

Case Study



Jindabyne Central School Service Trip

Project: Care & Community

Destination: Samoa

Group Leader: Heidi Shvetsoff

Total Group Size: 10 students, 4 teachers

Project Location: Apia



Intro

In May of 2016, Heidi, a teacher from Jindabyne Central School in the Snowy Mountains of NSW, approached Projects Abroad with an idea. She wanted to organise an enriching and educational international service trip that engaged her students in 3 main objectives.

- Global citizenship volunteer experience
- Intercultural understanding of diversity and difference
- Developing student leadership & building capacity

Just under 12 months later, in April of 2017, 10 students aged 16 - 17 and four teachers left the snowy school grounds behind for their service learning expedition to the island nation of Samoa.

Through ongoing liaison and communication, Projects Abroad and Jindabyne Central School developed a varied schedule of community volunteering work ranging from education and awareness campaigns for school children, to jungle regeneration efforts. These activities allowed high student engagement with local Samoans and involved a worthwhile contribution to those communities by immersing the Jindabyne students into life within a developing country.

Community Contribution

One issue that was highlighted to the team from Jindabyne Central School was alarmingly prevalent unhealthy food choices made by many Samoans. It was identified to the team that this health concern is contributing to long term problems such as diabetes and obesity in the villages. The students pitched in with Projects



Abroad's nutrition awareness programme and worked on a Health and Nutrition Camp alongside the American Peace Corp at a village outreach school holiday programme. This was a well-received nutrition promotion programme on healthy eating and living. It was crucial education in an area where the lack of understanding over the consequence of poor nutrition choices is prevalent. Equally memorable, the students were able to get involved in a sports day helping the Rugby Academy of Samoa to engage a group of local children in being active and building their skills in rugby.

When the students were ready to get their hands dirty, the Projects Abroad team in Samoa took them deep into the jungle, where the combined efforts saw over 500 native saplings planted in one morning. The students also had the chance to spend some time assisting with renovation efforts of a local school, where Heidi says they were so engaged that they kept on painting until they ran out of paint!



Relaxation Time

It wasn't all work and no play though, with students and teachers alike able to relax in the afternoons in the clear waters of Samoa's coastlines. Students were able to trek through close jungle teeming with wildlife and road trip to secret cave pools and majestic waterfalls, which exposed the students to the beauty of Samoa.



Many cultural activities were organised, from visiting traditional villages to observe local foods and customs, church attendance (on Easter Sunday) and traditional dinners, but by far the most popular was the Haka lessons, of which the boys were keen to practice well into the night. (Heidi says on next year's trip, there'll be a Haka ban after 10pm!)



Reflection

The team of teachers and students from Jindabyne Central School were thrilled with the outcome of their hard work in arranging the programme.

"All of our goals were achieved and the experience far exceeded our expectations. We can't fault the Projects Abroad team in any way. The team in Samoa made sure communication was open and checked with us on a daily

basis to ensure the itinerary was meeting our requirements. Our students stepped up to every challenge without a single complaint and they have mentioned that they will take life long memories home with them."

Discussions for the school's next trip are due to begin soon and more staff are considering joining the next trip.



Projects Abroad

Founded in 1992, Projects Abroad specialises in managing practical, safe and educational service travel opportunities for high school students. With full time staff on the ground in each of the 30 developing and emerging destination countries there is a genuine connection to the initiatives the students support and local knowledge which ensures a local flavour to the time overseas with cultural understanding and sensitivity.

Around 10,000 students from around the world participate in Projects Abroad programmes each year through both the individual project options and the stream of group programmes illustrated

in this document. Many schools partner with Projects Abroad to design programmes which offer a rich cultural and service content which benefits local initiatives, challenges the students and teaches them about the wider world.

Projects Abroad manages a highly varied range of programmes which includes education, childcare, disability care, conservation, construction and human rights among others. Short and long term goals are established for each initiative and students will contribute towards a bigger picture giving them a broader view of development and an understanding of where their efforts fit in.



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