



*The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Cambodia
October 2013 Issue N°-60*



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2-WS August Donations to Home of Hope



toothbrushes, toothpaste, cloths, pants, napkins, and other necessary thing to donate to the supervisor and handicapped children. On 12th of September 2013, I, Nafy, have brought those things to give directly to the supervisor of Home of Hope. These donations are really important and necessary for the handicapped because all the things that our volunteers have bought are needed for them. Brother Banabas, supervisor of Home of Hope, said that he really appreciated the entire donation, and he was really thankful to our volunteers who are so kindhearted to buy something with their own finance to support their centre. These donations were really great and meaningful for

After the successful 2 Week Special Programme in August, our volunteers who joined with this programme really appreciated our arrangements since the first day until they finished the Project. During their 2 weeks in Cambodia, they said they were very happy because they think that they have done something meaningful in their life for this summer. Working at the placement, Home of Hope, most of them really like working with the disabled kids and community kids so much. Every day, they have spent their time playing with these kids or even feeding the handicapped children lunch and dinner. On the other hand, most of them have spent their time planning lessons to teach the community kids every day, and they also said that it was really good to be in Cambodia and having the chance to teach some basic English to the community kids. However, before they went back to their home town after finishing their project, most of them went to the market, which is near the apartment, to buy something to donate to Home of Hope. They bought

them, so the supervisor was really happy when he saw that our volunteers are so young, but they helped and did a lot of charity work at the placement since they started working until they finished their project.

Finally, we, Projects Abroad staff, are really thankful to our volunteers who spent their valuable time in Cambodia to do charity work through the 2 Week Special Programme. Not only come to do voluntary work, but they also have spent their own value to support the centre. This shows that they are not young any more. Now, they know how to help the people who need and wait for them to help. Anyway, we hope that the 2 Week Special Programme has taught a lot of charity work to young volunteers to know how important charity work is.

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> My Wonderful time in Siem Reap with Projects Abroad



Hello, my name is Georgie Terry and I have just returned home after spending 2 weeks volunteering in Siem Reap, Cambodia. My decision to go to Cambodia was based on my desire to do something worthwhile in recognition of the privileged life I have led thus far and to broaden my horizons by experiencing a totally different way of life before starting university. I can only say that my time in Cambodia wholly exceeded my expectations and was, undoubtedly, the most rewarding and memorable thing I have ever done. All the volunteers lived together in the same house and lived in the manner of local people, eating traditional food prepared by a Khmer cook and with no hot water available. It was certainly a completely different lifestyle to anything I have ever experienced, but I was amazed how effortlessly I was able to adapt and how quickly it began to feel like

home even eating rice for breakfast soon became second nature! The other volunteers were such a varied mix of people, from all different parts of the world, but all of them were really lovely and welcoming. I believe that, as we were living together in what was a wholly unfamiliar environment for all of us, the friendship bonds grew particularly strong. By the end of the 2 weeks, it felt like the other volunteers were part of my family. My job at the orphanage involved both teaching and caring for the 30 children who lived there. The age of the children ranged from 7 months to 18-years-old and all of them were utterly delightful with an irrepressible supply of energy and affection. I had a short overlap with another

volunteer, but for most of my time there I was the only volunteer at the orphanage and was, therefore, in charge of making all the decisions. Although at first I thought that this amount of responsibility would be daunting and beyond my capabilities, the receptiveness of the children and the support from the Projects Abroad staff and other volunteers made my job very easy. I spent my time at the orphanage teaching maths and basic English, organising different activities and playing games with the children (hangman was a particular favourite!). The children spoke very little English, but they were all so keen to learn and I was often hailed with cries of "me want more school!"

The most rewarding thing for me was realizing that I was playing a small part in helping these children to realise their potential. For example, on one occasion one of the younger boys, Sak, having seen that I was teaching the older children algebra, asked to be taught the same. I was told by one of the Khmer staff that he wasn't bright enough to understand so I shouldn't bother teaching it to him. This shocked me as at school in England we had always been encouraged to challenge ourselves and to believe that anything was achievable with hard work. So I taught Sak algebra. Initially he didn't understand; however after I-



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My Wonderful time in Siem Reap with Projects Abroad

worked with him for a while one on one, he began to comprehend what I was showing him. I shall never forget his elation when he worked through an equation by himself for the first time and got the answer right. A few days later Sak was doing equations the same level of difficulty as the older boys. On my last day at the orphanage, he pushed a note into my hand, which read “Dear Georgie, thank you for teaching math for me. I miss you every day. From Sak”. Cambodia is essentially coming out of its dark ages and just starting to recover from the devastating effects of the Civil War. Poverty is visible everywhere and the people are so grateful for any help that is offered to them. The situation in Cambodia is not going to change overnight, but I am certain that small things such as giving children confidence in their ability and cultivating their desire to learn will help make a difference to the future of both the individual and Cambodia in the long term. Now that I am back home I feel that the most worthy thing I can do is to try and inspire others to go to Cambodia to do the same thing. I am lucky enough to have done lots of travelling and I would say, without hesitation, that Cambodia was one of the most amazing countries I have visited. It is culturally fascinating and I was able to spend some of my free time visiting the temples and also a floating village. It has such a vibrant atmosphere, particularly evident in the (amazing!) markets and, of course, the tourist hub ‘Pub Street’, which boasts the best nightlife in Siem Reap. Perhaps the most striking and inspirational aspect of



Cambodia was the extraordinary selflessness of the Khmer people. Their generosity despite the difficulties they face in their own lives is truly humbling and their happiness is infectious. For example, the locals living across the road from the volunteers’ villa offered to let me stay in their home instead of going back to England (I was very tempted to take them up on this offer), plied me with farewell gifts and woke up early to see me off to the airport. Since arriving back in England I have been reflecting on my time in Siem Reap and I truly believe that, despite being away from my family, friends and daily comforts, those were the happiest 2 weeks of my life. I am conscious that when I’m telling my friends about my time in Cambodia, and indeed in this article, I am not doing justice to my experience. The natural warmth of the Khmer people, the unrestrained joy of the children at the orphanage and the sense of fulfillment you feel at the end of each day can only really be understood if experienced in person. My experience in Cambodia was eye-opening, enriching and maturing. So, to potential future volunteers I have only one thing to say: go; Cambodia needs you and you need Cambodia! As for me, I will always be grateful for the lessons I have learnt and I have no doubt that I will return to Cambodia one day. Thank you Projects Abroad staff for everything you did. I spent an amazing time thanks to you. I hope I can come back really soon.





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Projects Abroad in Cambodia had changed me



My name is Lina Zainea. I am 22-years-old and come from Canada, Quebec. I study special education and will be finishing university in a year's time. I decided to do volunteer work in Cambodia, to teach basic English and French for two months. I've always wanted to do volunteering, so I thought it would be good for me as a teacher to experience something different. I chose Cambodia because I know that it is one of the poorest countries. Also, I really like the Asian culture, so I wanted to visit an Asian country, to see and feel the difference and also, to do the best I can to help. When I first arrived in Cambodia, I felt really good. The people seemed so nice, and the other volunteers were very nice too. It felt like home in the Projects Abroad villa. I've been working in an orphanage, doing care and teaching. I was teaching English in the morning and French in the afternoon. The rest of the time, I would play and have fun with the kids. The children were all so wonderful, specially my students, with whom I got very much attached to. They were all really good students. I could see in their faces that they love to learn and to go to school, which encouraged me to give them more. Then I worked at Wat Bo Primary School for 3 weeks. It was amazing, this feeling of teaching in a

real local public school. For the first time, I got to experience huge classes, around 55 and 70 students per class. At first, I was worried because I was afraid I couldn't do it. When I saw the students for the first time, I felt like I was at the right place. They seemed so excited to have a new foreign teacher. Thanks to them, I felt so happy teaching. Also, thanks to them, I learned a lot. I could see the difference between teaching in Canada, Quebec, and teaching in Siem Reap. It is not the same at all. It made me really want to come back to Cambodia and work as a teacher. I really think that my journey to Cambodia was one of the best things that ever happened to me so far. I feel that I have accomplished something. Besides teaching, I had the chance to visit around. I saw the main attractions in Siem Reap, such as the Angkor Wat temple, the floating villages, Phnom Kulen and the waterfalls, the landmine museum, the silk farm, and much more. I also had a chance to visit Phnom Penh and the S-21 prison. Phnom Penh is a really nice modern city. Also, I had the opportunity to go to Kep and see the beach. I think Cambodia is a really beautiful country. The food was always delicious; I experienced the Cambodian noodles and Cambodian barbecue. I could also see how people lived in their community. It is amazing to see how they work so hard to be able to have a good living, and also to see that despite that, they are very happy. Moreover, the Cambodian people are very nice and warm. I learned a lot about Cambodia, its culture and its history. I wish I could stay longer. For me, two months was not enough. I didn't see how the time passed so fast. During my whole journey, I felt happy.





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» Volunteer's Story- Ms.Nina Verder

"To explore a new experience and other country culture, I decided to sign up with Project Abroad to volunteer in Cambodia with 2 Week Special Programme," said Nina Verder (19). As working with 2 Week Special Care and Community Programme, she and other volunteers went to Home of Hope to work with abandoned children with mental disabilities, handicap, and some of them are also affected by HIV. Having been working for two weeks in Cambodia at Home of Hope, she was very happy because she has helped a lot, both the children in the center and the community children by playing with and feeding the handicapped children in the center, as well as teaching basic English Language to the community children. Nina mentioned that, "I have given love to disable children, played, and feed them, and also I have taught some English to the community children as they don't have enough money to study at the Public School. Moreover, from day to day, I have organized many interesting activities such as paying games, doing origami, or drawing pictures with them, and sometimes, I also prepared lesson for teaching the community children". For the first week of this programme, all our volunteers have painted the playground for the whole week in the morning, and in the afternoon, they all played with the disable children or teach English to the community children. "For the first week, I had painted the playground in the morning and in the afternoon; I mostly played with the handicapped children. To paint the play-ground was very hard work for me as I never painted before, but I really like to do it because it is a part of which I can help the Orphanage Center with," added by Nina. Painting the playground was very hard work as they never did this before, but all of them look so



interested because they believed that painting is also a part which they can help the center and especially the children with. Through the 2 Week Special Programme, our volunteers said that they have learned a lot from this programme such as how to work with disable children, how to feed, and how to play with the handicapped children. Most of them really appreciated this programme so much as this programme has led them to being real human beings. Not different from other volunteers, Nina also said, "2 Week Special was my unforgettable experience which has taught me how to play with the disable kids, how to feed, how to communicate with the children even if they are using different languages, and they could not speak English. All that I have been involved with and especially the smile of the children was my most memorable experience which is unforgettable". Even a short time living in Cambodia, Nina said that she really loves Cambodia because Cambodian people are so nice, friendly, and helpful. Finally, she would like to give some advice to future that the volunteers should be open minded and try to get involved with any work like helping, feeding, and playing, with the disable children in the center, and don't be afraid of them.



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Cambodia Marine Conservation Project – September 2013



The seahorse team successfully completed 37 surveys during September. We explored some of the deeper areas of the seahorse habitat with our well trained team and we also got to go on some exploratory and reef dives at the end of the month. The long term volunteers are keen to cover as many GPS points as possible in the coming months in order to better understand the habitat. Volunteers are working on statistics and some are keen to help with the next quarterly report.

Conservation Projects

Seahorse Surveys

37 surveys were completed during September. This meant the volunteers were able to enjoy some exploratory dives, reef dives, and go further around the island to some sites they hadn't dived before. Volunteers are keen to cover as many GPS points as possible in the coming months as well as work on the third quarterly report.

Reef Surveys

Volunteers are helping Emma with statistical analysis and report writing for the comparative reef study. Those who are interested are working hard on statistics from 2011 and 2013.

Clean Ups

The volunteers got some extra dives this month and we were still able to keep the beach clean. We had some nice weather which meant we were able to snorkel some shallower reefs and clean any fishing nets or trash from those sites too.

Community Projects

Khmer school project

This month the volunteers worked on the Khmer school while the kids are on holidays. They were able to do regular clean ups, gardening, painting, and maintenance on the playground. Some of the older children continue to learn English at the bungalow every second day.

Other stuff...

We have had Niki's nudibranch research, jungle treks and seahorse surveys keeping the volunteers busy this month. We are looking forward to completing the third quarter seahorse report and comparative reef study report.





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> New Intern for Phnom Penh



My name is Chea Kimmeng. I am in my third year at the Cambodian Mekong University majoring in Business Management. In 2012, I worked at a telecommunication company; I learnt how to run a business in real life which is different from what I have learnt in university. I'm currently working as an intern at Projects Abroad Cambodia. To work in this position, I have to make myself generalist since I support most of departments in the organisation. I am learning a new process of workflow and operation which are completely different from the company. In here, people who used to work in a company like me, we have to adapt to a new environment and culture of the organisation. I find it interesting to work here because I can learn new things, do new work, meet new people, and

go to new places. Finally, I would like to thanks Projects Abroad Cambodia for giving me a chance to work with you.

> Dirty Weekend at VDTO





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▶ Dirty Weekend at VDTO

Vocational and Development Training Organisation (VDTO) is one of our partner organisations in Phnom Penh which has been working with children who come from poor families, orphans from families living with HIV/AIDS and children who work in garbage collectionsince 2000. It takes care of around 200 children at the placements now. In order to primarily promote the children of this organisation to understand about group consolidation, to motivate the kids to study, and to strengthen the cooperation between VDTO organisation and Projects Abroad. Last month, September, they suggested Projects Abroad help them paint the inside of the library as it is getting dirty.

Therefore, on 29th of September, we conducted a Dirty Weekend at this organisation and six volunteers from Apartment DN were involved with this event. At 9 O'clock in the morning, we left our apartment to ward to VDTO organisation, we spent around 30 minutes from the apartment to the Organization. Having arrived at the centre at around 9:30am, we got a warm welcome from the supervisor of this Organization, Mrs. Chantha, and she introduced her placement to the volunteers and told us why they need us to help painting and decorating. Afterward, we started to open the paint and separated into two groups of volunteers. One group helped painting the wooden wall and other group helped painting the concrete wall. It was a bit of hard work for our volunteers as they have never done this before, but a few



minutes later they found that it was really amazing work for them because they were able to help decorate the library for the children. As we did not have many volunteers to help like this every month because some of them already travelled, we still finished our painting on time. Our painting finished around 3:00pm, then we went back to Apartment. Finally, we would like to say thank you to our volunteers who worked hard to help paint and decorating the Orphanage center, we believe that our work will make a big difference for the center and the children. Without your strongly co-operation, we would not have finished on time as we have set. Therefore, your co-operation is the most important key to complete the task.

