In the Philippines
with Baggy Wanderlust
I'm flying to the Philippines to visit Jocelyn!!! The country is made up of over 7,000 islands! I hope I land on the right one!

Over here, Baggy! My best friend Clarissa and I want to show you where we live.

My name is Laute. I'm Jocelyn's father and a fisherman.

My name is Anita. I'm Jocelyn's Mum. The water is our home. But it can also be dangerous, for example when there is a flood!

You can help the community in MinLand by giving them a kit that will help them cope with the effects of an emergency. Each kit costs 100 PHP (about $2).

I am Erick from MinLand. Together with Anita, Laute, and the others in the community, we are setting up a group that knows what to do in the event of an emergency.

* Look at the search-and-find poster for the Children's Lenten Campaign on the Philippines!
Goodness, the heat is incredible. And paddling is hot work!

What the!?

I give up.

One, two, three, heeeave!

Hurray, here at last! That must be Jocelyn* and the community of Laylate*.

* Pronounced Josselin and Laylahtuh

Hot here, isn't it?

Phew!
Because of the heat, we usually go for a little nap after school, unless of course we have a really important guest ...  

Ooohh ...  

Gotcha!

Not a very good start!

Why do you have all these walkways? There's no water here. Has someone pulled the plug?

This is low tide. Just wait, this afternoon the water level will rise.

Really? Will there ... be a flood?

No, just an everyday high tide. It only gets dangerous when there is really heavy rain and storms.

Oh ...
So why on earth do you live here?

Well, how was I supposed to know?

Our fathers are fishermen. They go out to sea in their boats so we have to live close to the water.*

I'm creating my own flood right now!

We are currently setting up a group of people to help others in the event of an emergency, such as a flood. We do get floods here from time to time, you know.

* Boats with outriggers like this are typical in the Philippines.

Time for the afternoon nap ...

Look! The water level is rising, like I said it would.

Hopefully, it won't rise too much.

Later ...
Look, this is a gauge. It tells us how high the water level is so that we know when things are getting dangerous. MinLand* gave it to us.

You're soaking wet! Are you overheated or afraid?

* The name MinLand stands for Mindanao Land Foundation.

That evening ...

Good night, Baggy.

Good night, everyone.

Good night, Jocelyn.

Huh?!?

WAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!

Help!
Jocelyn, Laute, Anita!
Wake up, everyone!
To much water!
What's wrong?
Water's coming from all sides!

If the water rises this high, we'll have to shelter in the city, away from the water.
Where's all this water coming from? Is this just high tide?

When the rains are as heavy and the storms as severe as they are tonight, the river swells, the sea level rises, and all the water converges right here, where we live.

You get some rest. I'll keep watch.
Next morning …

All the water’s gone!

That was a close shave, wasn’t it?

Thank goodness you woke us! We almost had to seek shelter elsewhere.

Look! What’s that?

A message in a bottle!

Out you come!

I am melting.

Ohhhhhhh!

Easy now, Baggy!

To whosoever finds this message: my name is Gearld and I live on an island called Siargao. We have a forest.
* Look closely at the search-and-find poster for the Children's Lenten Campaign on the Philippines! Gared’s full letter is available on the Internet. Perhaps your teacher can download it for you.

We also live very close to the water! Like Gared! So ...? When a big flood comes, we don't have any supertrees to protect us by blocking the water! No like Gared!
You know what?
We need mangroves too!

Just like Gared!

Of course!

Erick, Erick!

Look, here comes Erick from MinLand.

Message! Message! Message!

Water! Water! Water!

Supertrees???

Supertrees!

Storm!

Flood!

Ah! You mean MANGROVES! We've already thought of that. But first we have to find out which kind of mangrove will thrive in the water here!* You see, there are lots of different types of mangrove.

It's too hot. I feel dizzy.

Come with me. I know where we will find some supertrees!

There you are: mangroves!

Wow, look at those huge roots!

* Erick, his colleagues at MinLand, and experts at the university are looking into this together.
Gosh! They look really strong. Like supertrees!

Exactly!

Can't we just take one with us?

No. They have very deep roots. But we will take a seedling!

AND ME!!!
In the coming weeks and months ...

Next morning ...

Bon voyage, little bottle!

I bet that when I next visit, there'll be mangroves everywhere, keeping the fishermen’s families safe, despite all the water around them!

The end

Illustration: Mele Brink, Aachen