African countries – Nigeria, Cameroon, Algeria, Ivory Coast and, the most inspiring team, the Ghana Black Stars. Unfortunately for Ghana, it lost against a country that they were too familiar with in previous World Cup finals - the United States.

Then came the nail biting and heart stopping thriller of a match between Germany and Ghana, which ended in a two all draw.

Prior to the match, the streets of Accra were quiet as many Ghanaians had little hope that their team would secure a win. Interestingly, many Westerners were visibly supporting the Black Stars. This included Projects Abroad volunteers, who gathered in Oxford Street in Accra to catch the game on giant screens.

"I go to Oxford Street to watch the Ghana matches because of the amazing atmosphere. You see people making noise, dancing and celebrating when Ghana scores a goal," says British volunteer Luke James, who works at Cantonment FC, the Projects Abroad soccer placement.

He expressed his support by stating that "if England isn't playing, then that's when I support Ghana." He was also confident that the German side was strong and they showed enormous promise of lifting the World Cup trophy in Brazil. He is happy to see some of the children he trains watching the World Cup because he believes that it will be a huge inspiration for them.

In the end, amidst controversies, Ghana could not qualify from the group stages. Sadly, no other African country made it to the quarter finals this time, which leaves the entire continent with another four years to nurture their world cup dreams.



**Volunteers cheering the Ghana Black Stars during the Ghana versus USA group match.
Ghana lost 2:1 to the USA**