

KAPINTIG Philippines 2017

July 9th
- August 12th

-
Metro Manila
Marinduque
Cordillera

Agnes Gruber
Simone Fuchs
Klara Maringele
Anna Schwarzingger
Margareta Stern
Bianca Wieser



KAPINTIG Philippines 2017

July 9th
- August 12th

Layout by
Margareta Stern

Agnes Gruber
Simone Fuchs
Klara Maringele
Anna Schwarzing
Margareta Stern
Bianca Wieser

Personal Descriptions

You want to
get to know us?
Then this is the right chapter.

Agnes Gruber
Simone Fuchs
Klara Maringele
Anna Schwarzing
Margareta Stern
Bianca Wieser

Agnes Gruber

Photo by
Margareta Stern

by Bianca Wieser



Agnes, the only one who liked the “bittergurk”, works at the main office of DKA in Vienna and is responsible for projects in Latin America.

She went to the Philippines for the third time and was leading the Kapintig 2017 group - also called #NerwinSweetBreadBatch – and did her job really well.

goodjobclapforyou

She was always ready to share her knowledge about the philippines and even more. Already before the departure Agnes always had an open ear for our concerns and questions.

All the time when we had to introduce ourselves we were happy when Agnes started to talk.

Just in the morning it took her longer than the rest of the group to get ready, so breakfast time took sometimes a long time.

Even if Agnes was healthy all the time she had to go to the hospital three times. For example she had to take care of Maggie so she couldn't take part with the MACEC Youth program. But, like Nerwin, our local participant, told everybody: “As you know, as group leader you have to stay with the weakest and take care of them.”

In our group Agnes always tried to take care of everybody. She was responsible for our weekly group reflection and offered us a really nice and good method to talk to each other about what is in our mind and heart.

Even after this trip, Agnes was so enthusiastic that she would definitely come back.

Salamat po Ate Agnes for this great adventure!

Simone Fuchs

Photo by
Margareta Stern

by Anna Schwarzingger



Simone is a teacher for german, religion and history and just started to work after our Kapintig. Due to the fact that her job is also her passion, she started our journey with a special view on the education system in the Philippippines and how it is different from austria's. She really enjoyed the opportunity to visit schools and get an insight to the class-rooms and daily routines at primary schools. Also when we got the chance to spend time at a daycare center in Valenzuela, the children liked Simone at least as much as she liked them!

Simone always cares about her fellow human beings. It was very important to her that everyone was satisfied, but also never neglected to express her own needs honestly.

Health was a very important issue for Simone, she was really worried of Malaria and Denge and even infected me with her tales of terror what possibly could happen if you get bitten by an infected moscito. (for example you could die by gumbleeding :o)

Unfortunately she forgot about the sea urchin and had the worst luck when she was stepping on one during at the beach day on Marinduque. As we learned later, there where more than 100 spines in her foot. She was kind of our Group-jinx, as she wasn't able to join every activity. The doctors at the hospital couldn't help her, because cutting the stings out of her foot would have been complicated and more harmful then the therapy they recommended her otherwise: Simone had to soak her foot in vinegar at least twice a day.

To sum it up she got dependent on our group and wasn't free to move around. Therefore I would like to use this opportunity and value Simones happy mood, even if she had to miss some activities. She always tried to make the best out of her situation. Thank you po for being part of our journey!

Klara Maringele

Photo by
Anna Schwarzingger

by Simone Fuchs



As Klara - or Klaring as her Philippine name was - took part in every single event of our schedule, we provided her with the best-attendance-award.

Klara is known for her special look, lots of her things are red with white points on it. In Baguio, she even found shoes fitting this combination.

In our group, Klara always seemed happy. She spread lots of joy and took care of everyone, even when she didn't feel well. She helped where she could and she hardly ever got annoyed with anything.

She was also the reason for our first big event on the Philippines as we celebrated her Birthday all together the day after our arrival. The now 27-year-old works as a Social Worker in Vienna, she just finished her studies and will start to work with homeless people in September. Klara is a member of the Catholic Youth of Austria, where she, amongst other things, leads youth workshops.

When we were asked about our highlights of the journey, Klara always started to explain about AKKMA. As she is an enthusiastic feminist herself, she really enjoyed being with dedicated women of this organization. But the biggest smile on her face was because of the schedule they handed us, when we arrived.

Anna Schwarzingger

Photo by
Margareta Stern

by Agnes Gruber



Anna – 21-year-old, studying German in Vienna – needs her sleep, and well rested she is an active, happy person with her head full of ideas and laughing a lot. She's an expert on pranks and after an extremely successful visit in a second hand bookstore where she got hold of a copy of „Philippine Fright“ also expert on authentic filipino pranks – be it Aswang or what ever you like.

Anna is also an expert on organising food and eating food anytime – a talent that made her the one and only essential group member of KAPINTIG 2017 also named „Anna and the rest“ and „the sweet bread batch“, as we wanted to eat sweet bread anytime - Anna organised it for us - and unfortunately were not hungry every time our welcoming hosts offered us delicious filipino food – but luckily Anna was.

Once home again and homesick for the Philippines Anna tried to persuade her younger sisters to call her „Ate Anna“ like younger siblings in the Philippines do, but they refused – I suppose they have the same natural self-confidence Anna has. Dear Ate Anna – easygoing, kind and with a sunny smile – thank you-po for all the fun and good times we had! Ang galing galing mo and a big G-doble O-D-J-O-B-good job-good-job-clap for you!

Margareta Stern

Photo by
Bianca Wieser

by Klara Maringele



This is Maggie. She is twenty years old and a graphic designer from Vienna and also really amazing.

The journey together with Maggie was great. She always had really good questions and she was always critical and wanted to know it in detail. She also has a big feminist heart and she also tries to support women to find their own voice.

In our small group of austrian women, Maggie always had a good story for us in after an exhausting day in our program. If Maggie told a story, she told it like in every detail and so you felt like you have been there with her.

You can also see that she is really into karaoke and she was also really good at it. Like a cool star. She was also called from philippino friends "Taylor Swift". I think Maggie is much cooler than Miss Swift.

Maggie is a truthful person, she will never lie to you only because you want to hear it and she will be honest and help you to improve yourself.

I'm proud that Maggie was with me in the Philippines and that I can call her my friend.

Bianca Wieser

Photo by
Anna Schwarzingger

by Margareta Stern



Bianca lives in Innsbruck, capital of the state of Tyrol, where she currently works in the office of the catholic youth. She is 29 years old, which does not suspend her of going on carrol singer tour every year (something that is usually done by five to fifteen year old kids).

There are many things that Bianca likes – but she likes nothing as much as playing with children, watching soccer, wearing clothes in green and black (the colours of her favourite soccer team) and putting things in specific order:

If you are with her, you are not allowed to pick pralinées randomly out of a box – you always have to take care of symmetry and disposal of the chocolates. Which is a great opportunity to make fun of her. (Sorry, girl!)

She does not only love to play with children, the children also love to play with her – her speciality are sing-and-scream-games: Everybody has to do a crazy dance while singing and shouting until everybody is soaked with sweat and rolling on the floor laughing.

I loved to get known to Bianca! She enriched the group with her humour, loud and catching laughter and her intelligent views on our topics.

Thank you so much for travelling with us :)

Impressions, Reports and Kapintig

Some of
our adventures
written down :)

Agnes Gruber
Simone Fuchs
Klara Maringele
Anna Schwarzingen
Margareta Stern
Bianca Wieser

Tagalog Language Lesson

Small Nervin-
sweetbread-batch-
dictionary

Anna Schwarzing

	KA	A journey together
	PINTIG	heartbeat
Kamusta ang pus mo?		How is your heart?
Pumi-pintig! Buhay na buhay!		It is beating vigorously and is very much alive!
Mabuhay		Welcome
Salamat po		Thank you
Ang ganda ng Pilipinas!		The Philippines are beautiful!
Gandang ng Austria!		Austria is beautiful!
Magandang umaga!		Good morning!
Magandang Gabi!		Good evening!
Kumusta po kayo?		How are you?
Ako ay si ...		My name is ...
Ako ay isang estudyante.		I am a student..
Pagkain		Food
Inumin		Drink
Kain ako		I am eating.
tawa tayo		We laugh.
Ako ay masaya		I am happy.
Gutom ako.		I am hungry.
Busog ako.		I am full.
Gusto kita.		I like you.
Mahal kita!		I love you!
Sarap!		Delicious!

Small Nervin-
sweetbread-batch-
dictionary

Sakay!	to ride (when getting on a jeepney)
baba, para!	gettin off
bayad po!	to pay
paki abot po!	Asking to forward the money to the driver
Ako ay labing-isang taong gulang.	I am twentyone years old.
Gusto kong maging mamamahayag.	I want to become a journalist.
Naglalaba, nagsasampay	Washing, drying
Nagluluto, kumakain	cooking, eating
Naglilio, giniginaw	showering, freezing
kapitol	End of a table
Halo-Halo/ Sari-Sari	Mix-Mix
ulag	perverse
Angaling galing mo!	You did a very good job!
Lupang ninuno	Land is life

Contrast Tour – Manila by foot

Meeting on
the same eye level

Bianca Wieser

The contrast Tour also called “Manila on foot” was a really special and exiting experience.

Together with our Buddies - some of the local Kapintigs - Ian, Helen, Pets, Niño and Elvie we had to mangle some challenges on this day.

The day before everybody got 430 Pesos (about € 7,-). This is the amount of the minimum wage per day. With this money we had to survive the whole day – our food, entrance fees and transportations had to be paid with it. It was not just surviving, we got some exercises which we had to deal with. We should ride as many different vehicles as possible, taste a lot of different foods including street food, visit the Manila cathedral or one church, find out the cultural differences to Austria, visit museums, explore a wet market and enjoy the Filipino entertainment. And all of this... we had to handle within one day.

At first we split up in 3 groups because it is easier to discover Manila in smaller groups. But after we planned our tours we discovered, that some of us have the same routes anyway, so we would come together again during the day.

After our Pancake breakfast our Buddies picked us up at our home. All together we started our tour with finding a Jeepney, who can bring us to the Light Rail Transit at Anonas. Riding with a Jeepney was the first challenge – how many Fillipin@s and Austrians can fit in? The answer is – one more is always fitting.

After the LRT we used the tricycle to the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP). At the PUP we tried a really special and unusual way of transportation. Even some of our local friends didn't use it before. We went by the trolley to Pandoan. The trolley is a wooden plank with seats and a

Photo by
Anna Schwarzingen



Photo by
Anna Schwarzing

The wet markets are big markets called “palengke”, where you can get almost everything, mostly fruits, vegetables and meat.

big umbrella that rolls on wheels fitting on to the rail of the train. It is foot pushed by a driver behind – the drivers are just wearing slippers. If a train is coming you have to get off and the driver removes the trolley. To use the trolley is a real adventure, because we were also crossing a river... always scared if we had to jump into the water...

After this we split up in 2 groups again. Some of us were using the bus, the others went by PNR (Philippine National Railways). Finally we arrived Manila City after a long trip with using a lot of different vehicles.



Before we went to the wet market, where we tried some delicious street food, fruits and shakes, we visited the Quiapo Church. At the church we were able to buy a lot of coloured candles with different meanings. The rainbow candle for example should fulfill you any wishes you have, green candle stands for financial & money, pink candle for love & health and so on. From that place we walked to the jail of Manila and took then the Jeepney to the National museum. At the National museum Ian and Helen were telling us a lot of interesting stories and we had a lot of fun there – even though we were not allowed to touch something.

Our next goal was the Luneta Park, a historical urban park, where you can find the Monument of the national hero José Rizal. We used a Kalesa to get there, a horse drawn carriage. During walking through the park we were trying a popular Filipino dessert – Halo-Halo. It means “mixed together” and the name is also its program. Its milk added with various ingredients like sweet beans, coconut, corn, fruits and so on. Others of us preferred to drink coffee to get energy again.

Photo by
Simone Fuchs



After that small break we went to the cathedral of Manila, San Augustin Church, Manila Garden with a very small and nice souvenir shop and used the UV car express.

At the end of our trip we tried to see the sunset at Manila Bay, but unfortunately it was too cloudy. So we waited for the rest of the group, enjoyed the smell of the sea and played some funny singing game – pen-pen the sarapen. Before we went back home we visited the “Mall of Asia” (one of the biggest malls of the continent) where we ate our dinner and spent the rest of our money.

After a long trip back home some of us went to a karaoke bar and enjoyed the evening.

It was quite an exciting day!

MACEC & MACEC Youth

MaCEC:
Marindque Council
for Environmental
Concerns

MaCEC is a church-based
and multi-sectoral NGO.

Simone Fuchs

The day after we arrived in Marinduque we already started to our trip with the MaCEC Youth. Until this day I didn't believe how many people would fit in one single cheepney, but on the first day with MaCEC we managed to be 23 of us in only one vehicle. Although we were totally crowed and surrounded by all our bags, we had a lot of fun at this trip, getting to know each other.

When we arrived in St. Cruz there was a big welcome ceremony with lots of speeches prepared – thanks to Nerwin, who translated for us, we could understand how people welcomed us in St. Cruz. After the welcoming we started with the program, the first thing to do was planting mangroves, after that we went for the Sand bagging.

Back in Austria, we had gotten a lot of information on mining problems, Marinduque faced in the last centurys but know, we got the possibility to learn, how people actually deal with it. The Sand bags should help local communities against floods or landslides. Standing inside the River, we had to fill old plastic bags with mud from the ground and afterwards place them on the riverside.

Photo by
MACEC



After this activity, we walked down to the beach, where a whole peninsula was created out of mining waste products. To me, it seemed like a wonderful beach to swim, all the waste was covered with sand. But appearances are deceptive. To deal with the toxics which are entering the sea with no boundries, inhabitants of the town started to plant Mangroves about 30 years ago.

These Mangroves have three advantages: First of all they separate the toxics from the sea so that they stay inside the

islands. Second, the big roots of the Mangroves create living spaces for lots of fish, which can be caught by people of this area. And last, mangroves create also space for birds.

After a lot of information we got about the beach and the mangroves, we went back to have lunch and to take a rest. We joined the solidarity night in the evening, where we had a boodle fight, dances and different games.

The next morning started early with a Zumba training, afterwards MaCEC organised a sharing from the local community for us. We got to know a disabled child who is clearly influenced by the toxics of the Marinduque water-cycle and we heard about the missing actions of the government which just ignored the incidents on Marinduque. On the other hand we learnt about the small actions MaCEC people try to set for people living in this area just like providing health insurance for the kids.

Our days with MaCEC youth ended at a natural tub where we swam and jumped and played together and had lot of fun. Thank you, MaCEC!

Photo by
MaCEC



Mining Disasters and Small Scale Mining

Anna Schwarzingger

Photo by
Anna Schwarzingger

Mining – this was the overall topic of this years Lerneinsätze in Ghana, Brasil and the Philippines.

On the preperation weekends we already had workshops and thematic inputs to this topic, resource mining and how the countries are affected differently by the oconomic and ecological circumstances caused by it. Unfortunate ecological disasters, exploitation of natural resources and the destruction of natural habitats were mentioned very often.

We, as Kapintig group, examined one special case, the island in the middle of the Philippines, Marinduque.



Toxic mud, produced by the chemical proceed of big mining companies, who are still using this form of dividing raw materials from the rocks, was pumped into Calacan bay over years. The ecological resources of this bay got completely destroyed and this particular way of disposal mining mud were forbidden. Afterwards the company built big dams. 1993 one of these dams burst and polluted wide parts of the island, because the toxic dump flooded the Mogpog river. Especially the water resources of the island got unusable and harmful to health. In this case the mining company Marcopper is responsible for these disasters.

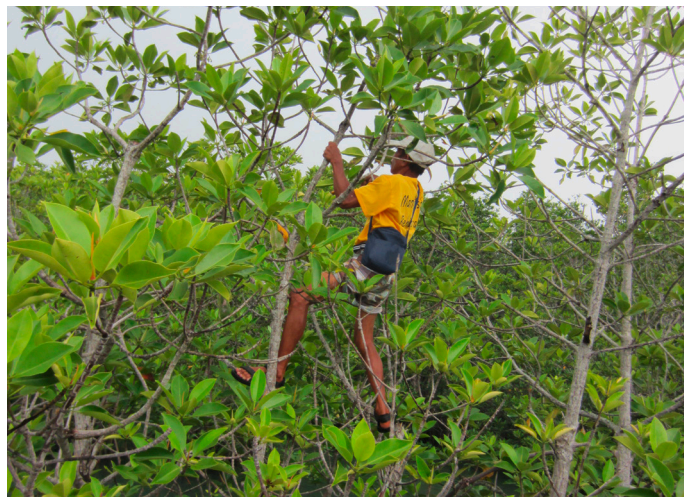
Marcopper is a made-up word, which mixes the words Marinduque and copper. In a cynical way some people say, that also the name of the former president of the Philippines, Marcos is used for it. He signed the contracts with the canadian companies and also owned parts of it, so he got money from the huge amount of the profits, Marcopper was able to make on Marinduque. 1996 happened another disaster on the island, caused by the mining company. A tunnel, in which the toxic mud was dumped too, cracked,

because Marcopper ignored warnings of people that the tunnel is ruinous. By this the biggest river of the island, Boac river, got contaminated.

Placer Dome, the responsible canadian mining company, never felt consequences due to this. The people, who lost their livelihood by this catastrophes, have to fight for their rights until today. Marcopper never paid any reparations. Rich concerns neglect their responsibilities and hide behind paragraphs and in tax exils. Also several changings of company names make the situation more difficult to understand and look through it.

With MaCEC and the members of MaCEC Youth we visited the dumping bay Calacan. Before the mining companies used this seaside for there mud, the people were able to catch enough fish, to be able to live from it. Today it is even a problem to get in touch with the water, because the toxic sea can cause several diseases. MaCEC fights for environmental topics on the island and also get active by themselves with remedies which should work against the contamination. We were able to join them at one activity and planted Mangrooves with them. These trees, growing inside of the water, remove the toxic chemicals of the sea but also provide new living spaces for fish. Fishing is still one of the most important income source, as well as agri-

Photo by
Anna Schwarzingen



culture. By polluting the water, the mining companies destroyed both and are also to blame with making the people sick. The health problems, caused by the long term effects of the contamination are extensive.

We were able to mention this at an immersion with effected people of the Barangay St. Cruz. The farmers lost

Photo by
Anna Schwarzingger



their income, children get in contact with the chemicals while playing at the waterside and the risk for cancer increased. Especially leukemia; new borns have a lower IQ and more birth deformities.

More than 20 years ago the mining disaster took place and still there are no supportives acts. There was kind of a serenity to feel. A lot of the people do not believe that they will receive any money from Marcopper in their lifetime.

Something else that has to be mentioned is, that there is not enough awareness in some parts of the population of Marinduque for these problems. The new grown Mangrove forests got cut down, because of the lack of income resources. The Marinduquenos sometimes even want to start mining again, because there are no other workplaces for them. Albert Ibanez explained to us, that he, as a young local politician, fights against mining and for the increase of tourism on Marinduque. He knows that he revolt against a strong lobby and expose himself to danger, but still he does not want to stop fighting for it. Once someone even tried to shoot him, but his goal, to bring justice for the people on Marinduque is more important for him.

We stayed on the island during the second week of our journey. We got the chance to see all the beauty in the nature there and felt the hospitality of the people. Amazing beaches and heartwarming welcome rituals (in Tagalog called Putong) made this time very special for us. The shady side of the island is only visible if you look twice, what makes it even more tragic. I was able to recognise very quickly, why Marinduquenos do not want to leave their home island, even if it is contaminated and harmful to health. On the one

hand there is a lack of money and possibilities to do it, but on the other hand Marinduque is also a lovely, special island, which made our goodbye just after one week very hard.

The mining topic was also a focus during our last week on the Philippines, while we stayed in the north of the country, in the Cordillera. Marinduque has to fight against the consequences, caused by mining disasters, in the Cordillera people also have to deal with the trouble of active mining. While staying in the small Barangay Ucab we got an insight to the daily life of small scale miners. Together with staff of the NGO Cordis, we visited the working spaces of these workers and also the tunnels, where they dig for gold.

Photo by
Anna Schwarzing



The biggest difference between small scale mining and big concerns, they are mostly Canadian ones in this region, is that small scale miners do not use chemicals and have to do the process of gold washing with their hands. Mining concerns are also settled in the Cordillera and also contaminated the environment there. Open pit mining also has the negative effect of destroying the views of the mountains, as they get cut down by the companies while searching for raw materials. Surface and Underground Mining eat the mountains up from their inside. This causes a dangerous situation for the people living there, as the Philippines are located on the ring of fire and earthquakes are a frequent occurrence.

In the Cordillera the environment was also contaminated with toxic mud. Due to a typhoon the companies just opened their dam and flooded the nearby villages. Agriculture, what was once the main source of income, is not possible anymore. Poverty and unemployment are the results. A lot of people had to change their profession to mining, as

there were no other opportunities to gain money.

The money the miners receive for this heavy labor, is way too less. Six miners and their families have to share approximately 50 Euros per month. The circumstances of living in the small house, where the miners live during the week, near to the mining tunnels, are hard to bear. The river, next to the hut is toxic, even cows die, if they would drink the water from it, and the tunnels, which were digged by forefathers of the miners, do not seem secure. Often the men have to work the whole day, which means eight hours, within sunlight, because the two hours walk out of the mountain is too long for lunchbreak. On the weekends the stones which do contain gold, have to be carried up to the village, where the women, mostly the mothers and wives of the miners separate the gold from the rocks and mud. The left over sand is often bought by mining companies, which are able to get more gold out of this sand with their chemical procedure, then the families have to live by.

Photo by
Anna Schwarzing



It is sad to know, that the miners we visited are working under relatively good working conditions, as the mountain there are working in is owned by relatives of them. If miners have to work for a stranger they are often paid even less and get exploited.

There is also no high hope that these facts will change in the near future. Raw materials as gold and copper are wanted resources and still more valuable than the people living in the Cordillera or on Marinduque. Also the destruction of the rich environment is not as important as the profit of some mining concerns.

What we as Kapintigs learned during our stay at the Philippines is a global perspective which enables us to look at these things in a more critical way than before. I will also think twice before buying a new technical device the next time, keeping the impressive and keen experiences during our Lerneinsatz in my mind.

Photo by
Margareta Stern



Marinduque: BECs and Hostfamilies

BEC:
Basic Ecclesial
Community

Photo by
Margareta Stern

Bianca Wieser

After our great experiences with the MaCEC Youth we were travelling to our first immersion. Therefore we spent 4 days and 3 nights at host families from Basic Christian Communities. In order to be the Church of the poor, the Philippine Church adopted the movement to foster and organize Basic Ecclesial Communities, BECs.



We split our group into two and so Maggie, Simone and Bianca were accommodated in the Barangay Tay Tay, close to the Village St. Joseph. Our new home had about 106 households and is located at the northeast side of Marinduque.

After travelling by Jeepney we made our first stop at the priests place. He welcomed us warmly and together we ate our first merienda. At this moment we didn't know that we will become our lunch in almost 1 hour.

While eating we had a lot of fun and were talking about our works and lifestyles at home. The priest pointed out very often (also the following days) that he found in us his lost sisters and he would like to keep us in his parish.

After the merienda he took us with his car to our new home place. The around 200 families survive from selling and harvesting their own rice, mangos, coconuts and fishing.

Again they welcomed us very warmly and we got some delicious food. Everybody was very happy that we stayed at their place. After introducing ourselves, we were dancing Walzer together and the head of the Barangay delivered a speech. After the official part we had free time, so we tried to get a little bit familiar with our hometown and went to our lovely hostmum Julieta. She offered us to go by boat through the sea. We got a big company and so we enjoyed our boat trip. During that we tried lato, some kind of sea-

Photo by
Margareta Stern

weed and catching some fish – without success.

When we were back again on land we learned a lot about coconuts. We tried to harvest and crack it, learned the differences types of coconuts, they taught us about the coconut tree as “the tree of life”. You can use everything from it – for drinking, food, souvenirs, huts and so on.

The young coconut (Buko) is green and the pulp is very soft. The old one (Niyog) is brown and the more familiar one. We drank the coconut water and had a lot of fun while we were trying to open it.

After that, we produced the coconut milk by ourselves. For this we had to grate the coconut and then kneaded them until the milk came out. Referring to that, we used the milk for our dinner. (Dinner of the day: Jackfruit, fish, chili, lemongrass, coconut milk, coconut water, salt, rice)

Before we ate, children arrived from school and came to the house of our hostparents. First they were shy and reserved, but gradually they began to smile and take pictures with us. After the meal we sat together and learned interesting details about the Philippines.

Photo by
Margareta Stern



Life here is very simple but the cohesion in this community is very strong. The love between each other and friendliness was from the beginning noticeable. Also the concern for us and the hospitality was amazing.

On the next day we got rice and fish for breakfast – I still miss this kind of breakfast so much!!

After we went to the school and were visiting every classroom. Because it was Wednesday the kids were allowed to

Photo by
Margareta Stern



wear what they want – it was the so called freestyle day so they didn't had to wear school uniform. Accompanied by some children and teachers we went to the rice field. We stood in the mud up to knees and planted rice – our tried to do it. Hopefully now the harvest is a good one. Again and again we could hear from behind shouts like “deeper, farther left, not quite so deep, yeah it's perfect”.

The Tricycle took us home and we immediately packed our swimming clothes. By boat we went to the other shore. An unusual experience was waiting for us. The first time with flip-flops, swimwear and T-shirt in a very warm sea. We found a lot of beautiful sea stars and also sea urchin. Our host father explained us to watch one's step. For lunch another boat was coming and brought us our food. While we were enjoying swimming in the sea some of the men were catching a lot of fishes and freshly prepared the feast.

In the early evening we drove back again and at around 17.30 the first students came back home. We had to make a lot of selfies with them – but the kids and we enjoyed it. Afterwards we ate dinner and with the solidarity night they said goodbye to us. After a lot of acceptance speeches five children performed a dance, which we were able to give afterwards also to the our best. After this... Stage free for all of us. It was feeling a little bit similar to a Jungscharlagerdisco. Everyone was at first very shy and reserved and after a while no one wanted to stop dancing anymore and go to sleep despite tiredness.

Towards 23.00 due to the heavy rain we have to finish with dancing. Before we went to bed we had to make again a lot of pictures.

Due to the rainy weather, our complete program was re-located. We could not go to the second Barangay, because

a river was flooded. So they had to find an alternative program for us very quickly. We learned to dry fish - not only theoretically, also practically. Fortunately, the fishes were already dead; the latest after our slaughter would be that. Drying fish is very important for the community because during full moon they are not able to catch fishes. We also helped preparing food, tipped vegetables, fried potatoes and showed our pictures from home. Continue to wait and to take a rest - something we had to get used in the Philippines more often.

Photo by
Margareta Stern



Photo by
Margareta Stern

At noon we were picked up by a tricycle and were taken to a place near St. Joseph. The priest from the first day ate with us in the afternoon and we went to the holy mass together in the evening. The church was kept very simply. Three priests very celebrating the mass. The worship process was very similar to ours - the sermon lasted about 45 minutes. We sung a lot, accompanied with guitar. It was a very lively holy mass. In the end, we were able to introduce ourselves and share with the parish community our experiences so far. Then two dinners followed within 1 hour. We all ate crabs for the first time and really enjoyed it. The evening was cosy with mango shake, beer and good discussions.

The next day started very early because we had to go to school. 187 students were already waiting for us. The school principal / pastor, Rory, etc. gave a speech and explained our stay, DKA, Kapintig, ... We were showered with friendliness, a dance was shown to us and then our time was coming. We talked about our last days, the differences to Austria (time, weather, seasons ...) and afterwards we danced a waltz together.

Photo by
Margareta Stern



At the same time there was also fire and earthquake training and so we learned we had to behave in case of burning clothes, etc. - an earwig - stop-drop-roll-cool-call.

After a small break, where we made a lot of pictures we offered the students a little German language course. At the end we played the singing game Laurenzia – together with around 200 people.

After that we went back home, ate again crabs for lunch and tried our first time Tuba – the palm wine is an alcoholic Filipino national drink. Tuba is extracted from the inflorescence of coconut trees. With this drink we said salamat po to a really great and fun immersion.



Photos by
Margareta Stern



AKKMA Valenzuela

Aktibong Kababaihan
ng Komunidad
sa Mapulang lupa
, Inc.
—
aktive gemeinschaft
für frauen und kinder

Margareta Stern

In the office of AKKMA,
VALENZUELA.
Photo by AKKMA



Meeting the women of AKKMA was the most inspiring event to me that took place in these whole four weeks – nowhere else NGO-people had so strong faith, loud voices and chased their aspirations with such a strong but also pragmatic will.

We first met the women of AKKMA on (DATE DATE DATE), after we took a one hour taxi ride to the city of Valenzuela, one of the many cities in Metro Manila; a city known for its slum communities.

The people living in Valenzuela are called the working poor: Men are usually working 12 hour shifts in factories, women are either stuck at home with children and housework or switching between housework and minijobs to provide some extra income for their families, but even if both parents are busy up to 16 hours a day to earn money, it is barely enough to ensure a proper living for their family.

Often it happens that the education of their children is the only way of families to invest in a better future: The children have much pressure to finish school and go to university, so they will get better jobs and can pay for their siblings' education and nutrition later off.

In this environment, AKKMA established, to help women to lead a better and freer life – for example, AKKMA provided a day care center for infants, so the mothers have some free time or could go to work, but also to teach the children and their parents about healthy nutrition. AKKMA also supports women who have been victims of (sexual) harassment or violence, offers counseling lessons and accompanies them to the police, and, following, to the court.

“Ate” is kind of a respectful nickname for elder sisters, being called “ate” shows you respect and trust.

Also, AKKMA’s agenda includes teaching housewives how to make peanut butter, cough medicine (which is called lagundi syrup), massage oil and blankets out of fabric remnants – they offer them the option to earn some money on their own so they are not entirely depending on their husband’s money, which is a big step towards independency.

This was the basic information we got about the work of AKKMA when we arrived at their small office, right before we dined with them – afterwards we split up in groups by two and were introduced to our host mums, they took us to show us their places.

The streets of Valenzuela were small, loud and dirty, but everything was full of life – children played everywhere, tricycles searched their ways through the crowd, people stared and laughed at us when we passed by, but they were just curious, never mean. children started following us, shouting: “What’s your name?” and “Hello, ate Anna! Hello, ate Maggie!”

We spent the day with our family, visiting the market and chatting with young people around the neighbourhood, who were just at the same age as we are, studying at the university of Valenzuela.

Before we got there, we were often being warned about the criminality and poor circumstances there, but i have to admit; nowhere in the Philippines i felt that welcome and safe in a host family as in the small neighbourhood in Valenzuela.

Our host mum was very open-minded, and it was great that she spoke english, so we talked a lot after dinner.

Our host mum, entering her house.
Photo by Anna Schwarzinger



Photo by
Margareta Stern

About living in the slum community, about money, about childcare and her life in general.

In the next morning, we visited the AKKMA daycare center, the local kindergarten. As we entered the room, the children were standing in line performing a cute song about fruits and vegetables. They were adorable, singing and playing! Then, all of the parents became excited very quickly and wanted to take pictures of us with the children, which was very overwhelming and chaotic – the children just wanted to sing, play or eat, but were forced to sit on our laps for the perfect photo, many of them felt clearly uncomfortable and a few even started to cry. We did our best to escape the situation and free the children from their annoying duty, and after half an hour the parents left with their children.

Photo by
Anna Schwarzingger



Then the peanut butter making started: The women of AKKMA showed us how to roast the peanuts, then mix them with other ingredients like sugar and oil and grind them in a motorised machine. For all of us, it was really amazing to watch, because every one of us loves peanut butter so much – but we never got the idea to make some by ourselves before. It looked so easy and tasted so delicious – we bought a lot of it afterwards, to show everyone back in Vienna how good homemade philippine peanut butter tastes.

(Spoiler: Everybody loved it!)

Afterwards, they told us about their local speciality; the lagundi syrup cough medicine, made from local herbs.

While they cooked the syrup, the leader of AKKMA told

Photo by
Margareta Stern



us about their opinions on feminism and women`s rights, then they sang us a song about what it means to be a woman – and what it NOT means to be.

The core essence of the song was that women shall not be judged for who they are – that they are strong, self-sustaining and independent people, that their bodies only belong to them, that no man has the right to declare a woman as his property.

It was a very touching moment for me when i realised: Their feminism is our feminism, and even if our worlds are divided by so many things, we have this strong connection which should be strenghtened even more.

I left AKKMA with a strong feeling of satisfaction – i felt like i gained a lot from the past two days, that i learned something that i could take home and talk about.

Extra Juridical Killings

Simone Fuchs

Photo by
Anna Schwarzing

On Friday morning we went to Sterten Place, to hear some lectures about the extra judicial killings.

Father Daniel started his lecture with a documentary of victims, affected by such killings. Then he told us some very touching stories about what happened in his parish during the last year: Several men had been killed by the police due to drug abuse and addiction. Due to these procedures women and their children are left behind. They are not only traumatised by the loss but are also facing lack of primary care as in most cases there isn't any income for the family.



Father Daniel showed us a lot of pictures and told us the individual story of each family, every one of them is an own tragedy. He ended his report by showing how his parish tries to help. They are not only providing money for the women to start their own little businesses, but are also trying to take psychical care of the families.

He started several support-groups for the mothers and the children, where they get the chance to talk about their feelings or express them in another way. He said, often it even helps to know, that someone is there to listen.

The second lecture we heard was given by Isaac Linco of PhilRights. This presentation was more about the facts behind the extra judicial killings. We were shown lots of numbers and figures that demonstrated, how many people suffer from this abuse of power.

The slides we saw were originally designed to be shown to EU-committee. In the end we saw the official suggestions for the European Union how to deal with the Philippines and their president, it was very fascinating to see, that PhilRights suggests bans for their own country. This morning was one of the most touching ones of our Kapintig.

Cordillera Host Family Experience

Photo by
Simone Fuchs

CorDisRDS
Cordillera Disaster
Response and
Development Services

CorDisRDS Inc.
envision a Cordillera
region where:
The people can effectively manage disasters or emergencies that befall them;
Communities are able to exercise self-reliance and self-determination;
Communities are able to control, utilize and nurture their natural resources to sustain the present and future generations;
Communities are able to maximise their indigenous socio-political institutions, where both women and men meaningfully participate in decision-making process;
The people enjoy equitable access to socio-economic and socio-cultural opportunities and services;
Communities are food sufficient and the basic human right to food is met;
The people can take pride in their cultural heritage and identity;
The people live in peace and unity.

Agnes Gruber



After a week of typhoon-weather in Manila we travelled to Baguio, capital city of the Cordillera Region in the North of Luzon and while reading about the heatwave in Austria in messages from at home arrived in a freezing Baguio welcoming us with 19 degrees, rain all day and foggy views that reached no further than the next 200 metres. Post cards views of rice terraces and Cordillera mountain tops in our minds could – at least for the time being – not be matched with real impressions. The cold arrival added another aspect to my picture of the Philippines as a place of stark contrasts.

Three days of our stay in the Cordillera Region we spent in Barangay Ucab living with hostfamilies. Ucab is part of the municipality of Itogon, a district 17 km north of Baguio or a 40 minutes ride by Cheepney. Well equipped to visit a small miner's community replacing the slippers of the last three weeks with newly bought rubber boots we arrived at Ucab heaving a sigh of relief: Unlike Manila it is not a hot place, but unlike freezing Baguio at this time of the year attributed to its lower elevation Itogon was warm and surrounded by mountain tops we could actually see.

As a group of six we were invited to stay in pairs of two in three hostfamilies for the next three days. We reached the house of our host family following a path winding down a steep slope between the houses of the neighbourhood. Compared to some other houses nearby it was spacious and looked newly built. During the evening my eldest host brother would share that they built this house replacing their former one, where water was dripping inside through the leaking roof on rainy days, with money earned abroad. He had worked years building ships in Japan and his elder sister working as a nurse in an Arabic country was home on her once-in-two-years-holiday, while we stayed at their house.

Photo by
Anna Schwarzing

I confronted the adventurous and exciting connotation of travelling and staying abroad I had in my mind and taken for granted turned with the reality of Filipino labour migrants - overseas workers. For millions of Filipinos it is one of the rare opportunities to earn a living going beyond living from hand to mouth. A choice that tends to lack voluntary nature and a hard one considering hard and sometimes even brutal working conditions abroad.



We spent the evening celebrating with friends and family who filled the living room. Unlike in other places we visited, I enjoyed us not being the one and only focus of the attention. I rather had the feeling of being part of a coming-together, our visit being the welcome opportunity to celebrate amongst family and friends.

When we moved to the room that was explained to us to be “ours” for the next days to get some rest, a cat sprang through the wall. My KAPINTIG-sister who was about to stay with me at this host family, a person in fact not too fond of animals was not amused. I was relieved to find out that the cat had not come through the wall, but through an open window behind closed curtains. We had a good rest and woke up to a song coming from the computer in the living room. Our sister-for-four-days showed us where to fetch rainwater behind the house to wash our faces. Bianca was not amused again. Between the backdoor and the water bowl lived the youngest family members – a batch of puppies who greeted us enthusiastically and didn’t care to make a difference between their dog-loving family and the slightly more reserved guests. But even Bianca loved something about one of our host pets: it was the name of a big and quiet dog lovingly called “hazard” by his owners.

That seemed to fit for all those animals, as accepted house-mates not keeping any distance, but all of a sudden hopping on Bianca's lap at any moment she felt safe and secure sipping her morning coffee. Better be prepared for such natural hazards. (Bianca never was.)

Community life, lived traditions and culture and close family ties seemed to me to be an important part of the lives of the family members we met and who made us feel part of their family although we never had met before. On our second evening our host sisters and brothers showed us how to play the nose flute, a traditional instrument of the indigenous peoples made of bamboo. While Bianca and me were trying hard everyone was laughing a lot – including us two. One brother was a real professional on indigenous music and all of them were actively engaged in the communities' cultural activities in Ucab.

Photo by
Margareta Stern



For this community and - within it - for our host-family the history of mining activities in Itogon meant a struggle decisive for the lives of generations. "Land is Life" means for the Indigenous Peoples of the Cordillera a strong bond with the land of their ancestors, at Itogon a soil perforated for 100 years by large scale mining companies; the soil, on which the house of our host-family was built, and in which their ancestors were buried only few steps from their home, the white gravestone near the path we crossed every day while staying at Itogon. That company would not publish their maps showing the tunnel systems probably putting the houses built there at risk of collapsing one day. Where their ancestors had lived for generations large scale mining activities had resulted in falling ground water levels that made subsistence by growing their own foods impossible,

leaving them with only one source of income: small scale mining. Our host dad had been a small scale miner and active in the resistance that finally lead to the stop of destructive large scale mining in the area – extracting gold and with grams of gold producing tons of toxic waste. Our host brothers working as small scale miners were engaged in the lobbying for methods of mining without using chemicals and passing on their cultural traditions, music and values. Our host-sister was engaged at CorDis an NGO that worked hard to make their vision of a different life for Cordilleran peoples true: self-reliant, self-determined, sustainable and peaceful.

A Cordillera where communities are able to exercise self-reliance and self-determination; where they control, utilize and nurture their natural resources to sustain the present and future generations; where people take pride in their cultural heritage and identity and live in peace. - Staying with our host families in Ucab, Itogon for three days we experienced that this was not today's Cordillera yet. But remembering their welcoming attitude and their naturalness in sharing their homes and lifes with us for those days I am with them in wishing it will become this Cordillera very soon.

Photo by
Margareta Stern



Visiting ECPAT

Photo by
Klara Maringele

Klara Maringele



In our Urban Poor Experience in Manila we visited a shelter for girls from the worldwide organisation ECPAT.

What is ECPAT?

ECPAT stands for End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography & Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes. In the world there are 88 ECPAT Organisations in 90 different states. The home in Manila is for girls from 12 to 18 years and beyond. The problems of the children is child abuse, prostitution, pornography trafficking. So ECPAT is against commercial, sexual exploitation of children.

Our experience in the home was really good. In the beginning the social worker of the home explained the purposes of the shelter and after that we met the girls, who live there.

In the beginning the girls acted for us. The story of the acting was about school, mobbing and also about good breeding. The act was full of energy and obviously the girls had a lot of fun and our group too. After that they danced and sang also for us, it was impressive.

The evening was so great we played games, the girls braid our hair and we all had really beautiful hairstyles. They also asked us to bring the blessing of a carol singer and so we improvised and knocked on their door.

We talked with them about first love and broken hearts and it was nice to get to know them better.

We also ate together sweet spaghetti and after that we tried to make Austrian Palatschinken. The girls didn't like the Palatschinken so much because they weren't sweet enough but the chocolate sauce they liked so the eating changed really. The best thing was that the girls started to feed us.

It was a good experience to see the girls who experienced such terrible things to see them so full of energy.

KAPINTIG

Thank you
<3

Agnes Gruber

KAPINTIG is the name of the intercultural learning program in the PHILIPPINES.

KAPINTIG:

One pulse, one journey, a common endeavour,
a common yearning, a reaching out, one people,
one humanity, one creation.

We would like to thank all Filipin@s who made us feel
this KAPINTIG, this common heartbeat during our stay!

Maraming salamat-po!

Pu mi pintig? Buhay na buhay!

How is your heart?

It is beating vigorously and very much alive. <3



