



newsletter

Island Kids
Philippines 

2022/1

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Dear Friends of Island Kids Philippines

We are looking back on eventful months. The omnipresent Covid pandemic which makes tuition a lot more difficult and highly increases exploitation, abuse and mistreatment, but also another typhoon catastrophe are only three examples from our vast field of activity we are able to work in thanks to your support. Besides that there are always reasons for gratitude and celebration on the Philippines. We are looking forward to having you on our side during 2022 to share joy and sorrow.

■ First Aid for Victims of Typhoon

Time and again and quite often during Christmas, the Philippines are struck by typhoons, as it happened on 15th December 2021. As typhoon Rai/Odette closed in over the islands during daytime, the population was warned and evacuated in time, and therefore relatively few victims had to be mourned. Many places were heavily flooded, also in Cagayan de Oro. Worst hit were the islands around Leyte, Bohol, Dinagat and Siargao as well as Surigao in the north-east of Mindanao, where the approaching typhoon raged over the sea and hit the land with full force. It is a poor area where people live from harvesting coconuts and fishing. Odette snapped the coconut palms like matches and sank the fishing boats. Not only the people's houses and huts built with light materials were destroyed by the force of the wind, but also more stable buildings were unroofed and walls just tipped over. "We have nothing left, but we are still alive" – the affected people were able to express gratefully.

Even if first aid is not the core business of IKP/PIKI-FI, it is still an act of national solidarity and reflects the Philippine mentality to help the victims of the typhoon. Within the limits of our capacity and using the donations received for that purpose – for which we thank sincerely – we decided to give aid on the island of Dinagat which is approximately 360 km away. About 120'000 people became homeless on this island.

Together with their carers the kids and adolescents of our children's village prepared 500 packages with snacks and 500 sanitary kits (including soap, shampoo) and loaded them with bags of rice and cartons of eggs into our school bus.

At the moment, the ferry of a mine operator is the only way of transport to the island of Dinagat. Accordingly, the vehicles even with aid supplies have to queue. Hence, on 7th January 2022, Butch, our driver, and the two teenagers Ricky and Rosebel spent two nights with our school bus in the port of Surigao City, after a seven hour trip, before they were ferried across to the island.



However, Virgie Demata, the director of PIKIFI and another eight staff members could already get across as passengers. In the control room the Governor “Sir Kaka” conveyed a picture of the disastrous situation in the eight destroyed communities of the island. Sir Kaka is also a member of Balaod Mindanao, one of our partner organizations in Cagayan de Oro.



The Control Room

While the women camped in a damaged resort with a still intact dining hall and waited for our school bus with the precious load, they visited three communities. When Butch and the two teenagers finally arrived, they could start distributing the 500 packages (5kg of rice, 12 eggs and sanitary articles each).



Distribution of Food

In addition, our social workers conducted a stress debriefing with the affected children (handling the experience by recounting and drawing). Our staff members spent two more days and nights in the bus at the port

cooking, playing, waiting and sleeping before they could go back to Mindanao where they arrived in Cagayan de Oro on 11th January 2022 late in the evening, exhausted but content.

Those who would like to support another first aid mission can do so with the comment “Odette” using our bank account or the following direct links:

<https://donate.raisenow.io/myymn>

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Confirm amount and
donation



https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=8DB3GZ7ZQQERW



As the Governor Kaka said; «Walang maliit, walang malayo, lahat ay mahalaga» (nothing is too small, nothing is too far away, everything is important). In this sense thank you very much for your donation!

■ Increase of Abuse and Mistreatments

Due to the pandemic, domestic violence (also sexual) and sexual abuse of children has increased massively over the last two years. We never had as many requests for new admissions in our children's village as 2021. Therefore, we extended our 60 full time care places (2020) to 75. This gets us again to the limit regarding the premises and our budget. Only with a second children's village and additional houses will we be able to admit, protect and support more kids and adolescents.

Sexual abuse of children via internet has also drastically increased. The projects "Safer Kids" and "Building Resilient Communities" (see Newsletter 2021_4) which we initiated in partnership with "Save the Children Philippines" have generated such positive feedback that we will continue this important task in 2022. First training courses have already started again in January.

■ Events 2021/22

We are very grateful for the raised money at the Spiegel Bazaar 2021. This well known and excellently organized bazaar with its flea market always attracts many people. A well-honed team organizes this event. The money raised then goes to two different charities.

We are also very pleased with the generous support we were given at the Christmas Market on Beatenberg and the special sales days at the company Schubiger Möbel.

■ Children's Month Competition

November in the Philippines is the month of the children. Because of Covid rules, local collective activities were not possible in 2021. But, a talent contest took place: contributions for various categories could be recorded and submitted. To see that our kids and adolescents were among the best was a great pleasure for all of us. We are very proud of them!

Let our protégés show you some of the Philippine culture:

[Chant: 1st position](#)

[Cultural Dance: 2nd position](#)

[Children's Got Talent: 3rd position](#)

■ Awards for Teaching Staff and Carers

In December the more difficult work of our teaching staff and the commitment of parents respectively carers of our school children during the pandemic have been honored in the context of the education week at school: PIKIFI awarded the «Cagayan de Oro Seal of Excellence Awards». "No doubt it takes a whole group of people to make a difference and achieve effective results. Congratulations and many thanks, dear teachers, parents and carers!" (Sir Adrian Bantilan).

Together with the award for parents/carers we also awarded the certificate "Best Reader":

Grade 3: Calvin Paradela

Grade 4: Janeza Capiro

Grade 5: Jen Gaa

Grade 6: Renecel Ann Casia

Grade 3: Calvin Paradela





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Actual information you'll find as well
www.islandkids.de
www.islandkids.ch

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KuyaThom Goes Home

At the time of finishing this newsletter Thomas Kellenberger was in Turkey near the city of Samsun. He has walked about a fourth of his distance. Repeatedly the media dedicated articles about his walk (and the aim to raise money for another urgently needed children's village, as shown above).

[Mindanews, 16.1.2022](#)

[Jungfrauzeitung, Dezember 2021](#)

[20 Minuten, 23.7.2021](#)

[Berner Oberländer, 23.7.2021](#)

Let Thomas Kellenberger himself tell of his walk:

In the small village of Smrdelje (Croatia) some guys were roofing a house. They invited me to beer and tasty soup with meat, beans and cabbage. I learned that all the people in the village were Serbs who had been slowly returning and rebuilding their houses after the war in 1991. They told me that the frontlines of the war had been here in these villages. The older guys blamed the Croatians for the war and for burning down their houses. They also said that as a minority in the country they still felt discriminated. However, the younger men who are the post war generation said that they wanted to move on and live in peace with everyone. I told them that they are the generation of hope for a peaceful future.

As an answer, he showed me a picture of his burnt house and said, „look what these Serbs did to me. I worked in Germany for 20 years to build this house. In 1991 one year after it was finished they came and burned down everything I had been working for. To rebuild it I had to work again in Germany!“ I was speechless. After some silence, Juri added, „well, my wife is from Serbia anyway.“ Both of us had to laugh. Juri continued, „we are all Slavic people here, but even in families, brothers fight each other.“

On the way I met a nice couple from Norway who gave me a cash donation for our project. A bit later, one of our former student beneficiaries contacted me through messenger and asked for help as she was in a difficult situation. I informed Virgie about the case and she took action on it.

On the evening of the 2nd day we crossed the border to Bosnia & Herzegovina. We went for a drink at the restaurant near the border control. There we had a good conversation with a migration officer and with the bar keeper. The officer was a Serb, the bar keeper was Croatian and the topic was once again the war.

The kind owner of the restaurant spoke Swiss German. He told us that he had lived in Switzerland as a war refuge.



At 10am, we all met at the entrance of the Comunita Cenacolo, a catholic institution for young people struggling with different kinds of addictions. After an introduction about the history of the community, young men shared their impressive testimonies about how the time in the community had helped them to be freed from their addictions. I learned that the therapeutic approach of Cenacolo was mainly faith based and followed the principle of „Ora et Labora“ (pray and work). People are asked to have a strong commitment before entering the community.

Buying baklava with Anny, I had a short chat with the young sales lady who was fed up of political and religious power issues in her hometown.

Reaching the border late at night, the migration officer informed us that this border was only for locals and that we had to go back. We were so shocked that he had mercy on us, allowing us to cross the border anyway.

The following morning, I wanted to continue my journey to Podgorica. However, after 100 meters of walking I saw a bunch of children playing in their neighborhood and their mothers invited me for coffee and Rakije (local liquor made from prunes). I ended up sitting with them the whole morning, playing volleyball and exchanging little gifts with their children, having great conversations ... and having much fun together. Later Biljana invited me for lunch. In the evening their husbands joined us and we all went to Ivana and her family for dinner... Thank you so much for the great experience children, ladies and husbands!

In the mountains I met no one, experienced temperatures well below zero degrees and got lost twice due to bad weather conditions, lacking trails and inaccurate GPS-positions on my navigation. Exhausted and lost in the dark and foggy night, I started questioning my undertaking, wishing not to be alone.

Down in the valley I was very thankful for the kind invitation of local farmers. They blessed me with Turkish coffee, homemade cheese and the best „burek“ ever. Breaking the language barrier was challenging, as the old couple couldn't speak a single word in English or German.

Kosovo: Population density, median age, street markets and out of school Roma children begging in the streets reminded me of the Philippines. Also, the great hospitality of the people who make me feel at home.

After lunch, Ardit took me to the Olympic Committee of Kosovo. We were warmly welcomed by his father Ismet Krasniqi, who is currently the president of the committee.

There I once again enjoyed great Kosovo Albanian hospitality. I was invited to stay in the empty house of the parents of Herolindt. Herolindt's uncle Ali and his lovely family were taking good care of me. Ali who is an actor playing at the theater of Gjilan and in Albanian movies showed me around in the city and in the theater. Through Herolindt, I also met Irfan, a police officer from Gjilan. He and his chief invited me for dinner and shared about their interesting work within a special unit of the police. As a former police officer, I was very interested in their stories and impressed by their resourcefulness amidst lacking manpower and equipment.



Young men (in Serbia) were curious about me and invited me for tea. They said that they had no employment and no future in their villages. Many spoke German as they regularly work in Germany - also illicit work.

At night, totally wet and shivering from the cold I reached the village Tran (Bulgaria). The very friendly police officers called people of the village until they found a bed for me.

When I left Sofia Istvan from Hungary joined me for one day hiking. Istvan just like me lives on the island of Mindanao.

Plovdiv: Anton invited me just for 20 minutes to have a drink with him. These 20 minutes eventually became a great adventure that lasted for 3 days! We celebrated during a grill party in his neighborhood, met his friends from the local alternative scene on a psychedelic 60s party, slept together with musicians, artists and intellectuals at the house of a psychologist who produces unique handmade clothes from different types of wool, played billiard with Roma boys in Stolipinovo, ..., flew in an ultra-light airplane over the rice fields along the river Mariza and did many other things.

From the suburbs to the touristic city center on the european side of the Bosporus metropolis it took me 2 days of hiking. There I met the young Chinese Gerard and we spent a day of sightseeing together. The following morning, a Filipina friend from Switzerland came to visit me. We had another great day of sightseeing together and were invited for lunch by very kind members of the filipino community of Istanbul. It was great talking with them and eating very tasty filipino food, which I'm missing a lot ever since I've left my second home in CDO.

In Cayirova we visited a kindergarten, had a fun time with the kids and tea with their principal.