



The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Cambodia

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Staff Update

Mr. Has Sophourn, our co-ordinator, has successfully done his heart operation. He is now back at work and taking some medicine to make sure that all is well.

We would like to congratulate three of our local staff who has recently been promoted.

ChhoyNareth: She has been working with Projects Abroad for a few years as a Desk Officer and was the first contact with new applicants. She has been promoted to Officer Manager and who will be responsible for the work, with regards to the office working process.

SounKanika: She was our intern in 2011 and has been selected to be a General Assistant. She also has experiences working as an Accountant while Vattey was on her maternity leave. Currently, she has been promoted to Co-ordinator who will take care of the Health Care project which includes the Medicine project, Dentistry project, and Occupational

Therapy project and Physiotherapy project.

Man Hannafy: He was also our intern working for six month, due to there being a lot of tasks to be response for; we have required him to be our General Assistant. He had replaced Seang during her maternity leave. Once Seang was back at work, we promoted Nafy to be the Co-ordinator responsible for the Human Right, Journalism and Teaching projects.



Second Turn to Cambodia for Volunteer



My name is Casey Palmer and I am an occupational therapy student studying and living in Queensland, Australia. I was feeling restless about my work here in Australia, so I started scoping out volunteer websites to see if I could get out into the real world and practice my therapy skills. I stumbled across the occupational therapy and physiotherapy program offered through Projects Abroad and I was hooked! My partner Luke, who is a

physiotherapy student, and I decided to venture to Phnom Penh and stay for one month

during November and December, living in the city and volunteering at the National Borei Infants and Children's centre (NBIC).

Once we arrived, we were blown away by the hospitality of the Projects Abroad staff and other volunteers, but we were also both suffering from culture shock. As an experienced traveler I can definitively say that Cambodia, and more specifically, Phnom Penh are unlike any other places I have travelled to previously. It took a few days to adjust to the business of the city, the bustling crowds, the humidity as well as the constant stares, which made me feel like I was walking around with a monkey on my head!

The work at NBIC was, above all, the most rewarding part of the whole trip. Some of the children at the centre have disabilities that didn't even have names. However, the staff at the centre are amazing and the degree of love and care dedicated towards these children marveled me and evoked strong emotions within me. After a few days within the centre I started to find my place and develop relationships with the other volunteers and the staff who worked at the centre. As an OT student, I was sometimes at a loss as to where my place was on the rehab continuum, but the NBIC staff was happy to teach me simple physio techniques, which I could utilize when my OT skills were not needed.

I was able to aid in developing a few children's skills in using walkers and wheelchairs in order to become more independent and I was also using a therapy technique called Constraint Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT) to aid in developing bilateral hand use in children who neglected one of their upper limbs. I learnt a great deal about the nature of disabilities and how to treat them while I was at the centre, but I also learnt how to interact with other professionals and with children in a different way. Obviously there was a language barrier between the children and I, however the experience forced me to learn a little Khmer in order to successfully communicate with the children but also provided me with the ability to develop my non-verbal and interpersonal skills on a deeper level.

The accommodation and placement in Phnom Penh city was excellent. The proximity to local markets, riverside restaurants and "western" supermarkets, (where I could curb my cravings for Australian Cadbury chocolate!), provided many memorable social experiences and allowed me to create memories and new friends. It was wonderful getting to know all the

volunteers over the course of our months stay. I now have a place to stay in nearly every continent of the world should I need it on my next adventure!

I would recommend this volunteer experience to everyone who is studying a therapy degree and to anyone who wants to be challenged and strengthened as a person whilst travelling. As cliché as it sounds, it is important to note this kind of experience is not for the light-hearted. The experience was rewarding because it was challenging. I would like to thank Projects Abroad for the time and effort they put into supporting myself and my partner throughout the month, it made the whole experience manageable, safe and enjoyable.



Pro-volunteer working at Physiotherapist at VI

Summary of my volunteer experience as a physical therapist at the VIC (Veterans International Rehabilitation Centre) in Phnom Penh from 14th October – 11th November 2013, Roger Salvisberg.



For many years now, I have been strongly associated with Cambodia. About 15 times I was able to get to know this wonderful country with its diverse culture and friendly people. For this reason, I have decided to build a house in Siem Reap 3 years ago and hope to move there in the near future. I would like to work as a physical therapist in Cambodia and it was my wish to have some experiences as a volunteer first. This is why I have decided to start through Projects-Abroad as a physical therapist in Phnom Penh. Regrettably it had no related opportunities in Siem Reap.

My volunteer project as a physical therapist is now completed. Two months ago I travelled with a lot of uncertainty in the luggage to Phnom Penh, where I could finally work as a volunteer physical therapist. The initial difficulties lay down after just over a week and I was able to develop myself as a physical therapist properly. The circumstances encountered in the clinic demand a great deal of emotional and strategic techniques. Luckily my years of experiences have helped me a lot and I was repeatedly asked by the inconsistent and sometimes incomprehensible treatment strategies which were almost impossible tasks.

Every day I put all my energy into my patients to bring out only the best in them. I have learned how they express their gratitude and their great trust. I appreciate that a lot. I am convinced that the clinic could benefit from my work and the new treatment techniques. I am sure that the employees appreciated my input as well.



I will greatly miss everyone here; especially my young patients and I hope some of these experiences in my future work, mainly to take more to Switzerland as physical therapist.

There would be so much to tell, but that is beyond the scope here. I ask all of you to contact me personally if you want to know more details about my project.

A big thank you to all of you: **my patients, parents, students, volunteers and to the whole team of VI.**



Donation to Khemara Organization

A Ex-volunteer, Véronique Gillet from Luxembourg, who worked as a Pro-volunteer at Khemara Organization as a consultant, has donate 50\$ to the placement.

Her overall experience was a great memory in her life.

We deeply thank you so much for all your contribution.

Dirty Weekend in Phnom Penh



On Sunday the 1st of December, 10 volunteers from Projects Abroad set out to the Asia's Hope school for a 'Dirty Weekend.' We were greeted by friendly faces and hugs as we arrived with paint-rollers and paints. The children and volunteers grew excited as we opened new rollers and mixed buckets of paint in preparation for the outer walls of the

orphanage. As we began, using a cream base color along the outer walls, you could feel the enthusiasm of the children all around us. The children were so eager to help, grabbing rollers and brushes to reach the small corners of the walls. Soon paint was everywhere, on the walls, the trees, the ground, our clothes and our faces; the children couldn't have been happier, lighting up with joy as they used the paints. As we stopped for lunch and surveyed our work, we created an Alphabet design for each subsection of the wall. Unfortunately, we were only able to complete one letter due to running out of paints. As we began using colored paint, the ecstatic children began drawing and writing on the trees around us. We finished the 'M' wall using words and pictures such as music, monkeys, mangos and men.



As we left Asia's
Hope we left
parts of our
hearts with these
lovable children.
Having only
arrived in
Cambodia the

night before, this Dirty Weekend was the most perfect introduction to the lovely people of Cambodia. I recommend Dirty Weekends to anyone that has the opportunity; it is a great way to bond with other volunteers and also to share in wonderful memories.

Thank you for reading our Monthly Newsletter.