



# newsletter

Island Kids  
Philippines 

## 2021/4

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Dear Friends of Island Kids Philippines

While it is getting cooler here, Thomas Kellenberger marches South towards a warmer climate. He already covered over one thousand three hundred kilometers and gathered many precious experiences along the way.

More experience and knowledge are the purpose of two projects offering numerous courses in further education and schooling. On the one hand our staff are attending them, on the other hand children, parents, teachers, government workers and policemen and policewomen are welcomed to participate as well.

Rosalinda, Rica Mae, Guyn, Carmena and Mary Grace – all students of PIKIFI – made and make their very own valuable experiences. Learn more about it in the articles of a promising future, module lessons and song contest.

We are grateful for the valuable and good experience of many people supporting IKP also financially for many years, either regularly or sporadically. We do not take this for granted. We thank you all for your loyalty, your open hearts and generosity. Steve Jobs was once saying: “The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do” – at PIKIFI we learn that this sentence is true.

Already now we wish you a Merry Christmas and all the best for a Happy New Year!

## ■ Co-operation with (Inter)national Organizations

Two pioneering projects being put into practice in poor areas of six urban districts of Cagayan de Oro are demanding a great deal from our staff at the moment. They are at the frontline, as their task is the implementation of the projects. This is a huge challenge, first because the range of the contents to be conveyed is very wide, and second not only the affected children and their parents are participating, but also so-called service-providers (teaching staff of public schools, employees of local governments (Barangays/districts) and policemen and policewomen). Naturally, all the training, lectures and workshops are adapted to the specific audience. At the same time, the activities among the residents of the poor areas attract attentive participants, for example on 7th October at the workshop seminar on BRC and at the end of the month on the topic of OSAEC.

### *BRC – Building Resilient Communities*

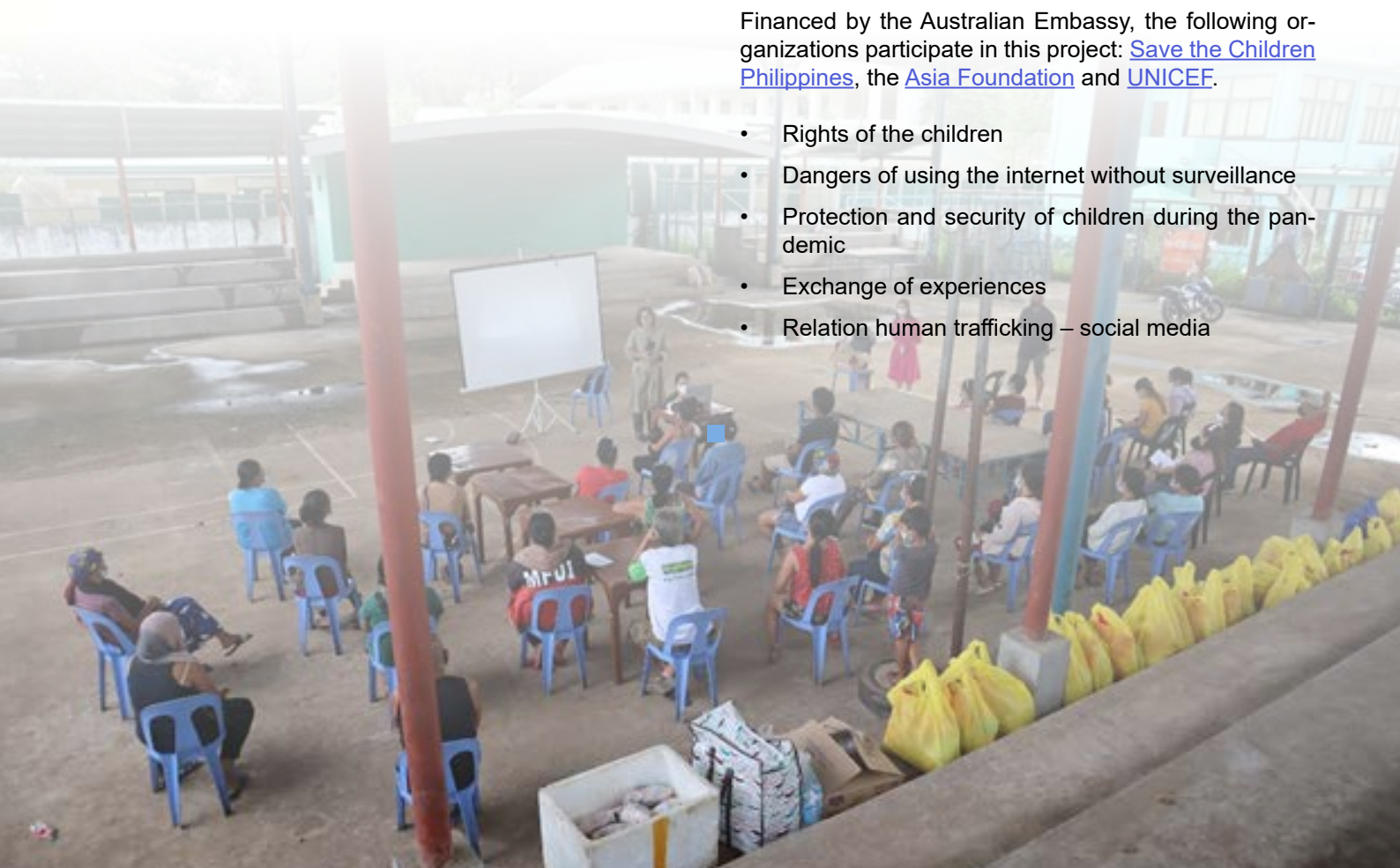
This project is a cooperation between PIKIFI, the Life-Bank Foundation [LifeBank Foundation](#), the [Partnership for Transparency Fund Asia \(PTFA\)](#) and the [Jesse Robreido Foundation](#).

- Providing children with survival packages during twelve months
- Monitoring of their nutrition during this time
- Instruction of their parents with regard to a healthy diet
- Setting up communal gardens leading to more self-sufficiency in the poor areas
- Training of the employees of local governments concerning crisis management

### *Safer Kids – Prevention of OSAEC (Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children)*

Financed by the Australian Embassy, the following organizations participate in this project: [Save the Children Philippines](#), the [Asia Foundation](#) and [UNICEF](#).

- Rights of the children
- Dangers of using the internet without surveillance
- Protection and security of children during the pandemic
- Exchange of experiences
- Relation human trafficking – social media



## *Training of Staff*

In order to pass on know-how successfully, a continuous training in workshops of staff involved in our project is important. In October, our social workers, the development aid worker and the director Virgie Demata-Vicare finished further educational courses in mental health, social support, trauma therapy and psychological first intervention. Furthermore, they were trained during 10 days in Asian sign language, as deaf-mute victims should also be cared for.

## *A First Conclusion*

Now after a year of partnership with the above-mentioned national and international organizations, we can come to a first conclusion: Our staff are benefitting enormously from valuable further education. At the same time, our professionalism is enhanced in areas like structured procedure, realization of workshops, efficiency control by reporting and monitoring projects. On the other hand, administrative work is increasing considerably due to the strict guidelines of the international partners. In addition, our partners are more cumbersome and less flexible. As a small organization with an extremely lean administration, we are able to react quicker to unforeseen emergencies. All in all we are extremely grateful for the successful cooperation. Both projects are financed by our international partners. Without these partnerships, PIKIFI could not implement them.

## ■ **Safe House for Women**

Renovation and extension works for the project Safe House for Women have been 60% concluded. Floor and ceiling are still missing. We hope to move in by the end of this year.

## ■ **Promising Future**

Our two students Rica Mae and Rosalinda made it to the very top: Both were able to finish their Senior High School (12th grade) at the Liceo de Cagayan University with an Honors degree, Rosalinda as class winner. They have now also passed the entrance examination for the Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi. This public university, with extremely difficult terms of admission, is

considered as the best of Mindanao. Only the best students are admitted. It is said, whoever finishes here with a degree can expect a magnificent professional career. Both girls grew up in the slum near the landfill, both were brought up by single mothers.



They always made the best of the opportunities offered to them, and now they have enrolled at the MSU for a Bachelor in Psychology. We are hugely proud of Rosalinda and Rica Mae who in addition are involved actively in leading positions in our student organization of PIKIFI.

## ■ **Module Lessons – Also an Opportunity**

Due to the pandemic, front-of-class teaching is still prohibited. Therefore our teachers, with the support of the students, are busy preparing module lessons. While for many, module lessons remain a big challenge, they can benefit others like the teenage mothers Carmena and Mary Grace. Both stopped their education after 10th grade because of their pregnancies. Meanwhile they look after their two small children. Now they take contraception and continue their education at the Senior High School (11th grade at home).

## ■ **Successful Participation in Song Contest**

Guyn left school at the age of 8 in order to help her parents collect recyclable materials and thus contribute to their costs of living. Working on the garbage dump and living in a slum polluted by smog and garbage, Guyn

began to suffer from asthma as did many other children. Thanks to IKP she could soon return to school and is today in 11th grade of High School. In September the 18-year-old took part in a virtual song contest and became third. Her contribution can be heard [here](#). Congratulations Guyn!



## ■ IKP-Shop

We look forward to presenting our 2022 Calendar. Do you know someone who would be pleased with 12 cheerful individual and group pictures of children benefiting from our projects? Or you might like one for yourself?

The Calendar (A4, landscape, spiral binding) costs CHF/EUR 15.— plus CHF/EUR 3.— for shipping.

Perhaps you would like to put a special stamp on your Christmas letter? Every year we bring out a new first class stamp in Switzerland. The second class stamp remains the same.

Please note that postal tariffs in Switzerland will go up from 1st January 2022: first class CHF 1.10, second class CHF --.90.

You will find the corresponding flyer and order form attached.

For orders delivered to Germany please contact [deutschland@islandkids.ch](mailto:deutschland@islandkids.ch). Further information is available at [projekt@islandkids.ch](mailto:projekt@islandkids.ch) or telephone +41 (0)31 992 29 37.

## ■ Concert by “Die Gendarmen” and “Quattro Schtatzjoni”

The „Gendarmen’s“ concert had to be canceled at short notice due to a corona case in the band. They are re-scheduled for March 2022.

The new concert dates:

Friday, 11th. March 2022 8:00 pm, Ref. Kirche Spiez  
Saturday, 12th March 2022, 8:00 pm, Ref. Kirche Ins-  
Sunday, 13th March 2022, 4:00 pm, Ref. Kirche Signau

## ■ Successful collections for Kuya

Schoolkids of 3rd/4th grade in Unterseen eagerly sold toys, books, craft materials, CDs, cakes, candyfloss and drinks at a flea market they had organized themselves!



Also Jana, Nicola and Ladina yet again did their utmost to support IKP with sales at a flea market.



# newsletter

Island Kids  
Philippines 

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**Actual information** you'll find as well  
[www.islandkids.de](http://www.islandkids.de)  
[www.islandkids.ch](http://www.islandkids.ch)

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## KuyaThom goes home

Thomas Kellenberger has already walked through his fourth country: Croatia. During his hike, he repeatedly shared with us on Facebook/Instagram what he experienced alone or with companions, but also his thoughts and feelings. We are happy to share individual excerpts from his „diary“:

*...Today we hiked through the beautiful valley up to the Fellilücke on 2,500 meters above sea level. We had to ascend more than 1,000 meters before descending again to Oberalppass, where we will be spending the night. Weather was getting worse with fogs and even snowfall. The boys got to their limits and were thankful when we finally reached our shelter for the night.*

*...Tonight, we are once again allowed to spend the night in the sport center of the school. People are in general very friendly and positive when they hear about our project. Thank you Sedrun!!*

*...This morning I still felt exhausted, but nevertheless continued my hike with a very hard ascend of 1'6000 meters bringing me over the Güner Lückli down to Sa-fien Platz in Safiental. I think I really need to reduce the weight of my backpack.*

*...When I was planning this project, a friend of mine asked me, „Thom, are you trying to escape from something?“ I have a loving family and very good friends in Switzerland and I have very precious people and the children I love so much waiting for me in the Philippines.*

*Thus, I have absolutely no reason to run away from anything. On the contrary, when I am hiking alone I have lots of time to reflect on my life, on good and bad decisions I made, on people I hurt even though they mean much to me, on my late mom and things I would have wanted to tell her. Fact is, when one goes on a journey like mine, he will not be able to escape, especially not from himself...*

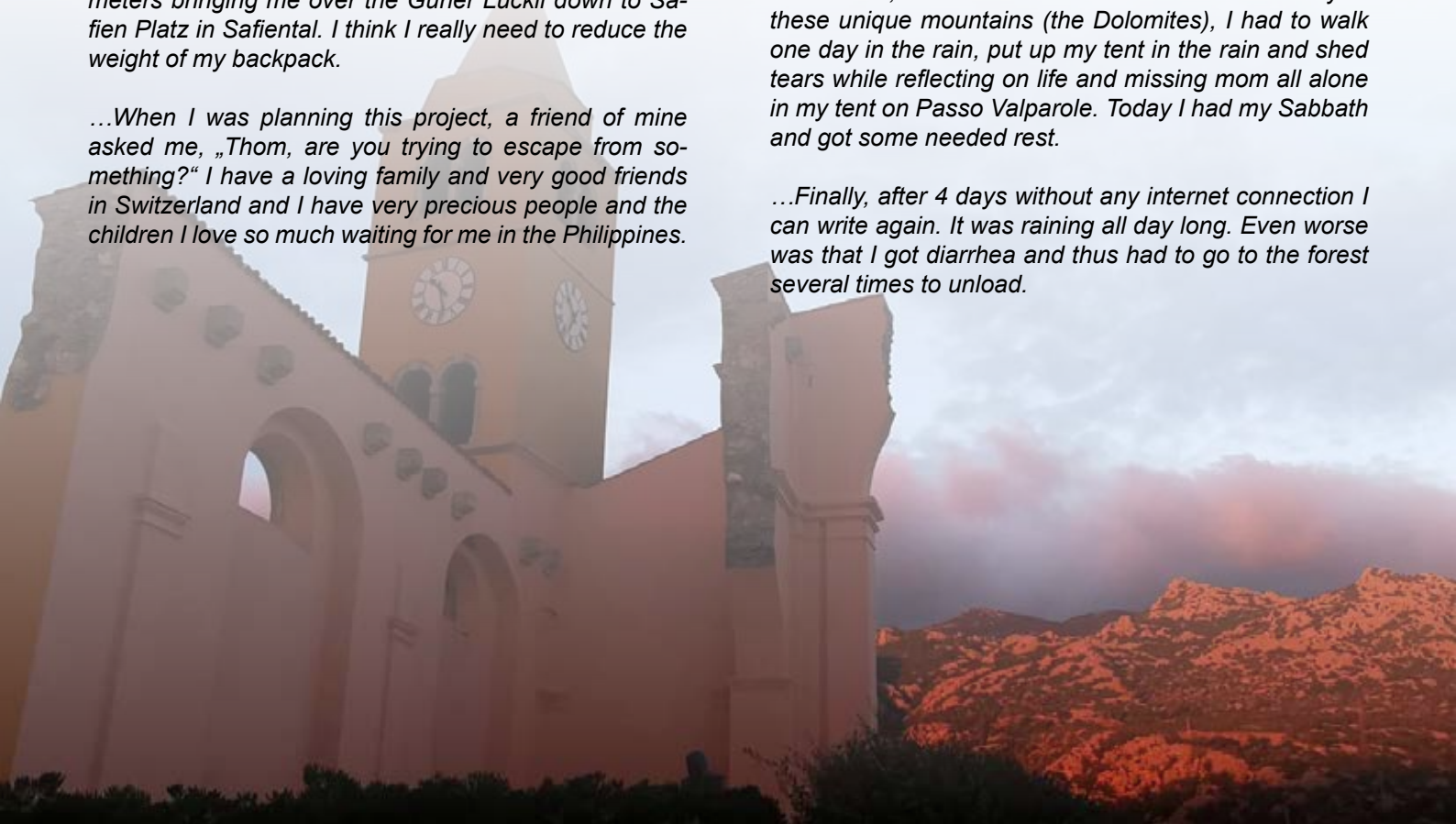
*...In Meran, we were warmly welcomed by members of my family. I was so happy to see my loving grandmother, my two aunts Margaret and Dora and of course Daniel, the husband of Dora.*

*...My cp fell on a rock and broke. Good that I had an extra unit with me to navigate and take pics.*

*...On the Sarner Scharte, on 2458mams, I I spent the night all alone in a bivak hut. It was a very lonely night and I was happy when the sun rose the next morning. After a beautiful descent to Barbian with its leaning church tower, the owner of Restaurant Traube invited me for lunch!*

*...However, before I was able to witness the beauty of these unique mountains (the Dolomites), I had to walk one day in the rain, put up my tent in the rain and shed tears while reflecting on life and missing mom all alone in my tent on Passo Valparole. Today I had my Sabbath and got some needed rest.*

*...Finally, after 4 days without any internet connection I can write again. It was raining all day long. Even worse was that I got diarrhea and thus had to go to the forest several times to unload.*



*The only thing that cheered me up a bit that day were video calls with my Dad and with Virgie. In Calalzo I put up my tent in the rain on a already closed camping ground. It continued raining the whole night. The following day, I still felt weak because of the diarrhea. I sat in my tent the whole morning, having a video call with the kids in the Philippines. At lunchtime I felt better and decided to continue walking. I bought food good for four days and made it up to the Rifugio Padova, at the entrance of the Parco Naturale Regio. Delle Dolomiti Friulane*

*...The Parco Naturale Regione Delle Dolomiti Friulane was the grand finale of my hike across the alps. For 3 days (56km) I had no internet connection and didn't see a single human being. I overcame altitude differences of up to 2000 meters a day on trails hard to find and partially destroyed by landslides. The weather was unstable with thick fogs covering the summits every afternoon. Conditions were so difficult that I made little progress. On my second day, I lost my orientation due to thick fogs and wrong directions given by my navigation. Fear came over me. Knowing that fear is never a good companion, I spoke a silent prayer to calm me down. Hoping that the view would be better the following morning, I put up my emergency bivak on the mountain (2300mamsl).*

*...Finding my way out of the Parco Naturale was exhausting and consumed whatever was left of my energy. The trail was hard to find with lots of ticks crawling on my legs. Reaching the valley, I was astonished by the mere beauty of the river with its green waters. Making it back to civilization, I found myself in Val Tramontina, which consists of a number of tiny villages making up the 300-souls-municipality of Tramonti di Sotto.*

*At the B&B Kessa I was warmly welcomed by a very nice young couple. Hungry as I was, they lend me their bicycle to go to the only restaurant in Tramonti di Sotto (store was closed). I had to wait 1 hour for the restaurant to open and another hour for the cook. All guests were men (age 60+) drinking wine, reading newspapers and debating with each other. After spaghetti, beer and wine the men invited me to more wine until I was able to speak Italian. Excited the men opened a map and planned with me the next hikes. Driving back at 10om, I almost fell asleep on the bike.*

*...While walking, the two of us exchanged lots of thoughts and experiences. As a psychologist and a professor (teaching communication skills) to social work students Martin was sharing his vast knowledge with me. Listening to him, I was able to connect theories with the practical experiences I made in the Philippines. We also talked about our personal lives, our world views and many more enriching topics. With Trieste we also reached the Adriatic coast of the Mediterranean Sea. We were invited to stay for two nights at the house of Franco, a very kind senior citizen who used to be a professor teaching chemistry. Once again Gabriella had organized this place for us to sleep. Franco is a very precious soul. He showed us Trieste from his balcony and shared with us the city's history and of course his own rich life story.*

*...On my way through the woods, I came across abandoned camp sites. Franco was telling me about migrants using the route through Slovenia. Probably these camp sites were put up by them. He also told me that he had given temporary shelter to two young refugees from Afghanistan.*

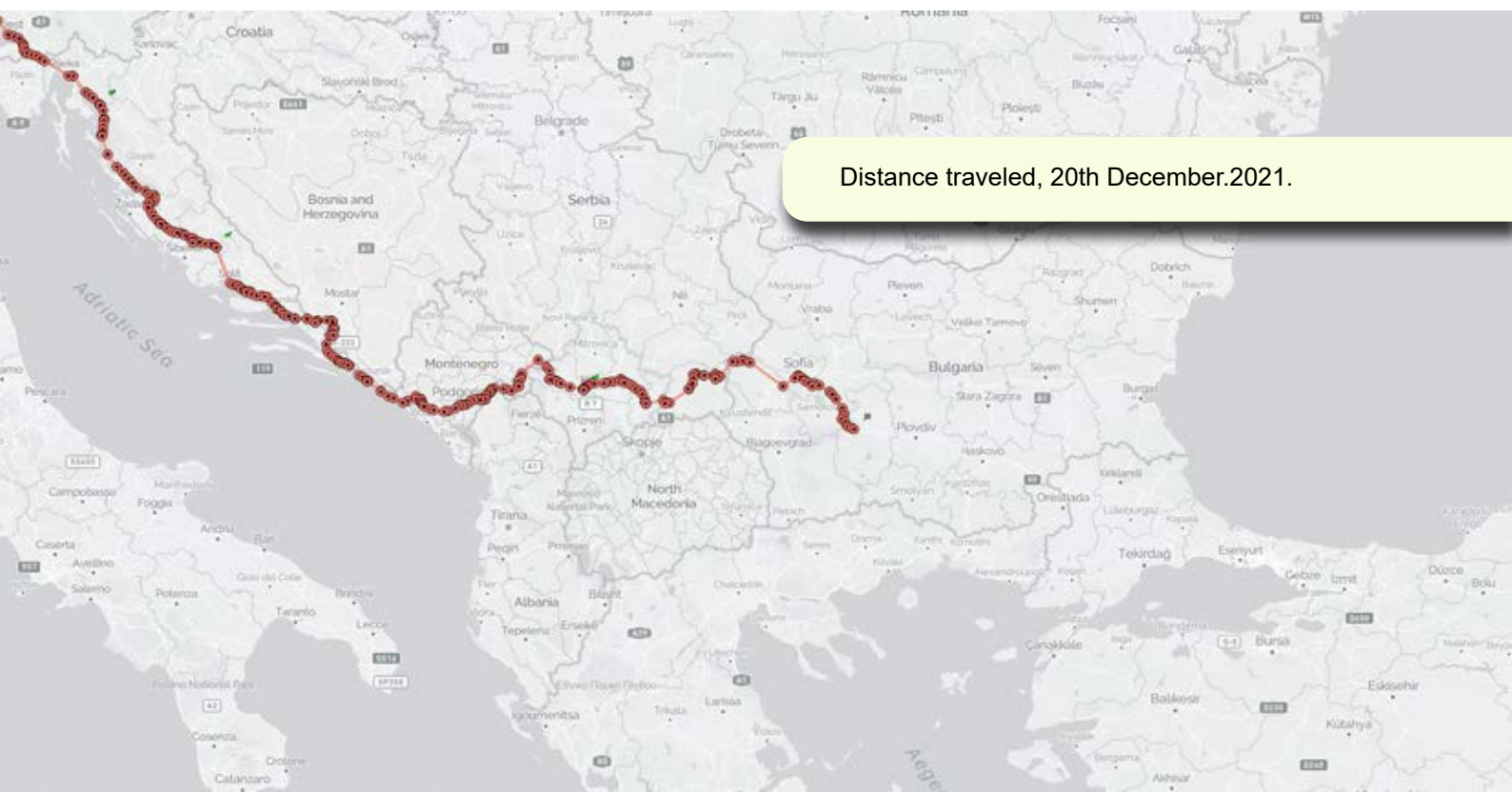


...At the Croatian border, two very kind police officers checked my documents. I learned that Croatia though member of the EU is not a member of the Schengen-agreement. The officers were amazed about my hike to the Philippines and wished me good luck. It was getting dark when I reached Jelovice, the first village after the boarder. I was lucky to find a little restaurant and a place to sleep. From the locals I learned that only 7 people are living in Jelovice.

...By lunchtime I was very hungry. In a tiny village I met a family cutting fire wood. They told me that the next store was 2.5km away and that it was already closed already. I was losing hope when they invited me to be their guest. They prepared big sandwiches, cake, fruits and a big bottle of beer for me. I was so happy! Thankful for this blessing, I helped them cutting the wood.

...Spending time with my dear friends, my godson and his younger sister meant a lot to me. It allowed me to re-connect with precious people who were more than just familiar to me.

...As I continued walking in the Velebit Channel dark clouds formed in the mountains. Suddenly very strong winds violently fell down to the coast. It was the beginning of the Bora, a very strong wind in this region from October to March. It was so strong that I stumbled and fell against the road wall. I met Yann (CH) and Wibke (D). They walked with their bicycles as the wind was too strong to drive. It was very dangerous and we needed shelter. In the small village called Starigrad kind locals allowed us to sleep in a warehouse at the port. They blessed us with soup, coffee and breakfast. During the night the Bora blew so strong that big branches fell from a tree blocking our exit. In the morning a man cut the branches so that we were able to get out.



Distance traveled, 20th December.2021.