



CLAUDIA AND SHARON AT MEDICAL CHECK UP

What's Inside...

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

GREETINGS FROM CAMBODIA EVERYBODY,

It is a special public holiday in September, Phum Ben Festival, and I hope that some of you have observed how the ceremony was celebrated in pagoda. Meanwhile, I would express my sadness to people who suffered due to the flooding in September during the Pchum Ben Festival. I hope everything will be positive again soon.

We are all happy to get to know the placement improvement at VDTO and VCAO; those benefits will be most likely to serve the kids at the placement (read in detail in the placement update section). For Projects Abroad we have donated some money to VDTO to finish their library project and also donated some money for Riverkids for purchasing students uniform, study materials that were needed for the students during their new academic year starting in October.



Recently we have received an application from our ex-volunteer who wants to re-volunteer in November. Thank you and welcome to Adele Hayes, we really appreciate your support. Thank you not only to her but also to some other volunteers who I did not mention on this page.

Before ending this message, I would say welcome to our October volunteers and thank you to the ones who will leave in October. Your time will steadily improve children's lives. Also thank you to the volunteers who contributed their articles to this newsletter.

Please read the other details section for other information.

Best regards,

Mao Pises
Country Director

ONE OF OUR SPECIAL FESTIVALS – PCHUM BEN IN CAMBODIA

A year was gone and the Pchum Ben Festival was taking place again for fifteen days from 13th Sept to 27th Sep 2011. This special festival is celebrated for Ancestor Spirit who died in the past. It is a belief that dead people become ghosts who are shaped by their actions from when they were alive. If we do good we will go to paradise, and if we do bad things we will not go to paradise. Therefore, this festival is always held in the tenth month of the Khmer calendar. In the Khmer calendar, the tenth month is called Phoatrobot. During this fifteen day, we go to pagoda and at least one pagoda that we have to go to offer food, dessert, rice, fruit, water and some other dried food to the monk, then the monk blesses us, so those items will eventually be offered to our Ancestor's spirits. No doubt, if we do not go to offer food at pagoda, our ancestors who already died will get nothing during these fifteen days. Then, they will place blame and wish us bad luck in life. So, we have to go at least once.

For the dress code, it is encouraged that Cambodian ladies wear the traditional clothes, in white shirts and silk long skirts. For men, they should wear white shirts and trousers.

We should mention that during the fifteen days some people also go to pagoda in the early morning at 3:00am to offer sticky rice, fruits and water to the spirit who is in deep sin, it believes that if we offer it during day time, they cannot receive what we offer. And when we offer the food to the spirit who is in deep sin, we need to throw the food to the surrounding spaces of the pagoda, otherwise they could not have it. Those spirits who are in deep sin are called Prat. The way we make food for offering to Prat is different from area to area in the country. To conclude, at pagoda, they celebrate this festival for fifteen days and we will never miss it even if there is heavy rain.



This year, the last three days on 26th, 27th and 28th Sep are public holidays, so most Cambodians will visit their relatives where they were born for a family reunion and also for the time to go to pagoda all together. Unluckily, this year, there are floods in some provinces of Cambodia, therefore, it was not easy to travel and some people really did not enjoy it as the flooding blocked the road.

ANCESTOR'S DAY – BY SIONNIE KELLY

It is almost 6am over here and I woke up at 3.20am so as you can imagine I'm rather tired at the moment, and I'm considering going back to sleep.

There is a reason I woke up so early today (or late depending on your definition). A very important holiday is happening at the moment in Cambodia. It is called the Pchum Ben Festival and on the importance scale it is like their equivalent of Christmas. They even get a bonus at their place of work. But this day honors the dead and it is believed that the dead come back to eat.

This morning a ceremony offering food to the dead occurred. We were invited to attend by the cooks of our apartments. Despite having to get up at a crazy hour of the morning it was really cool to go to.

We basically went to a temple with prepared food offerings for the dead and the Buddhist monks blessed the food. We then went out of the temple into what appeared to be the cemetery and walked around with our food and water offerings and threw bits of food and water onto the tress. The food offerings we gave were mostly rice balls, they were made small because according to our cook, Rath, the dead don't have very big mouths.

We had to do this before dawn because the dead don't like to come out during the day.

We also took a lot of 100Riel notes (about 3 cents in Australia) and we gave them to the children and people who were collecting money during the prayer.

I now have a lot of 100Riel because I basically traded in 11,000Riel to get in (almost \$3). That's ok though, I'm sure I'll find a way



to spend it.

I'm starting to get tired...and hungry. Good thing I don't leave for my placement until 9.30am.

As is the custom with most large holidays there are days off. Next week the Cambodians get Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday off and so do most of the volunteers. Most of the Cambodians will leave the city to return to the provinces to be with their family. Apparently Phnom Penh gets very quiet during this period. Projects Abroad is also refunding us \$10 as there will not be any cooks cooking for us on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. That could be interesting. I'm not very good at fending for myself. If it was left up to me I probably wouldn't eat. I basically lived off ice-cream when I went to Vietnam but the circumstances were slightly different.

Interestingly enough I might be going to Thailand in a few weeks. I don't really have much of an option as my visa will run out on 22nd October and because of a mix up when I came back from Vietnam (I was given a tourism visa not a business visa) I can't extend it past a month. So I have to leave the country and because I don't have to pay for a Thai visa it looks like I will be going to Thailand.

Just when things were looking boring they got a whole lot more interesting.



FLOOD IN CAMBODIA



The rainy season is vital for life to survive but the unstoppable rain in September had a bad impact on some countries in Southeast Asia; Cambodia is also in the list. Thirteen provinces along the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake are most effected by the flooding, those provinces include Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Cham, Prey Veng, Kratie, Kompong Thom, Pursat, Kandal and so on, but the worst is in Kompong Thom province. According to the government official report, the level of Mekong River water is expected to rise further to

levels that haven't existed for a decade. The preliminary figures show that 5000 families had been displaced, 20000 homes flooded and a lot of people had been evacuated from the flooding. The rice fields have been destroyed and some roads have been blocked. It is also worse because kids have not be able to go to school and they have also been affect by some diseases. No doubt, the shelter, food, health care and other main supplies are need. We hope the level of water will go down in October. We should mention that the government, Red Cross and some NGO's are working to support those people who suffered from that disaster.



1 MONTH IN PHNUM PENH – ORPHANAGE: CPCDO

By Ophélie Irma – Care volunteer



Chammy – General

As an anxious and stressed student I needed to review my situation. Not wanting to spend the summer working in a fast food restaurant, I decided to travel and at the same time live something unknown, useful and that would help me to put my life in perspective.

Therefore I undertook a Care project for 1 month in Phnum Penh in Cambodia, with Projects Abroad.

I still remember the day of my arrival. I got out of the airport to see chaotic traffic and hear the sound of horns coming from all directions.

During my introduction on the first day I was very reassured by the staff who were very smiley (especially Sophan – Volunteer Manager) and motivated! In the afternoon

Assistant) took me to

the orphanage where I would be working. The experience shook me a little; the heat under the roofs of sheet steel, the small size of the rooms, the smells ...

What a funny effect when a little (sweating) tot snuggled up to me! I have to regain self-control, because the next day I really begin. I quickly become integrated in the orphanage, but I also took time to observe and note the advice given by the other volunteers of CPCDO. They were the people I relied on during the placement - I was very lucky to have their support.

The children's ages ranged from a few months to 20 years. The oldest simply decided to stay in CPCDO because it is a real



home for them (and also because they can have the upper hand over the youngest), and the babies have no family. As for all the other kids, they were placed there by their relatives - too poor to assure them a good life. Each child has their own story. The kids of more than 6 years old are schooled; one group in the morning, and the other ones after noon.

Sharing my feelings with the other volunteers allowed me to compare and put in perspective the situation:

Finally, my orphanage is not dirty and muddled, the children are relatively healthy and clean, and even though some of the staff are passive there is a good atmosphere.

Their meals are all quite the same; some rice, some fish, a vegetable broth. The smallest kids suffer from deficiencies. My voluntary colleagues went once a week to the local market to buy them chicken, tomatoes, potatoes, onions and fruits to make them a real meal. After their departure, it was my turn to go there.

UPCOMING HOLIDAY

There are two special national holidays in Cambodia in October 2011. On 29th October it is a King Sihamoni's Coronation Day and on 31st October it is the King's Father's Birthday.

We at Projects Abroad Cambodia would like to announce that on the above dates our staff will be on holiday, but will still be contactable if you have any urgent problems.

Even the most harmless moments became real moments of happiness with these monsters! A game or an English exercise can lead to giggles or discovering what they filmed or captured with the camera at the end of the day! These moments are etched in my memory.

What to say about the time I spent with the volunteers of Projects Abroad?! To have at least 6 nationalities around a table during the meals, you do not often find that! The real complicity settled down in the evenings and we had good moments throughout the week.

During the weekends I was able to go to Siem Reap, Koh Kong and Sihanouk Ville, as well as to visit Phnom Penh. I made unexpected meetings, learnt many things about the history and the culture of Cambodia: a real personal enrichment, unforgettable memories and a cure of smiles.

All this means that month goes too fast and that it is necessary to take advantage of it to the maximum. After this experience, I have gained maturity, as well as a lesson in morality. I had not expected to live something so hard-hitting before my departure.

Useless to say that leaving the children, the staff and the volunteers to return to the country was hard. I lived something unique.

Long live Cambodians!

Cambodge – Written By Alizée Delpierre Volunteered At NBIC for one month



Voilà maintenant deux semaines que je suis rentrée du Cambodge, mais en réalité, je n'ai pas encore totalement quitté ce pays fabuleux que j'ai pu découvrir pendant le mois d'août 2011 en partant en mission humanitaire avec Projects Abroad. J'avais choisi le projet « Care », et pour cela, je me suis occupée d'enfants dans deux orphelinats différents, l'un accueillant des enfants des rues, l'autre accueillant des enfants handicapés. Mon activité était tout aussi intéressante dans l'un ou l'autre orphelinat, et être en contact avec deux populations très différentes fut une expérience très riche et intéressante. Avec l'aide des salariés des orphelinats, je surveillais les enfants, jouais avec eux, leur donnais à manger, leur lavais les cheveux, lingeais les plus jeunes, leur racontais des histoires... Chaque instant que vous passez avec les enfants est précieux, car il suffit seulement de les regarder jouer, de leur montrer que vous êtes à leur côté, que votre attention est portée sur eux, pour égayer leur journée et leur apporter ne serait-ce que quelques heures de joie et de bonheur.

J'avoue qu'être volontaire n'est pas toujours évident au début ; lorsque vous arrivez à l'orphelinat pour la première fois, il n'y a pas toujours quelqu'un pour vous introduire au personnel, qui ne parle pas toujours l'anglais, et souvent, l'on ne vous assigne pas de tâche particulière, c'est à vous de prendre vos repères et d'engager des activités. S'il faut prendre



des initiatives, il ne faut néanmoins pas oublier que vous êtes dans un pays étranger, qui a sa propre culture, donc sa propre vision de l'éducation par exemple, que les rapports humains sont différents de ceux des pays occidentaux ; ainsi, être volontaire, c'est apprendre avant tout à observer, à comprendre l'autre, à ne pas juger d'après nos codes et nos normes occidentales ; il est nécessaire de s'adapter à la façon dont l'orphelinat qui vous accueille fonctionne, sans vouloir tout changer à ce fonctionnement. Ainsi, être volontaire apprend à être tolérant et surtout, humble. Si vous avez envie de mettre en place certaines activités particulières, si vous avez des idées afin d'améliorer le fonctionnement de l'orphelinat, il faut en parler avec ceux

qui travaillent avec vous, qui sont présents à l'année dans l'orphelinat, qui connaissent les enfants beaucoup mieux que vous ; il serait bien trop arrogant et orgueilleux de la part d'un occidental qui connaît à peine le Cambodge et l'orphelinat de vouloir tout améliorer du jour au lendemain, sachant que ce qui nous semble bon à faire ne l'est pas forcément pour les autres !

En partant comme volontaire au Cambodge, j'ai donc réalisé combien il était difficile de lutter contre la misère, la violence, la pauvreté, que tout cela demandait une mobilisation énorme, et surtout, du temps. Malheureusement, il ne suffit pas de claquer des doigts pour que tout aille mieux.

J'avoue avoir hésité longuement avant de partir un mois en mission humanitaire ; j'avais peur que mon action soit inutile, de ne faire cela que pour me donner bonne conscience. J'avais peur que Projects Abroad soit une de ces agences de voyage qui « vend » des voyages humanitaires sans aide profonde réelle. Pourtant, j'ai tenté l'aventure ; étant jeune et n'ayant encore aucun contact à l'étranger faisant partie du domaine associatif, j'ai pensé que partir avec cet organisme serait peut-être un bon compromis pour une première expérience de volontariat. Et je n'ai pas du tout regretté ; je pense que notre action à nous tous, volontaires, est réellement utile. Même si je ne suis restée qu'un mois, même si ma présence ne fut pas une présence à long terme, durable, j'ai pu me consacrer pleinement aux enfants et tenter de leur transmettre le plus d'amour et d'attention possible. Je suis maintenant convaincue que c'est la multiplication des petits cours d'eau qui donne naissance aux plus grands fleuves.



Parallèlement à mon action dans les orphelinats, je me rendais chaque semaine dans un bidonville proche de nos appartements avec une autre volontaire, afin d'apporter des vêtements, accessoires et objets aux populations les plus démunies, et passer quelques

heures à jouer avec les enfants le matin avant qu'ils ne partent travailler dans les rues. Ces interventions dans les bidonvilles ne faisaient pas partie des missions données par Projects Abroad, c'était une initiative à part. J'ai pu ainsi en apprendre un peu plus sur la vie dans les bidonvilles, me rendre compte du fossé flagrant qu'il y a entre les plus riches et les plus pauvres au Cambodge, et toujours tenter de mettre un peu de soleil dans la vie de ces pauvres enfants qui n'ont pas la chance de mener une vraie vie d'enfant.



Au-delà du volontariat, j'ai pu profiter de la richesse culturelle et naturelle du Cambodge, en visitant de nombreux musées et pagodes à Phnom Penh et à Siem Reap, les magnifiques temples d'Angkor, ou encore la plage de Koh Kong. S'il conserve les traces d'une histoire bouleversante due à la dictature de Pol Pot, s'il s'agit d'un pays très pauvre où derrière les couleurs et les lumières des lieux branchés se cachent les atrocités d'un tourisme sexuel bien présent, le Cambodge n'en reste pas moins un pays splendide qui mérite de guérir de ses blessures. Ses habitants sont tout aussi incroyables ; j'ai été particulièrement marquée par la simplicité des Cambodgiens dans leurs relations avec les autres, leur facilité à entrer en contact avec vous, à vous mettre à l'aise, à échanger. J'avais peur que la langue soit une barrière, mais ce ne fut pas du tout le cas ; s'il est très fréquent d'entamer la conversation avec un inconnu parlant anglais à tout moment de la journée, vous pouvez tout autant sympathiser avec des Cambodgiens parlant uniquement le Khmer ; la communication ne passe pas seulement par le langage !



Je pourrais vous écrire des pages sur mon expérience, qui ne pourraient bien entendu pas, malgré toute ma bonne volonté, traduire entièrement la richesse de mon expérience ; les mots sont bien insuffisants pour rendre compte de tous les détails que nos yeux peuvent capter, de toutes les pensées qui nous traversent l'esprit à la découverte d'une nouvelle culture.

Et puis, être volontaire, c'est aussi partager son expérience avec les autres, et ceci est un des points forts du séjour. En partant avec Projects Abroad, j'ai pu connaître des personnes du monde entier, qui ont toutes des parcours différents, des points de vue différents, mais une volonté commune. Les sorties et les soirées passées entre volontaires nous en apprennent tout autant que notre expérience humanitaire, et apportent de bons moments de divertissements. Avec les moyens actuels de communication, il est aisé de garder contact avec les volontaires que vous avez connus durant votre séjour.



En résumé, si c'était à refaire, je le referais sans hésiter. Je suis partie un mois au Cambodge, mais j'ai à la fois l'impression d'y être restée deux jours et d'en avoir appris autant que si j'y étais restée toute une vie. Le plus dur fut de repartir ; c'est ce terrible sentiment d'abandon qui vous parcourt, tous ces regards et ces sourires d'enfants que vous laissez derrière vous. J'avais le cœur gros en

partant, je me disais « et après ? » ; que vont devenir ces enfants, que va devenir ce pays ? Raviendrai-je un jour ? Vous ne restez pas la même après être partie en mission humanitaire ; cela vous transforme et vous fait appréhender la vie d'une façon différente. Cela vous remet en question, remet en question votre façon de vivre, de voir le monde, et surtout, vous apprend à vous satisfaire de ce que vous possédez. Si tous ces gens vivent, si tous ces enfants rient malgré leur misère, ce n'est pas grâce à l'argent, puisqu'ils ne possèdent rien de matériel. Ce qu'ils ont, c'est autre chose, de beaucoup plus important et plus fort, c'est cette volonté de vivre, cette soif de connaissance et de contact, ce désir de voir la beauté du monde. On a beau dire, mais être heureux, c'est en partie une question de volonté.



J'aimerais continuer à m'investir dans des causes humanitaires ; je ne sais pas quand, comment, ni où, mais en tout cas, je sais que je le ferai. A tous ceux qui hésiteraient à partir dans de telles missions, je leur dirai de foncer ; vous ne serez jamais inutile si votre objectif est d'apporter ne serait-ce qu'un peu d'aide à ceux qui en ont besoin. Il faut y aller tout en ayant conscience des limites du volontariat, et parfois, de sa difficulté. Etre bénévole n'est pas de tout repos et peut parfois être éprouvant ; il faut savoir prendre sur soi et partager avec les autres volontaires ses émotions, ses opinions, pour pouvoir être plus efficace et gagner en maturité. Mais être bénévole, c'est avant tout oser s'investir et partir à la découverte de l'inconnu, et accepter de ne jamais réellement en revenir...

VOLUNTEERS' UPDATE

UPCOMING VOLUNTEERS

There are 25 volunteers who will come to Cambodia for voluntary work with Projects Abroad in October. They are of various nationalities and will do different projects.

Here they are:

We are looking forward to welcoming and meeting you in

Cambodia in October 2011

Let's hear the messages from some of our prospective volunteers who will be coming in October 2011.

Introduction from Abby

Hello everyone!



My name is Abby and I am from Alberta, Canada. I love sports and have played volleyball, ringette, speed skating, badminton, snowboarding and, as you can imagine, a few games of hockey. I love to travel and have been to Mexico, Quebec, Paris, Italy, Spain and Morocco. I am the youngest in my family and have two older brothers. Both are in university right now, I just graduated from High School, and don't know what I want to do for the rest of my life so I decided I would take a year off and volunteer abroad. I am super excited to go to Cambodia, but also a bit nervous as I will be starting so soon.

Introduction from Ellie

Hi, my name's Ellie and I'm 17 years old, I'm counting down the weeks until I leave for Cambodia and it's getting more exciting as it gets closer and closer. A few of my interests include dancing, photography, art, films and social justice. I love hot weather, the beach, snowboarding, meeting new people, learning new cultures and generally living life to the full. The only expectations I have for Cambodia are the friendly people, beautiful environment, and a chance to make a change, otherwise I'm going with an open mind ready for new challenges.



Sincerely,

Ellie

Introduction from Alice Young-Drew

Hey there! My name is Alice Young-Drew and I am from Wellington, New Zealand. I studied Communications in 2010 and I will be studying anthropology and religion next year. I also coach Rhythmic Gymnastics and teach school children to swim. I love to dance, spend time with friends and have a good laugh. I am doing a Care placement for four months. I am looking forward to loving the children and meeting other volunteers.



See you soon! Thanks so much

Introduction from Tanita Rosner

Hello,

I am Tanita Rosner, 18, from Germany. I am so happy to have the chance to travel to Cambodia. I was always interested in Archaeology and Foreign Culture, so I decided to experience it first hand. Travelling to Cambodia gives me the opportunity to learn more about the Angkorian rule (archaeological part :) as well as the Cambodian culture today. The Khmer Project seems perfect to me to learn more about Cambodia off the beaten tourist path.

Furthermore, I hope that being away from my familiar surroundings will help me to think about my plans for the future, because I just finished school and haven't any plans yet.

I am excited to see you all soon in Cambodia.

Best wishes

Tanita



Introduction from Susana Maldonado

I'm Susana, an American who has just left London after living there for 10 years to begin a year of volunteering and travelling! I was a management consultant, and was also the head of my company's CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) programme in London. This is my year-long career break before I head off to live somewhere else (must be a lot warmer than London) and go back to the corporate world (if I don't decide to work for an NGO after this programme)! I visited Thailand 7 months ago and fell in love with Southeast Asia, so I plan to spend 7 months exploring it – Cambodia is my first stop!



I'm going to be teaching English to 18-22 year old underprivileged adults with the charity Chances for Cambodia for 3 months. I've never been a teacher before, but I figure it can't be too different from running large workshops in banks (haha, just kidding). I'm looking forward to meeting my keen students, and really making a difference to them in their English skills. I also look forward to learning to speak Khmer, to cook tasty Khmer food, and to experience a different culture! See you on 2nd October!

Susana

Introduction from Susan Whittaker

My name is Susan (Susy) Whittaker and I am 59 years old. I live in London and have had a busy life working in London and bringing up two sons - sadly my husband passed away a few years ago. I gave up my job in a property company last year and went to live in Spain for six months. I am now living in England again and staying in my brother's cottage in the country with him and Paddy, who is an Irish collie dog. So really, I am having a belated "Gap Year"!

Although I have travelled in Europe, America and Australia, I have never been to South East Asia and am so looking forward to meeting the Cambodian people and seeing the beautiful country. Everybody I speak to here has good things to say about the country, I would like to see as much of the country as I can whilst I am there and perhaps come back a more tranquil and better person after maybe learning a little meditating. I am also looking forward to helping the children in any way I can - what I lack in teaching skills I will certainly make up in enthusiasm. I will be doing my one month placement in Phnomn Penn and then I will travel independently in Cambodia and Vietnam.

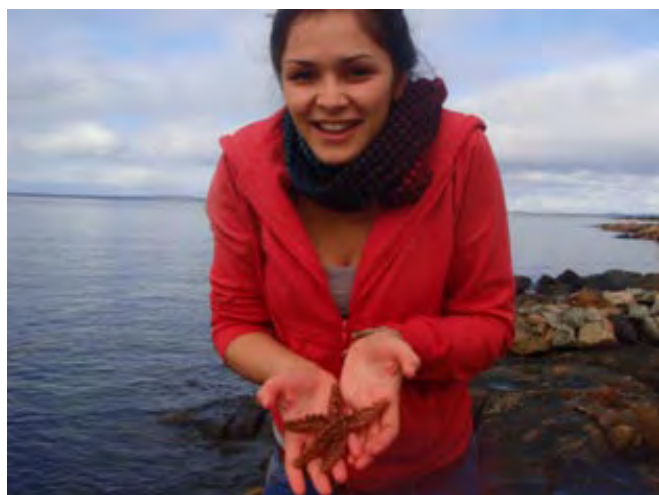
I like to practice yoga and pilates and enjoy painting water colors, visiting the cinema and reading contemporary novels.

I look forward to meeting you all.

Introduction from Annelin

Hi everyone!

My name is Annelin Verkade and I'm from Netherlands. I just graduated from High School and I am 17 years old. I am taking a gap year before I take the next step toward my education at university. I will be arriving in Cambodia on October 2nd. I want to deepen my view at society in general and the culture of Cambodia in particular. I expect working half a year in Cambodia will enrich me on my way to maturity. About my life in Holland. I



I have a twin sister who is also taking a gap year, she's going to Rome, Italy to study Italian. My brother is currently studying Medicine. I still actively play the guitar and have done so for 11 years. I have played field hockey for 8 years. I hope to become friends with all of you and gain beautiful experiences!

Introduction from Alison

Hello! My name is Ali and I am from Adelaide South Australia. I have recently finished my degree in Marine Biology and am looking forward to learning about diving and marine conservation on the coral reefs in Cambodia! I have never been to Asia so I am really excited about this experience. Once my time is up volunteering I am travelling back to Phnom Penh to start a 3 month adventure around South East Asia with a bunch of my friends! I arrive on October the 29th and will be staying for 1 month. I am very excited to meet you all. See you soon!

Introduction from Eva Isacsdotter

Hello everyone!

I'm Eva from Uppsala, Sweden and I will arrive in Cambodia on October the 22nd and stay with the Marine Conservation project for one month. I will take my PADI there and hopefully be a lot of help in working with the coral reefes and all the other activities. I'm planning on taking a Masters degree in Marine Sience starting my education in january 2012 so I'm hoping that this might be an experience that I will learn a lot from. Also I allready wish that I could stay longer since the island of Koh Rong Samloem seems so beautiful and the work there is so important. Hopefully I can come back later during my studies and then be of even more help when I have learned more about the ecological systems under the surface.



I look forward to meeting you all!

(The picture is taken after one of the biggest snowstorms last winter. I love the snowy winters here in Sweden, but it sure will be nice with some of that Cambodian sun for a change.)

Eva Isacsdotter

WELCOME AGAIN TO ADELE HAYES

Cambodia is the best country that you should not miss, apart from this country, we have Projects Abroad who mainly focus on voluntary work in this country. There are a lot of volunteers that have come here and experienced a lot of thing. Most of them also re-volunteer or re-visit this country. For instance, in July and August, there were a lot of ex-volunteers of Projects Abroad came to Cambodia and to volunteer again. That was very kind

of them and we really appreciated seeing them again. Now we have confirmation from Adele, who is also an ex-volunteer, that she will be coming to see us again in November 2011. Let's hear about her interest in returning:



I am so incredibly excited to be going back to Cambodia this November with Projects Abroad.

In November last year I undertook a one month Care placement at Sacrifice Families and Orphans Development Association (SFODA), and had such an awesome time. I was made to feel so at home with Projects Abroad, with such a strong volunteer community, and met so many amazing people from all over the world. Whilst I loved the social side of my trip and did a lot of sightseeing, the orphanage was by far the highlight of my experience. Having just finished a Bachelor of International Development, it was really good for me to have a first hand experience of life in a third world country. One thing that surprised me was how happy all the children at SFODA were, and how good I felt walking into the orphanage each day and being greeted by so many happy faces. I have thought about these children, as well as the amazing people that I shared my experience with, every day since I left and cannot express how happy I am to be going back to Cambodia.

Whatever the reason you decide to volunteer, volunteering with Projects Abroad is by far the most eye-opening and educational, yet extremely rewarding experience of my life. I couldn't recommend it enough and look forward to seeing everyone in a couple of months,

Adele Hayes x

Thanks to all our volunteers for your generosity and kindness volunteering in Cambodia, and your love to the kids.

VOLUNTEERS' CORNER

My Experiences! – Written By Nadine Fortine Care Project at Home of Hope

Hey Sister!

During one month, "Sister" became my new name at the Home of Hope Orphanage located outside of Phnom Penh. It felt weird to be called that at the beginning but I really do miss the young voices calling my temporary nickname now that I'm back home. This experience is one of best and most interesting I had in my entire



life. The liveliest memories of my stay in Cambodia, the joy of living, the smile, the contagious laughter, the curiosity and the desire to learn about all the people I met came from the Home of Hope.

The orphanage is directed by the Missionaries of Charity Brothers, a branch of the Mother Theresa Community. It opened in 2007 and close to forty people live there under the supervision of four brothers, all from India. Children with mental and physical disabilities, teenagers with HIV, adults with mental disease and adults with HIV form the different clientele.



A school for the children of the surrounding villages is also built on the ground of the Home of Hope. The students, boys and girls aged five years and up, have a family and they come to the school to learn English. This language is very popular among Cambodians who wish to improve their life conditions with this knowledge. On Wednesday morning the school is transformed in a dispensary. The brothers pay for doctors and the medication required for the poorest people in the surrounding communities.

They offer the same services at the prison a few kilometres away. They also provide a monthly supply of food for the poorest villagers.



At the orphanage I fed the youngest children and exercised their small paralyzed legs to slow down the process of rigidity. I taught English (pronunciation, tongue twisters, speeches and grammar exercises) to the oldest students who are dreaming to work with computers or as English teachers. Even the staff members joined the class if they had some spare time. With the elementary school students we played, drew, sang, taught some English, laughed and smiled a lot!

Other very good moments at the orphanage included the discussions we had at the end of the working day with the teachers, the brothers and the students. It was a great opportunity to spend some time together, learn about the culture, habits and each other's lives. It was also a moment to learn about the story of the orphans, who kept their joy of living in spite of their difficult reality.

Part of the trip, besides the volunteer work, is to discover the country. The life at the apartment makes it easy to find someone who wants to go the Siem Reap, the beach, the jungle or simply for an ice cream on the Riverside!



I also have to mention Ciara, my colleague at Home of Hope, another volunteer who shared teaching, care giving activities and a lot of laughs with me and all the people at the orphanage during my stay.

Thanks Ciara and all of you at Projects Abroad and Home of Hope!

Tauchen ist wie „Findet Nemo“ in 3D

Diving project - By Daniel Polzin from Germany



Es ist nicht leicht zu sagen, warum ich mich grade für das Projekt in Kambodscha entschieden habe. Angefangen hat es damit, dass ich zwischen dem Ende meines Zivildienstes und dem Beginn meines Studiums eine Lücke von 7 Monaten hatte, die ich in irgendeiner Weise sinnvoll nutzen wollte. Da ich aber auch was erleben wollte, entschied ich mich für ein Projekt im Ausland und stieß im Internet relativ schnell auf Projects Abroad. Eigentlich

fand ich viele Projekte sehr nützlich, aber die Mischung aus sinnvoller Arbeit und Abenteuer sah ich bei einem Tauchprojekt in Kambodscha am meisten gegeben.

Als ich dann nach langer Vorfreude in Phnom Penh ankam, war ich schon etwas geschockt, wie anders die Kultur ist und ein wenig Angst machten mir die unzähligen Tuk Tuk-Fahrer, die mich ständig fragten, ob ich allein wäre, am Anfang auch. Nach einer recht aufregenden



Busfahrt und einer 2-stündigen Bootsfahrt kam ich dann am nächsten Tag endlich auf der Insel an. Natürlich war ich am Anfang ein wenig desillusioniert, als ich den wirklich ziemlich kleinen Bungalow und das recht steinzeitliche WC sah, aber meine 3 Mitbewohner waren echt cool, was für mich zu diesem Zeitpunkt eigentlich das Wichtigste war. Da ich schon Taucher war, konnte ich auch gleich mit meinem

Advanced Open Water Diver und dem Training für das Seepferdchen-Projekt anfangen. Da ich bis dahin nur in langweiligen Berliner Seen getaucht bin, war es für mich natürlich wahnsinnig faszinierend, praktisch wie „Findet Nemo“ in 3D.

Aufgrund meiner eher geringen Englischkenntnisse, hatte ich am Anfang einige Schwierigkeiten was die Kommunikation mit den anderen Freiwilligen anging, wobei sich das auch nach ein paar Wochen legte. Überhaupt ist der Zusammenhalt zwischen den Freiwilligen auf der Insel das, was ich heute am meisten vermisse. Auf engstem Raum mit denselben Leuten über Monate zusammenzuleben und zu arbeiten, war wirklich eine Erfahrung, die ich nie vergessen werde.



Leider ging die Arbeit am Seepferdchen-Projekt eher stockend voran, da das GPS-Gerät oft kaputt oder nicht verfügbar war, was zwar schade war, aber auch verkraftbar, da man ja trotzdem Tauchen konnte. Am Ende lief es mit dem Projekt auch wieder besser und alles in allem kann ich eigentlich nur sagen, dass Tauchen echt wahnsinnig viel Spaß gemacht hat und man eigentlich bei jedem

Tauchgang was Neues erlebt. Da Tauchen, z.B. wegen Regen, nicht immer möglich war, hab ich versucht mit dem Unterrichten der Dorfkinder meinen Tag etwas sinnvoll zu gestalten. Es ist am Anfang zwar schon etwas kompliziert Kindern Englisch beizubringen, wenn man ihre Muttersprache nicht spricht, aber es hat wirklich viel Spaß gemacht und wenn du mitbekommst, dass du Ihnen auch nur ein neues Wort beigebracht hast, ist das schon ein tolles Gefühl.

Da in der Regel nur 2 Tauchgänge am Tag möglich waren und das Unterrichten auch nicht soviel Zeit in Anspruch nahm, hatte ich auch viel Freizeit auf der Insel. Am Anfang war mir



schon manchmal langweilig, aber mit der Zeit genoss ich wirklich die Ruhe beim Lesen in der Hängematte oder beim Joggen am Strand. Abends haben wir dann eigentlich sowieso immer Karten bei „Ones“, der Kneipe im Dorf, gespielt oder Lagerfeuer am Strand gemacht (was echt das Tollste war, was ich je erlebt hab). Am Wochenende hatte man dann auch immer die Möglichkeit mit dem Boot aufs Festland zu fahren, aber dazu kann

ich eigentlich nicht mehr sagen als dass die Parties da echt abgefahren sind und jeder das in seinem Leben mal erlebt haben muss.

Mit den Einheimischen im Dorf hatten wir immer viel Kontakt und auch wenn Sie, bis auf wenige Ausnahmen, kein Englisch sprachen, waren sie immer äußerst freundlich zu uns und luden uns sogar zu einer Hochzeit im Dorf ein. Ich bin ja später auch noch 10 Tage durch Kambodscha gereist und ich kann mit Gewissheit sagen, dass die Menschen in Kambodscha wirklich unglaublich nett sind.



Meine Tipps an neue Freiwillige sind, auf alle Fälle offen für neue Dinge zu sein, es mal mit dem Unterrichten zu versuchen, keinen hohen Lebensstandard zu erwarten und das Beste aus der Zeit auf der Insel zu machen.

Insgesamt war ich 3 Monate dort und auch wenn ich jetzt schon fast 1 ½ Monate wieder zurück bin, vermiss ich die kleine Insel und das Leben mit den

anderen Freiwilligen immer noch sehr. Mit Menschen aus der ganzen Welt so eng zusammenzuleben ist einfach eine Möglichkeit, die man nicht oft bekommt, und auch wenn ich vielleicht nie die Gelegenheit bekomme, zurückzukehren, werde ich die Zeit mit Sicherheit nie vergessen.

Placement Update

VDTO – Teaching placement – School



VDTO is one of the good placements in cooperation with Projects Abroad in Cambodia. They provide education to the kids from grade 1 to grade 6.

The main donor is from Japan. Now they have a good library for kids to self-study which is wonderful. Previously the library did not have a concreted floor so recently the director has tried to raise money from their organization's partner to make a floor so that the kids can easily sit on it and it is very comfortable. I believe this is good news for ex-volunteers at VDTO.



VCAO – Care and Teaching placement



All Projects Abroad volunteers who used to work at VCAO had experienced the bad smell from the slum area which was located nearby the VCAO Care Center. However, now, it does not exist anymore because the slum area was being managed by the Korean company which produces electricity.

The other good news at VCAO is by getting donations from volunteers and other organizations, VCAO now

has the shower cubicle which means the kids are able to take a shower by themselves whenever they want, especially after school.

I hope you will smile after reading this news:).

DONATIONS

Projects Abroad donated money for contributing making the concrete floor of the Library of VDTO.

Projects Abroad donated money to Riverkids, for purchasing educational material for their upcoming new academic year in early October at state school.

Thanks to Susanne Sorensen, Clare Van Elevoud and Hiromi Kobayashi who donated money (each of them 20US dollars) to SCCDO for rice to be purchased for the kids.

Thanks to Fabienne Blank who donated text books and other stuff for the babies at CPCDO.

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS FOR PROJECTS ABROAD IN CAMBODIA



Follow us on Twitter at Projects Abroad Cambodia – Here is the link:

http://twitter.com/Proj_AbroadCAMB

Share your information, ideas or tips for anyone who is going to do voluntary work on our official Facebook Group. Here is the link:

Facebook Group: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.cambodia>

Be informed about this and that in Cambodia and in Projects Abroad by reading our monthly newsletter. You can read it by just clicking the link:

Country Newsletter:

<http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/cambodia/newsletters-from-cambodia/>

Write down your interests, expectations and feelings before or after coming to Cambodia. Just use your Username and Password to log in. The link is:

Mytripblog: <http://www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/2845/Cambodia>

All your contributions – stories, updates and self-introductions etc are very useful for others. We really appreciate it. Thanks.

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH



Claudia and Sharon Medical check up



Kestin and kid at VDTO



Susanne at care placement SCCDO



Two week special volunteer was painting



Jonas and Freya – Diving volunteers, while they were diving under water. Thank Freya for sharing the photos.



Nicolas – a month medical volunteer, worked at NBIC was taking care of disabled kids at the placement. This picture took one day before he finished his project.



A group of volunteers and staff hang out for dinner for some volunteers' last day in Cambodia. I miss you all.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Get to know some main social events from Projects Abroad Cambodia.

DIRTY WEEKEND AT ASIA'S HOPE (SCHOOL)



On Saturday 20th August, eight other volunteers from Projects Abroad and I drove to Asia's Hope Christian School. Here we painted a dull gray concrete wall that surrounds the playground of the school. When we arrived at the school and saw the wall we didn't think we would be able to finish the painting that day. But some teachers and students arrived in the afternoon and helped us, and we finished the project. We had not asked them for help. They just saw us painting the wall at their school and decided to come and join us.

I had just arrived in Cambodia a few days before, so it was a good opportunity for me to learn from the other volunteers.

This monthly arrangement is rightly called "Dirty Weekend" because you become incredibly dirty when you sand down a wall and paint it. It was incredibly fun, even though it was dusty, and very hot and humid, made even warmer because we were wearing masks and gloves.

I like that you can help a lot of children while having fun. I will certainly join in with the Dirty Weekend again.

Written by Susanne Sørensen

MONTHLY DINNER PARTY



The monthly celebration which we never miss has happened again. This month we went to Malub Svay 99 Restaurant. Most of our volunteers have already experienced different foods – Cambodian soup with vegetable, beef, seafood and pork mixed together - and the very nice decoration of this restaurant.

Everyone enjoyed being together and chatting and taking photos at the end of the party. It is coming again in next month.



FOOD ITEM: PINEAPPLE FRIED RICE

Fried Rice is a common food anywhere. But somehow we have a different way of cooking. Have you ever tried Pineapple Fried Rice in Cambodia? Do you know how to make it?

Well, it is not hard. Its made up by the easily found ingredients and is easy to cook. I have listed what is needed and how to make it below. Read and do it yourself☺. If you have any queries please let me know.

Here are the ingredients you need:

- 0.3g of chicken meat, 1 egg, 2 glove of red garlic, 1 glove of garlic, a little bit of soy sauce, tomato sauce, fish sauce, red pepper, pineapple, cashew nuts, sugar, jasmine rice , 1/2 small cup soup water and oil, A pineapple shell(optional)

And how to make it:

1. Fry the garlic then cook the chicken meat by adding a teaspoon of soy sauce, tomato sauce, fish sauce, sugar and wait until it is well-cooked.
2. Add a bit of tomato sauce to the jasmine rice then put the oil in pot and cook it until it warm.
3. Cut the red pepper and pineapple in to small cubes.
4. Take a new pot. Then add a bit of oil and the red pepper and pineapple, cook it. Then add the cooked chicken meat and a bit of soup water. Heat for about 3 minutes and add 1 egg to the side to cook.
5. Then, add rice in to the mixture, fry it until it quite dry. Finally, put in the cashew nuts. Serve in a pineapple shell.

