## Study Exchange Transcript

**Text on Screen:**

Study Exchange Manila Philippines

Grace Rule
Bachelor of Human Services/Master of Social Work

Hello, my name is Grace. I’ve just completed my social work degree at La Trobe Bendigo, Bachelor of Human Services and Master of Social Work and I have recently done my 4 month clinical placement overseas in Manila in the Philippines.

I worked for an organisation called Community and Family Services International or CFSI. Within that I worked in the urban refugee project. So with a team of social workers working with refugees in the community.

Okay so living and working in another country was just a totally incredible experience. I was able to experience a different culture, a different way of living, a different lifestyle. Meet new and fantastic people and yeah it was just a really, really, fantastic experience.

So professional experience I found it was really significant to me to be able to use the knowledge and the skills I’ve learnt throughout my course, throughout the four years, to use that and be able to practice that in an international setting. I found it was a lot different than from a local setting. It was just really interesting to really see how social workers work over there in the Philippines, how that’s different to Australia, working with a team of social workers and really just experiencing that culture and those differences. Yeah, it was just really good professionally. In terms of personal development I think I actually gained a lot from the experience personally. Just as I said experiencing that different culture, really challenging myself and pushing myself out of my comfort zone. It’s something that I didn’t think I’d be able to do but I’m so glad I did it. And yeah just a whole new experience and something that I couldn’t have got if I haden’t done my placement in Australia. Just a different feeling altogether.

My advice to students who are thinking of doing an overseas placement or exchange would be that if the thoughts there and you’re interested in it, just do it. There is so much support around you, obviously it’s natural to get nervy about it, to have worries and concerns, but the La Trobe staff are great with support both before you go and while you’re over there. As well as internal support from the organisations. Yeah, just do it, it’s an experience of a lifetime. You won’t be able to get that experience in any other way. Yeah just talk to people and utilise the support around you. You’ll love it.