Our HKAC Mission Trip to the Philippines was like a never ending story! Before the trip began, we went through a difficult fundraising period, because the Hong Kong protests of June–December 2019 cancelled all the campus’ large and small events. Nevertheless, the Student Ambassadors, college students, and I worked diligently to fundraise in various other ways. Above all, the living God gave us miracles that was unlike the fundraising preparations of the year before.

As the day approached to depart for the mission trip, we received bad news of an erupting volcano near where we were headed in the Philippines. Several students decided not to participate anymore, due to the potential dangers of the active volcano. This was completely understandable.

I almost canceled the trip, since safety of the team was paramount. However, while in prayer with some students, I became convinced that the same God, who led Moses and the people of Israel from the wilderness, would also lead well the HKAC Mission Trip team. In the end, with the Lord by our side, we did not give up our work in the mission field. Our living God answered our prayers.

While arriving in the Philippines, volcanic activity gradually weakened, and that allowed us to move forward bravely without any difficulty to Mindoro Island, which was the mission trip destination planned a year ago. While currently I am not able to enjoy spending time with students in person, because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, I reminisce and can still hear their hearty, excited shouting “Mission! Mission! Mindoro…!”

The HKAC Mission Trip is an annual overseas service expedition that will always continue. The students, Ms. Kat Ma, and I are gifted with cherished memories and touched hearts in all the mission trip journeys that we have undertaken on behalf of Hong Kong Adventist College.

—by Pastor Ben Seo, Interim Dean of Students

Mission Trip 2020 Newsletter Editor

Jenifer Shiu
(email): alumni@hkac.edu
(email): jenifer.shiu@hkac.edu

Mission Trip to Mindoro Island, The Philippines  (Jan.—Feb. 2020)

While arriving in the Philippines, volcanic activity gradually weakened, and that allowed us to move forward bravely without any difficulty to Mindoro Island, which was the mission trip destination planned a year ago. While currently I am not able to enjoy spending time with students in person, because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, I reminisce and can still hear their hearty, excited shouting “Mission! Mission! Mindoro…!”

The HKAC Mission Trip is an annual overseas service expedition that will always continue. The students, Ms. Kat Ma, and I are gifted with cherished memories and touched hearts in all the mission trip journeys that we have undertaken on behalf of Hong Kong Adventist College.

—by Pastor Ben Seo, Interim Dean of Students

Mighty De La Bel (SA), Chris Liaw (Senior), Dixon Ng (Junior)

Pastor Ben Seo baptizes Christopher Liaw (Senior)

Zuriel T. Hagan (Sophomore) and Dixon Ng (Junior) teach origami to Mindoro Island village kids

Article/Photos by Pastor Ben Seo, Interim Dean of Students
Photos also by Ms. Kat Ma, HKAC Girls’ Dormitory Dean
Mindoro Island, The Philippines: HKAC Mission Trip Photo Collage I

Photos by Pastor Ben Seo, Ms. Kat Ma, and Jahzeel A. Celis Galleguillos, S.A. Aug. ‘19 onward

Pastor Ben Seo carries his One Voice One Mission heart

The beauty of Mindoro Island’s hilly, mountainous landscape

Lucy Seo and her village pupil friend

Dixon Ng (Junior), Yesung Kim (Freshman), Hansol Ryu (Freshman), Hoi Yao Hung (Freshman), Zuriel Hagan (Sophomore)

Yesung Kim (Freshman) and village child

Mighty (SA), Bart (HKAA-Music), Christopher Liaw (Senior), Jahzeel A. Celis Galleguillos (SA), and Jonathan Yeoh (Senior)

Jahzeel A. Celis Galleguillos (SA), Iliana Dialetctakis (SA)

Smiling village girl with a paper heart

Zuriel T. Hagan (Sophomore) and colleague teach origami to kids

HKAC Mission Team and Mindoro Island KESI Team

Fishing boat, Mindoro Island offshore

Pastor Ben Seo and 22 HKAC Mission Team Members
From the very beginning, God showed our team that this mission trip to the Philippines was His mission trip—we were only to be instruments in carrying out the plan He had in mind. Several seemingly ominous obstacles were placed in our way to discourage us from even getting on the plane to go to the Philippines. However, every time God provided the solution and necessary resources for our team. Upon arrival, we visited with students and staff at AIIAS before taking a ferry to the Katutubo Excel School (KESI) on the island of Mindoro. KESI educates and trains underprivileged, indigenous “Katatubo” people by working with the Iraya Mangyan tribe in three areas: health and community development, education, and evangelism.

Everyone at KESI did their part in caring for the facility, ensuring there was enough food to eat, and diligently pursuing their studies for the day. Each of us shadowed a KESI student to learn about their daily life and have a more direct opportunity to share Christ with them. In turn, we were blessed to have them share what they knew about Jesus with us. Those of us on the schedule to prepare breakfast started in the kitchen at 4:30 am before continuing on with a full day’s activities complete with music class, math class, work in the garden, a game of sports, and several other activities. This experience reminded me of my homeschooling years where class work was more than bookwork and moving to another room in the house was synonymous with changing classrooms!
Mindoro Island, The Philippines: HKAC Mission Trip Photo Collage II
Photos by Pastor Ben Seo, Interim Dean of Students
Photos by Ms. Kat Ma, HKAC Girls’ Dorm Dean

Christopher Liaw (Senior) teaches children about Jesus

A Mindoro Island pupil shows his creativity

Pastor Ben Seo, Interim Dean of Students, gives a lecture

Mighty Jan De La Bel (SA) and a village man

Jahzeel A. Celis Galleguillos (SA), Bart Brondo (HKAA-Music), Mighty J. De La Bel (SA), Carina Sun-Yee Yuen (SA) and villagers

Hoi Yau Hung (Freshman) and a village lady

A prayer circle led by a HKAC Mission Team Member

A Mindoro Island family

Bart (HKAA), Mighty (SA), Iliana (SA) lead a worship sing-a-long

Dixon Ng (Junior) teaches a village child

Blue eyed Mindoro Island Girl

Carina Sun-Yee Yuen (SA) hugs a fellow worshipper
Thoughts of the Mindoro Island Mission Trip  (Jan./Feb. 2020)  

This year’s mission trip taught us so many things. We went there expecting one thing but came out experiencing something completely different. I believe it’s exactly what we needed at that moment; it was what God wanted to teach us. During my first mission trip, God taught me what it means to love and how simple it is to show love to others. This one, which is my second trip, taught me what true faith is and that it is not based on circumstances. There were so many obstacles that happened, behind the curtains, that only the mission team could understand what we were up against. Our mission team members grew fewer with each passing month, as we prepared for the trip, and that is not to even mention the volcano eruption that happened just two weeks before we left Hong Kong. Many of our prayers involved a lot of “What are we going to do, God?” The mission trip leaders decided the next step with thoughtful prayer, and what we needed the most was faith, hope and trust. That’s when God opened our eyes and made us realize how big He truly is. I’ve had the privilege of spending the week being completely vegan, hiking the hills with children who never ran out of energy, singing a prayer whenever it’s time to eat, working on the gabion (i.e. a basket or cage filled with earth or rocks used especially in building a support) with a bunch of amazing people, and watching as God transforms the hearts and minds of pretty much every person on the team. In the end, everyone was safe, blessed and rewarded with a priceless experience. Kaupawan, the awesome mountain top where there is established a Laymen Ministries school for people native to Mindoro Island, is beautiful, precious and loved. There’s certainly much more to it than described here.

Reminiscing About The Philippines Mission Trip  (Jan./Feb. 2020)  

I breathed in heavily, while struggling to contain my sanity. It was hot, and my “germa-phobic” tendencies were overruled by my need to fend off heat stroke. Five of the seven days we were there in the Mindoro Island tropics, I lay down exhausted, dehydrated and nearly defeated on the tile floor below the electric fan. It was difficult to wake up at 5:00 a.m. each morning to worship, to do manual labour, to teach, to cook, to entertain, and to work. However, laughter and serenity were always within arms’ reach, atop the little school overlooking the island. We rode on the back of a truck, ate street food for a few pesos and went into the heart of danger. Each memory of Mindoro is etched into my brain with vividness and energy. As I reminisce about these mission trip experiences, I cherish the moments of laughter and absurdities that we are often devoid of in the city. As the name suggests, mission trips are meant to give you a challenge, but that challenge is different for everybody. What may start out as a unified objective to help those in other countries may quickly diffuse and manifest into personal, differentiated objectives, as each individual confronts his or her own challenges in the field. Whether you are adventurous, timid, sociable, or intellectual, participating in any mission trip will often become the catalyst you require for your mission in life.

Jade R. Justin (Sophomore) and a Mindoro friend
Christopher Liaw (Senior) and Jade R. Justin (Sophomore) work on the gabion in the heat and humidity of Mindoro Island
Jade R. Justin (Sophomore) singing outdoors on Mindoro Island
Pastor Ben, Carina (SA), Iliana (SA), Mighty (SA), and Jahzeel (SA)
Carina Yuen (SA) prays with a village student
Jonathan Yeoh (Senior), Carina Yuen (SA), Bart Brondo (HKAA), and others listen to each other during a discussion
Mindoro Island, The Philippines: HKAC Mission Trip Photo Collage III  
Photos by Pastor Ben Seo, Ms. Kat Ma, and Jahzeel A. Celis Galleguillos, SA, Aug. ’19 onward

Pastor Ben Seo and a few HKAC Mission Team Members with their young pupils

Mindoro Island toddlers

Jahzeel A. Celis Galleguillos (SA) leads a class

Kaupawan mountaintop and the boat dock at Mindoro Island

Mighty De La Bel (SA), Jahzeel (SA), Christopher Liaw (Senior), Hansol Ryu (Freshman), Yesung Kim (Freshman)

Mindoro Island girl & her origami bird

Jahzeel A. Celis Galleguillos (SA) leads a class

Mindoro Island toddlers

Zuriel T. Hagan (Sophomore), HKAC alumna, and Jade R. Justin (Sophomore)

Mindoro Island girl & her origami bird

Bart Brondo (HKAA-Music Faculty) sets the rhythm for a worship sing-a-long activity

Mindoro Island village girls play near their home

Working on the gabion despite the day’s heat

Village boy & his origami airplane

The HKAC Mission Team are ready to rock-n-roll!