



# Project Cagayan de Oro

## Volunteer Information

Updated January 20th, 2012

## Table of Contents

Project Cagayan de Oro Background information	3
Volunteering	3
Safety & Security	4
Health	5
Life on Base	6
Preparing for Your Trip	8
Travel to the project	9
Anything Else?	12
The All Hands Story	12

## Project Cagayan de Oro Background Info

The southern Philippines region on the island of Mindanao has suffered from destructive flash floods and landslides as a result of Typhoon Washi/Sendong, which struck the country on December 16. Almost 50,000 houses have been damaged or destroyed and 37,000 people are still living in temporary evacuation centers.

With nearly 350,000 people affected, the city of Cagayan de Oro was one of the hardest hit. All Hands will begin volunteer operations here on Friday, January 20, 2012. Work will initially involve removing mud and debris from some of the 12,000 houses impacted by the floodwaters. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to assist with the construction of 150 permanent homes for families who will be relocated from at-risk areas along the riverbanks. Volunteers will be working with local organizations and alongside community members to provide this much needed assistance in flood-affected areas around the city.

Other opportunities may come to light as the project progresses. All Hands and our partners will work to identify any other areas where our resources could contribute to the recovery effort underway in Cagayan de Oro.

## Volunteering

### Our Mission:

Our mission is to help communities in need anywhere in the world by empowering volunteers. Our focus is to assist families while providing rewarding volunteer opportunities.

### What Does It Cost?

We do not charge a participation fee to volunteer. You get yourself to the project and work hard each day. We provide shelter, food, and the tools, materials, and organization for work. Our average cost for these logistics while you are on a project is US\$20 a day. If you would like to make a donation to cover your time on the project or just make a general donation to support the relief efforts on the ground you can do so [here](#).

To give you a general idea of prices here: a meal on your day off will cost from P70, a beer P35 and a taxi into town around P150.

Did you know that you can help from home before your trip by engaging your family, friends and coworkers? By setting up a custom online fundraising page you can give everyone you know a way to directly donate to help the families that were affected by the flood. Learn more about helping with fundraising or setup your page today: [Make a bigger impact!](#)

## Safety & Security

### Will I be Safe In Mindanao?

We do not wish to discourage you from volunteering or reduce your enthusiasm, but we feel it is critical that all potential volunteers make well-informed decisions as they consider joining us, or any other organization, in the Philippines. All Hands Volunteers would not launch a project if we didn't feel it was safe, but there are inherent risks involved with any international travel, particularly in a disaster-affected area. We encourage you to do your own research before deciding if you're comfortable living and operating in this environment. Consult your country's travel recommendations for the Philippines, learn more about the situation in western Mindanao, and get the facts about the health and safety risks.

#### **Political and Social**

Several rebel groups have been active in the southern Philippines for nearly four decades, particularly in western Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. These groups occasionally clash with the Philippines Armed Forces and have been linked to a number of kidnappings and terrorist attacks throughout the country, in some cases targeting foreigners. Most governments have travel advisories in effect for Mindanao and recommend avoiding all non-essential travel to certain regions. Cagayan de Oro is considered a safe part of Mindanao, but is 50km from the border of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a stronghold of rebel forces.

Cagayan de Oro is a major city of over 500,000 and while violent crime rates are low, petty theft and crimes of opportunity will be a continuous concern. There is no dress code per se but local women do dress fairly modestly.

#### **Natural Disasters**

Situated in an active cyclone area, and along the "ring of fire," the Philippines is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world. Tropical cyclones and volcanic eruptions are common, and earthquakes are a risk. We will stock emergency equipment and supplies, and implement our emergency plan if the need arises.

### Will I Be Safe At The Housing Site?

We will continuously monitor security alerts and are prepared to respond if the security situation worsens, however we generally prefer to take a community-based approach. We've found that establishing a positive reputation and tight relationships in the community where we operate is much more effective than high walls and armed guards. We still make sure to lock the doors, and have a local watchman on duty at all times to help keep an eye on things, but we also place a significant responsibility on individual volunteers to practice the awareness and good decision-making to keep themselves and their fellow volunteers safe and sound each day.

Cagayan de Oro is considered safe, and violent crime rates are low. Occasionally, thefts may occur, which are most commonly crimes of opportunity resulting from carelessness with belongings. Remember that your camera, wallet, or iPod might be too much temptation for someone in a desperate situation, and please be discreet and careful with your possessions. All Hands will provide a secure, lockable space on base for you to keep your valuables, if you choose.

For your safety there will be an 11pm curfew during the week, extended to midnight on Saturdays.

Harassment or violence towards volunteers, staff, or community members will result in immediate dismissal from Project Cagayan de Oro.

### Will I Be Safe At The Worksite?

Volunteers will be provided with the proper instruction and briefed on each day's work projects. We aim to provide an experienced site supervisor for volunteers new to certain tasks; this is a great way to learn new skills!

Accidents can be avoided by taking precautions and staying alert to your surroundings. Because flooded and contaminated household belongings and building materials are among the debris to be removed from work sites, sturdy, high-topped work boots are recommended. Work sites can have unstable footing and mud is often slippery so take your time to avoid falling. There may be nails or other debris that may puncture your shoes or clothing. Volunteers are requested to provide their own work gloves and eye protection.

All volunteers will be required to sign a medical release and insurance waiver releasing All Hands from liability due to any accidents that may occur on site.

First aid kits are always available at work sites ... just in case.

## Health

### Physical Health

Volunteers should be in good physical health as much of the work on this project will involve manual labor in a hot and humid climate. Dengue and malaria are present and prophylaxis is suggested. There has recently been an outbreak of leptospirosis in Mindanao. Rabies is rare in the Philippines but has not been eradicated; the last reported case was in 2010. Remember that frequent hand washing and good hygiene is the first line of defense in staying healthy and productive. Incoming volunteers should read information available online and consult a travel doctor for advice on prevention and treatment. Please review the WHO's health information for international travellers [here](#).

### Mental Health

Working in a post-disaster environment and communal living situation is tiring and stressful. The work is full of its own rewards, but do not compromise your mental health or the safety and effectiveness of the work by ignoring your limits. All volunteers staying long-term will be required to take a minimum 3-night break from the project every 30 days, a minimum 7-night break from project every 60 days, and a minimum 10-night break from project every 120 days. Volunteers are responsible for all mental health break expenses, so budget accordingly if you plan to be here a while.

## Medical Emergencies

Most medical facilities are functioning in Cagayan de Oro and good medical care is available at any of several local hospitals or clinics. We always try to work safely and carefully so that we can minimize our use of these resources, which are meant for the community.

A serious medical emergency may require evacuation to a larger city or out of the country. As such, **All Hands strictly requires that every volunteer have travel insurance including medical evacuation.**

## Life on Base

### What Kind Of Accommodations Can I Expect?

We will be living just down the street from the “tent city” relocation center where evacuees are occupying 409 Shelterbox tents. Our base is about 10 minutes from the city center and is considered safe from flash floods. We will be living in a large house: the two bathrooms have flush toilets and cold water bucket showers.

You will be provided a bunk space but not any bedding; you are responsible for supplying a sleeping pad or mattress as your taste requires.

This sleeping arrangement is well suited for rectangular style mosquito net hanging and it is highly recommended you bring a net with you.

### How Do I Call My Mom (Or Send E-mail)?

It is an All Hands standard to provide internet connectivity for our volunteers. Initially it will be via a shared MiFi type of device, which offers limited bandwidth. We hope to bring high-speed access to our base as we work with local providers to connect the tent city.

There are numerous internet cafes in the city of Cagayan de Oro. The service is inexpensive and fast, but you might want to bring earplugs as they are often packed with gamers!

We are in an area where mobile phone service is available and we will provide contact numbers for incoming calls. It is also very inexpensive to purchase a handset and SIM in country on a prepaid plan. The most common carriers in our area are SMART and GLOBE. AHV is using the SMART network. Also, an unlocked or international plan phone will work throughout the area.

### What Will The Weather Be Like?

Hot and humid – perfect AHV Project weather, just the way we like it! We will be working in the “dry” season but this does not mean that it will not rain, it just won’ t rain as much. You should always travel with an umbrella or lightweight rain jacket. The average high is 90 degrees Fahrenheit and 72 degrees for the low. We are located close to the equator so when the sun does shine it is fierce. A hat, sun glasses, and sunscreen are essential. Many modes

of transport have you exposed to the elements and in the evening, despite the relatively mild temperatures, it can feel cool with the added breeze, so a light long-sleeve layer is a good idea.

### Can I Charge My Laptop?

The electrical grid supplies 220v power at 60Hz. Most electronics will be compatible, but always confirm the specifications of your device before plugging it in. The most common plug type is the flat USA 2 pin.

We appear to have a steady supply of power, but it is common for the area to experience brownouts. The area we are living in just gained 2,000 to 4,000 new residents due to relocation, so the power supply may become unreliable. If this should happen we will run a generator each day and your ability to recharge electrical devices may be limited.

Please consider your electrical needs carefully and pack accordingly.

### What Is The Food Like?

All Hands will provide volunteers with three meals a day six days per week. Breakfast will be bread and cereal with coffee and tea. Lunch and dinner will be simple, traditional Filipino food, which usually features rice with chicken, pork or fish. The food of Mindanao has much in common with that from Thailand or Indonesia, using a variety of Southeast Asian spices not commonly used in the rest of the country.

Vegetarian diets can be accommodated but we would welcome your patience as such requirements are not common. You may also wish to supplement your diet, either with food you bring from home or supplies you pick up locally.

The Philippines also has a tradition of serving a light snack at 10:00am and 3:00pm each day, known as merienda. This daily occurrence at the workplace often consists of biscuits or cookies and possibly fruit and a beverage. Plan to enjoy, but make sure to leave room for lunch and dinner!

### Not Comfortable With Our Set-Up?

Cagayan de Oro is a large, functioning city with many hotel options. Volunteers living outside our accommodations will be responsible for their own housing costs as well as transportation to and from the work sites each day and will be required to work on the same schedule as your co-volunteers.

# Preparing for Your Trip

## Language

English is one of the official languages of the Philippines and most people speak at least a few words and phrases. The other is Filipino and these two are spoken alongside 169 different languages across the country's 7000+ islands. You do not need to learn any Filipino to get by but a few words go a long way. Click [here](#) to get started!

## Visas

People from most western countries do not need a visa to enter the Philippines. A 21-day visa on arrival will be issued at the airport and this can be extended in country. There is some information at the website below but you should confirm details with the Philippine Embassy in your country of citizenship. It is your responsibility to ensure you are aware of visa requirements and are in possession of the correct documents and permits.

[http://immigration.gov.ph/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=80](http://immigration.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=80).

## Packing List

There are plenty of shopping opportunities around if you have forgotten something. The Philippines is a wonderland for people who are inclined to spend significant time in malls. There are no less than 4 malls in CDO and you can buy just about everything in air-conditioned comfort. Despite all of this potential fun, please come prepared with all the basics you will need during your stay so that you can get right to work.

As this is a flood response project, there will be times you will be handling household items, building materials, and debris that are covered in mud. **Be prepared for any clothing you wear on the worksite to be destroyed.**

### *Must bring:*

- Sleeping sheets and mattress or sleeping pad (we DO NOT provide bedding)
- Mosquito net (box-style works best)
- Personal work gear & safety equipment
- Sturdy footwear
- Work pants
- Work shirts
- Second pair of shoes that will not be worn to the job site

### *Recommended:*

- Headlamp
- Personal items/toiletries/towel
- Personal cash and ATM/credit card
- Sunglasses/sunscreen/sun hat/insect repellent
- Extra work clothes
- Nice clothes (at least one set for evenings/meetings/community events, etc)
- Lightweight jacket or sweater for the rare chilly nights
- Lots of socks (these tend to disappear in a communal

- Rain boots and waterproof clothing
- Immunization shots (minimum tetanus)
- Water bottle
- Personal first aid kit
- Permanent Marker (for labeling your stuff, remember this is communal living)
- living environment)
- Comfort food/rehydration supplement
- Laptop/camera/USB memory stick (for sharing photos!)/power adaptors
- Umbrella/poncho/Rain jacket
- Earplugs
- SENSE OF HUMOR

Remember, PACK LIGHT, space is limited!

### What can I bring, as a donation, if I have extra room?

NGOs and the local government have been distributing items required by affected communities. As an individual it is impossible to bring enough to make a positive impact after such a large scale event. Giving to some and not others is unfair and it is difficult to ascertain where the need is greatest.

Instead, please consider making a [general donation or setting up a personal fundraising page](#), which will be used to directly fund the projects we' re working on. As much as possible, we try to purchase all of our materials and tools in the community where we work to support the local economy and ensure the cultural relevance and appropriateness of our purchases. We will post certain items that are difficult or expensive to source locally on our project wish list. Please have a look through this [list](#) and consider bringing something with you to contribute to our relief effort.

## Travel to Cagayan de Oro

### How Do I Get There?

Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA terminal 1, airport code MNL) is the gateway airport for most foreign travelers. There are dozens of international air carriers serving the busy MNL airport located just outside of the city of Manila. There is also the option of flying into the retired US airforce base at Clark Field located about 85km north Manila. It has been renamed as Clark International Airport (airport code CRK) and handles inbound flights from around the world.

From either arrival airport you will need to change planes in order to travel to Cagayan de Oro airport (airport code CGY). This would be a good time to visit an ATM or exchange your currency for pesos. You will need them. If you plan ahead and your flights are on time you can make a connection the same day, but allow plenty of time between your international arrival and your domestic flight. Immigration, baggage claim, customs, the shuttle transfer service,

entrance into terminal 3, and check-in can take 2 hours or more! When booking your travel take note of which terminal your domestic flight departs from.

If you have to stay overnight in Manila a pre-paid taxi into the city should cost less than P500. [Friendly's Guesthouse](#) (budget) and [Our Melting Pot](#) (great value) are good choices. Don't be put off by the shabby-looking entrance to OMP, it's really nice when you get up there.

At the MNL airport you will probably need to transfer to NAIA Terminal 3 via the free shuttle bus. The free shuttle will take you to Terminal 3 departures where Cebu Pacific, Air Philippines, PALexpress, and Zest airlines flights leave for CGY. The domestic carriers have very low checked baggage limits, so make sure to carry some pesos for the overage charges – 150 piso per every kg over 20. Pay for your checked baggage when you book your ticket and it can be as much as 73% cheaper. Check with your bank after you book flights within the Philippines as these airlines often reject payments from international credit cards. You don't want to get all the way to the counter only to be told that you don't have ticket!

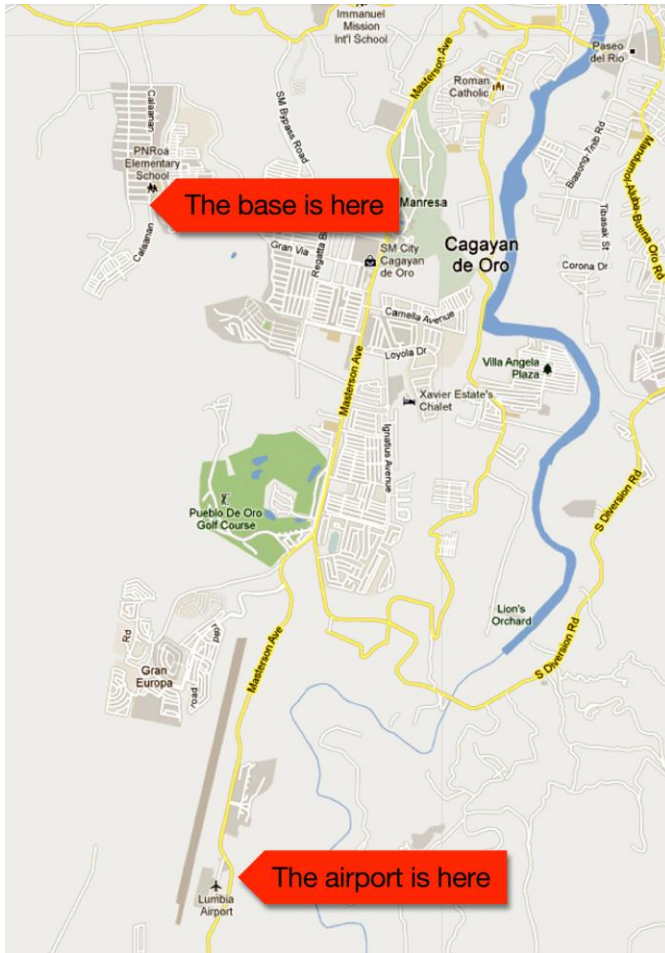
You will be required to pay the domestic airport departure tax of 200Php (note: it is 750Php for international departures).

## From The Airport

### **FROM MNL AIRPORT TO THE CITY OF MANILA AND BACK:**

If you are not able to make a connecting flight the same day there are 100' s of accommodations in Manila. Check the Lonely Planet Guide, TripAdvisor, or any other reputable source and make a decision that is right for you. To get from the airport to the city of Manila you can be adventurous and take a jeepney or hire a tricycle, or go with the most simple (but most costly) option of hiring a prepaid taxi. This is a set fee into the city through a reputable service based on your final destination. For example passage to Makati will cost about 700Php and they will drop you at the door of your hotel. You can hire a taxi on the street the next morning for your onward flight and insist they taxi use the meter. Your return taxi fee will cost as little as 170Php, but is heavily dependent upon traffic. Remember your carrier and which terminal they fly out of!

## FROM CGY AIRPORT TO THE AHV BASE:



This is a very small airport and you have almost made it to your new home! After collecting your bags head out of the terminal where at the end of the awning you will find a taxi service. Tell the driver that you need to head towards "Cala'anan relocation site" (pronounced KAHLAH AH NAHN). They will probably not understand you but be persistent in your annunciation and throw in "Sendong relocation camp." They will be very confused because you should want to go to a hotel that has a name they recognize. Once you are underway begin to look for the huge SM CITY mall on your left. You should turn to your left just past this mall and gradually head downhill and into the countryside. If you end up in the city of Cagayan de Oro you have failed. When you reach Cala'anan school turn right down the side street. Our house is on the right just after the internet café.

Our address is: Block 29, Lot 13, PN Roa, Subdivision Cala'anan, Canitoan, Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao, PI.

### By Ferry

You can also travel from Manila by boat: [Superferry](#) runs four times a week. The trip costs between PHP2228 and PHP4614 depending on the class of the ticket and takes 33 hours. You can find the schedule [here](#). Follow the taxi instructions above to get to our base.

## But What If Something Goes Wrong?

Relax. Take a deep breath. This is international travel and something is always going to go wrong. That's part of the fun, right? Patience and a smile go a long way in a stressful situation. The English language is prevalent here and there's always people willing to help you out. If you need assistance please call our Project CdO volunteer coordinator Jess Thompson at +63 919 576 0658 (from local phone dial: 0919 576 0658)

## Anything Else?

It can be dirty, hard work, but that's why we love it.

If you have additional questions, check out our forum on Facebook (search for 'All Hands Volunteers' ) to see if your question has been answered before. If you just need to talk to a person, email [projectcdo@hands.org](mailto:projectcdo@hands.org) and we'll get back to you right away.

## About All Hands

### The All Hands Story

The All Hands story began in 2005 after the devastating tsunami in December, 2004. Businessman David Campbell headed to Thailand to see how he could help. His intended one week volunteer visit turned into one month, during which he became one of the founders of HandsOnThailand, which brought more than 200 volunteers and several hundred thousand dollars to assist the rebuilding of five Phuket fishing villages. After hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of the US in 2005, David joined with several other HandsOn volunteers to establish HandsOnUSA. In total, more than 1,500 volunteers helped HandsOnUSA serve the survivors of Katrina. Six years later, the organization has mobilized nearly 10,000 volunteers from 40 countries on 24 disaster response projects in 8 countries around the world.

In 2010, this volunteer response model became known as All Hands Volunteers.

### Past All Hands Deployments

Since its inception, All Hands Volunteer has provided direct services and coordination support on twenty-four deployments in the United States and around the world.

International	USA
2012 Project CDO, Philippines, Typhoon Sendong*	2011 Project Catskills, New York USA, Hurricane Irene

2011 Project Tohoku, Japan, Tsunami	2011 Project Minot, North Dakota USA, Flooding
2010 Project Leogane, Haiti, Earthquake*	2011 Project Alabama RCC, Tornado
2009 Project Sungai Geringging, Indonesia, Earthquake	2011 Project Springfield, Massachusetts USA, Tornado
2008 Project Gonaives, Haiti, Hurricanes	2011 Project St. Louis, Missouri USA, Tornado
2007 Project Rayenda, Bangladesh, Cyclone Sidr	2010 Project Jasper County, Iowa USA, Flood Coordination
2007 Project Pisco, Peru, Earthquake	2010 Project Tennessee, USA, Flood Coordination
2006 Project Santo Domingo, Philippines, Typhoon Reming	2010 Project Rhode Island, USA, Flood Coordination
2006 Project Jogjakarta, Sawit, Indonesia, Earthquake	2009 Project Gowanda, New York USA, Flood Coordination
2004 HandsOnThailand, Bang Tao, Thailand, Tsunami	2009 Project Mena, Arkansas USA, Tornado
*Project Ongoing	2008 Project Cedar Rapids, Iowa USA, Flooding
	2008 Project Newton County, Missouri USA, Tornado
	2008 Project Gassville, Arkansas USA, Tornado
	2005 HandsOnUSA, Biloxi, Mississippi USA, Hurricane Katrina