

ProjectsAbroad



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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF PROJECTS ABROAD NEPAL



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First Time Teaching

*Christine Sommers – Denmark
Chitwan Medical Teaching Hospital*



Upon arrival to Nepal I meant strictly business with my volunteer time. It was a month I dedicated to learning about another health care system, and an experience that would look good on my resume for medical school. Luckily, that was far from the actual outcome. Of course I learned a lot at the hospital and of course it is going to look good on my resume, but I felt I gained a lot more on a personal level.

Not only have I met a bunch of fantastic people that I hope I never will forget, but I've pushed some of my boundaries too.

I've never been great with kids, and I've always felt kind of awkward and uncomfortable around them, so volunteering at the health outreach program was a really big deal for me and a step out of my comfort zone. Teaching kids how to wash their

hands might not sound like a big deal, but I was getting really nervous about it. Being surrounded by 30+ kids and trying to calm them down and teach them things; what a horror story!

When we arrived to the school we quickly went through the practical things and got everything set up, and then it was show time.

We were going to teach three classes. First we played a game with them, and then we showed them how to wash their hands. After they washed their hands on their own, it was back to the classroom to talk about why and when you wash your hands.

When we mentioned the word "game" and "outside," chaos broke loose. It was a fun and good kind of chaos with 30 children laughing and running around in excitement. It was hard to get their attention, but we managed to get through all of the steps and everybody was eager to participate and to try the hand washing. It was great!

All of my anxiety about this was gone as soon as we stepped into the first classroom. The kids were great, and after this

experience, it seemed silly and irrational that I had felt that way.

The volunteer work after my placement (like the health outreach) was actually the place where I felt I helped the most and where I gained the most on a personal level.

Nepal Fact #13

.The "Kumari," or living goddess, lives in Durbar Square right here in Kathmandu. Said to be the human representative of the goddess Durga on Earth, the Kumari is chosen at birth and remains a god until reaching puberty.

Welcome, Lea!

This week, we have a new Volunteer Coordinator joining our staff here in Nepal. Lea will be responsible for coordinating all volunteer activities in Chitwan, including doing inductions, feedbacks, setting up social events and dealing with all problems that may arise. Feel free to say hello!



Lea has dual citizenship, both Danish and Canadian. She has a BA in Sociology and a Masters degree in Development and International Relations. Lea has volunteered in Tanzania and completed her internship in India based on gender equality and literacy programmes. Before joining the Projects Abroad team in Nepal she was working at a shelter for women and children who have been subjected to violence and also counseled at 'The Social ER' for people in socially vulnerable situations. Besides traveling, Lea is exceptionally passionate about development and social work and therefore thrilled to have been given the opportunity to work in Nepal with a great staff and also with volunteers involved in the many interesting projects.

English Club in Bharatpur!



Thanks to everyone who came, and we hope you had fun!

Places We Love: Bharatpur

Suzanne Adams – United Kingdom
Projects Abroad Nepal Operations Manager

The premise is simple: write about your experience at a Nepali location that you love, that stood out to you, that you'll travel back to while daydreaming at your school desk or office cubicle. The place can be your favorite cafe, your host family's home, or even a dusty road in the middle of Nepali nowhere.

The idea is to be able to see how your experiences in a place compared to someone else's, and to gain insight into the #PlacesWeLove you may have not yet explored. I hope many of you decide to share, and they can be emailed to me at iansandler@projects-abroad.org.



For my first six months in Nepal I lived in Bharatpur, in the Chitwan Region. As I drove into Bharatpur for the first time, along the main highway, it seemed like a busy town, not unlike Kathmandu. The road is chock full of tuk-tuks, trucks, motorbikes, bicycles and the odd buffalo or goat. We passed a busy shopping area, a huge hospital, two or three large hotels and small stands selling things such as ice-cream, corn on the cob and pani puri (a local snack not recommended for travellers with sensitive stomachs). Some people like the city life, but being a country girl at heart, and having just moved from rural Ghana, I was a little sad.

However, after a few days in Bharatpur, a friend and I borrowed some bicycles to explore a little further inland. Ten minutes away from the hustle and bustle and you find beautiful, flat, green countryside perfect for cycling. My friend and I spent three hours ambling around on our bikes past small colourful houses with haystacks and buffalo in the garden, tiny temples and fields of green rice, with the foothills of the Himalayas as our backdrop. Instead of the large trucks and tuk-tuks that had past us on the main road, we were passed only by the occasional local on foot, bicycle or motorbike. We found the way to a large river and watched as three old ladies passed by with crops they had collected, on their backs in straw baskets. Eventually it was time to cycle back. We had no idea where we were, but found our way back home with the guidance of friendly locals.

I spent six months in Bharatpur and fell in love with the area. The flat countryside made it perfect for cycling, and I found this a great way to relax. I tried to go for a bike ride at least once a day. I usually cycled in the evening, looking

for the best spot to watch the sunset.

Nepal Fact #14

With 27 million residents, and 57,000 square miles, Nepal is the 93rd largest country in terms of land mass, while remarkably being the 41st most populous country.

I would highly recommend living in a community, rather than just travelling. You can build friendships with local people and gain an insight into the culture and how people live. Also, you get the chance to explore where you live and find all the beautiful little places that would never feature in a guide book and most tourists will never see.

Most people who travel to Chitwan go to the National Park, which is stunning. However, I found some truly beautiful spots and watched some amazing sunsets from my bicycle that I would never have had the chance to see had I just been passing through Bharatpur on the way to the National Park.

Projects Abroad Nepal Photography Competition

Congratulations Mees Mansvelders! Mees, 20, from the Netherlands, volunteered at Chitwan Medical Teaching Hospital in Bharatpur, Chitwan, as part of the Medical Project. As a medical volunteer, Mees had the opportunity to observe all facets of a bustling Nepali hospital, from the Emergency Room to the Maternity Ward.

Mees had a few words to say about her winning shot:



"After my months of volunteering in Chitwan Medical Hospital, I returned to the capital of the greatest country I've traveled to so far, to spend the last days of what was the best trip of my life. Nepal offered me so much beauty and happiness already, and I didn't think I could be surprised by Kathmandu anymore. I'd been high up in view of the mountains, volunteering at my dream job where I was really making a difference and I've been down low in the native and wild jungle; a city wasn't going to amaze me.

I wandered the streets of the big city on foot, with a friend and a camera. Soon realised I couldn't be more wrong about Kathmandu. Everyday we'd get lost in the many streets of Kathmandu, following our feet to temples, palaces and markets. Everywhere I went, everything I saw, everyone I met astonished me. I realised I'd been in Nepal long enough to see the inner beauty of the country, the beauty regular tourists couldn't see. The beauty that emerges from the people and culture, rather than the buildings. The beauty you see when turning your back to the Stupa and your face the believers.

The beauty I still enjoy when I look at the thousands of photos I took. The same beauty that is in the joy of this little

boy running through the pigeons. Looking at this photo makes me long for the little moments, the moments that were so normal I didn't appreciate at the time. Moments I will come back for, back to the country that stole my heart."

Congratulations again to Mees! Next month's submissions will be accepted until May 7th, so start shooting. And remember, the more creative, the better! Good luck!