**Philippines**

- Peace Corps Philippines is the agency’s second-oldest country program.
- 87+ languages spoken in the Philippines
- Consists of 7,100 islands
- According to UNICEF:
  - 2001-2009, Philippines is 1 of only 7 countries where HIV cases increased by over 25%
  - 36.8% of population still lives in poverty
  - 47.5% living on less than $2 U.S.
- Philippines is a source and destination country for labor and sex trafficking. Causes include: poverty, lack of education, high unemployment, displaced families and individuals due to natural disasters, high unemployment and fraud job recruitments, lack of official documentation, government and law enforcement corruption, etc.

**Dumaguete City, Philippines**

- Capital city of the island “Negros Oriental”
- Population of 125,000
- Centralized location for major tourist and scuba-dive destination

**Host Country Agency**

- Silliman University Extension Program & Marina Mission Clinic: Community-based institution focused on promoting holistic health of individuals and communities through numerous initiatives:
  - Health services in rural areas including reproductive health, family planning and alternative medicine, such as acupuncture
  - Trainings focused on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, income generating projects and environmental protection and development

**Community Partners**

- Youth Advocates through Theater Arts: Develop the creative potentials of young people and produce socially-relevant artistic products to raise people’s awareness and challenge them towards action
- Visayan Forum: Innovate solutions to end modern-day slavery

**Projects & Outcomes:**

- **Special Project: Magdalena Organization**
  - Approximately 20 women, between the ages of 24 and 58, who work in and are survivors of prostitution.
  - Conducted workshops on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, healthy and abusive relationships, and developed an alternative livelihood project.

- **Livelihood Project:**
  - Created doormats and pot holders out of recycled shirt materials.
  - Ten women were trained, four women were identified as fast learners.
  - Project is sustained through community partners selling the items within Silliman University.

- **Maternal & Child Health Grant – Health & Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH)**
  - 30 youth, between the ages of 13 to 22, were trained in life skills on topics including drugs and alcohol, nutrition, relationships and goal planning.
  - Youth learned communication skills, healthy ways to resolve conflicts, refusal skills and practical ways to not fall into peer pressure.
  - ARH topics: Relationships, cyber predators, contraception, peer pressure, reproductive organs, puberty, STIs and HIV/AIDS.
  - Activities included art and drawing, theater and role playing scenarios.

- **V-Day Movement & V-Girls Workshop**
  - Movement focused on ending violence against women and girls.
  - Position as the Chair of Finances: Held meetings with community partners regarding partnerships and funding. Supervised volunteers to follow-up with community partners and delegated organizational tasks.
  - Projects & Outcomes:
    - Conducted workshops on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, healthy and ARH topics: Bullying, body image, reproductive health, violence against women locally and globally (sex trafficking and female genital mutilation) and being an advocate for change and ending violence.

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- Thank you to the V-Day Movement & V-Girls Workshop for being an advocate for change and ending violence.
- Thank you to your Filippino friends and family for welcoming me into your lives and homes! Salamat kaayo sa tanan!

**Lessons Learned**

- Embrace failure as a learning opportunity.
- Networking and building relationships was important in order to gain community involvement and promote sustainability.
- Learning the language allowed me to be more respected and approachable.
- Try to not have high expectations of what your experience will look like. This may be harmful to your service because it is possible your expectations will not be met.
- Do not compare your service to the service of another volunteer.
- Maintain a positive attitude and learn to laugh at yourself.

**Career Connections**

- Gained practical experience working internationally alongside host country counterparts.
- Developed an awareness of cultural sensitivity by integrating into Filipino culture as much as possible and challenging my privilege and identity.

**Skills**

- Language skills: 170 hours of formal instruction in Tagalog & Cebuano.
- Facilitation and module development.
- Grant writing.
- Community organizing and network building.
- Problem-solving.

**Peace Corps Philippines**

**Youth Development Volunteer – Children, Youth and Family Sector**

**Jillian Albert**

University of Michigan – Masters International