

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Cambodia



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International Children's Day



To celebrate International Children's Day, Projects Abroad Cambodia arranged to take the children at the Khemera Organisation on a day trip. Our volunteers, staff and children played many games and had a lot of fun. Before we returned, we gave out T-shirts to 45 of the children and presents to the rest of them.

For us, this was a special day but for the children, I'm sure it will be one that they'll never forget.

For more pictures please [Click Here](#) to link to our Official Facebook page.

Staff Update

Vatthey, our previous accountant, has left our team so that she can spend more time with her daughter. We would like to thank her for all of the great work that she did with us.

We would also like to extend a very warm welcome to our new accountant, Soeung Dyna.



Vatthey Farewell party



Welcome Dyna, a new accountant to our team

STAFF TEAM BUILDING TRIP

In June, before the busy summer season started, we had the chance to go on a staff team building trip to Koh Ses, where our conservation and diving project is based. This was our first trip to the island together and it was wonderful. As this is the rainy season, we got stuck on the mainland for a while before taking a boat to the island. The big waves made some of our staff sea sick but it was not a problem in the end as it gave us all the chance to do some diving under the instruction of our Conservation Coordinator. We also handmade some decorations for the main bungalow. The journey from the mainland to the island took about an hour by boat. Upon arrival, we received a warm welcome from our Conservation Director and his team. We played a lot of games together but, as we were limited for time and it rained incessantly, we were unable to do everything that we had planned. More photo please [Click Here.](#)



We would like to extend a big thank you to Anne for donating toys, shampoo, pens and pencils to the children at the SCC. We would also like to thank George, our teaching volunteer, for donating toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap and shampoo to the children at VCAO.



VOLUNTEER STORY

Belinda Lush from Australia works as a Business Consultant at Khemara Organization

35 year-old Commercial Director, Belinda Lush, decided to volunteer with us in Cambodia after leaving her job at Lonely Planet in Australia. She wanted to take the opportunity to travel but also to gain some exposure to business in South East Asia.

''Cambodia has been on my list of travel destinations for a long time and the opportunity to visit it, experience the working life and use my skills to benefit an NGO seemed like the ideal combination,'' says Belinda.

Belinda volunteered at Khemara Organisation as a Business consultant. She strongly felt that she wanted to leave a lasting legacy, greater skills and knowledge that could be used to benefit their organisation beyond just her time volunteering there. Belinda mentioned that Khemara Organisation has an incredibly talented and passionate team. Her role was really to focus that passion to establish the key strategic issues facing Khemara in the next 3 years and then help them to document that using professional business English. She chose Projects Abroad PRO because it offered her the opportunity to travel to a destination she had always wanted to visit whilst using her skills and knowledge to hopefully make a valuable contribution and take away some new skills. It certainly lived up to her expectations!

As she has a Business Degree and has worked in a variety of marketing and commercial roles across strategy and business operations, she was able to help review and update the communications material including the website and corporate brochure. She also worked on shaping and documenting their 2015-2018 strategic plan involving staff in a series of (translated) workshops across the Khemara offices. Finally, she helped prepare funding proposals and concept notes to secure new funding from existing donors.

From this experience, Belinda said, ''I have been able to use my time to really learn about the issues facing the Cambodian people. I have also had the privilege of working with a fantastic, warm and welcoming team of people who have helped me to understand more closely the issues facing people in the day to day life of Cambodia.''

Belinda said that ''in my 2nd week, I conducted a workshop that was attended by over 40 staff and local government authorities to capture the current strengths and weaknesses of the Khemara Organisation. It was a typically sweltering March day in Phnom Penh and, although I had an interpreter present, I was conducting the workshop in English to a group of people who had only a fairly basic grasp of the English language themselves. Despite the challenging conditions, throughout the day I witnessed presentations from many intelligent, passionate and articulate individuals. Their contribution to uncovering the organisation's strategic issues was amongst the best I had ever seen.''

''In Sihanoukville, aside from conducting the workshop described above, I attended a meeting held by Khemara, which brought together key stakeholders in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Kampong Cham province. This included the Chief of Police and Head of the Health Department for Sihanoukville as well as owners of various Entertainment Venues. Khemara facilitated a sometimes heated discussion between these conflicting interest groups who ultimately want to work together to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS but have differing views on how this can be achieved,''

Belinda believes that the Khemara Organisation operates just like you would hope an NGO in Cambodia does; they invest all funding to benefit the community and avoid any unnecessary expenses. As a result, the offices are basic; there is no air conditioning or kitchen staff, but what is lacking in facilities is more than made up for by the friendly and welcoming attitude of the staff. Working in a different culture was definitely different from what she was used to back at home. For Belinda, the language barrier often meant that she didn't always know what she was doing from one day to the next and she sometimes had to make the same point several times before it was properly understood. However, in spite of such challenges, she really enjoyed getting to understand the culture more intimately.



Her advice for future volunteers would be that "there is almost no limit to the amount of work you could do for Khemara to make a positive contribution. In doing so, the existing skills and knowledge of the team cannot be underestimated - although it may take longer to get them to express their thoughts (particularly in English), their experience is vast and should be used as a first point of call."

Belinda loves the country and believes that the contrast of "such rich ancient heritage and landscapes with a deeply disturbing modern history is an intriguing combination. For me, travel is all about education, and there is certainly much to learn in Cambodia."

"In short, I had a fantastic experience with Projects Abroad and wouldn't hesitate to recommend it. I have some travel plans that I am keen to pursue, visiting Vietnam and parts of Thailand for the first time. Beyond that, I have really been inspired by my time at Khemara and am thinking about how I can work in South East Asia in the longer term."

**THANKS FOR READING. GOOD LUCK FROM
PROJECTS ABROAD IN CAMBODIA**