



*The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Cambodia  
September 2013 Issue N°-59*



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### › Farewell saying

I first came to Cambodia as a volunteer through Projects Abroad in November 2011, working on a teaching programme, initially for three months. Before I came here I had read that the Cambodian people are incredibly friendly and welcoming, and after quickly being able to form friendships with locals, both from within my workplace and from the local area to where I was living, I found this to be true. They seemed to take great delight in talking to me to enquire about issues such as where I had seen in Cambodia and what my expectations were for my time in the country. It was a pleasure getting to know so many people who were all keen to make my stay as pleasant and memorable as possible and to help me when possible. During this time, one of my highlights was a weekend trip to Siem Reap to visit the world famous Angkor temples. Accompanying me on this tour were some other volunteers working at the same school, and a local teacher from our work placement who was able to provide us with local knowledge which was greatly-



Robert Parker, Pro-Volunteer Coordinator

appreciated. Siem Reap is a place people simply must visit when in Cambodia, to enjoy walking around the different temples, seeing places of beauty, and appreciate the magnificent scenery. Bargaining for goods in the markets was a new experience for me, although I quickly became used to this and managed to gain some bargains. Some tuk-tuk and moto drivers can become tiresome after a while, as they ask you repeatedly whether you want a ride somewhere or where you are going. It doesn't seem to matter how many times you say no thank you, they still keep asking! But bear in mind

that this is their way of earning a living and are desperate for passengers to make some money. I was experiencing such a remarkable time living in Cambodia that the time soon passed. It was towards the end of my final month here that the position of Assistant Manager became available in the Projects Abroad office. I was fortunate enough to be offered the position and so my stay in Cambodia would last for longer than expected. From March 2012 I have been working for Projects Abroad in Cambodia, a job I have enjoyed immensely. Working for the organization has enabled me to meet many volunteers and form friendships with them, visit the partner placements to build and develop good working practices and to ensure the volunteers are all well looked after when they are working, and to provide the care and help to volunteers when needed. Being a former volunteer myself, I was able to know what type of situations and advice the volunteers would find useful and give help accordingly. Whilst living more permanently in Cambodia I have been able to travel around the country, visiting some truly beautiful places such as Banlung city in Ratanakiri province, in the north east of the country. There is a lush forest here, clean air and a crater lake with clear water-



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### › Farewell saying

and suitable for taking a refreshing swim in. One was certainly needed after the twelve hour bus journey to get here! Cambodia truly is a wonderful country to visit. Take your time, explore some magnificent places and take time to get to know local people, be they in your workplace or in the local area where you are staying. They truly are very friendly people. Experience the local cuisine; you will be able to enjoy some incredibly tasty foods here with fresh local ingredients. Fish amok, fish cooked in coconut milk is a particular favorite of mine.

It is with sadness that I now find myself in the position of leaving Projects Abroad and preparing myself for returning to England next month. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in Cambodia and would definitely recommend it as a country for others to visit. Make the most of your time away, embrace the local culture and cuisine, and take the time to talk to local Khmer people, they really are very friendly. Enjoy your time in Cambodia, I know I certainly did.

**By: Robert Parker, Pro-Volunteer Coordinator**

### › My time with Khmer Projects



Few months ago I came to one of the poorest countries in the world to volunteer, Cambodia. On my last day there, I felt really sad to be leaving. Now, instead of feeling home sick as usually people would do, I feel "Cambodia sick". I miss it very much. I had a great project with Sython, my project coordinator, where I got to learn and experience the Cambodian culture. In my first day there, I visited the Killing Fields and S-21 prison where I met a Khmer Rouge survivor. It was impressive. Then, the next day, we visited the national museum and the royal palace which was very beautiful place full of art, architecture, and design. Then in my next week, I went to learn how to make shadow puppets.

So I chose my own design and after four days, and with the help of the staff, I finished it. It's an easy skill to learn but it takes lot of precision and concentration.

Then, in the afternoon, I used to go to a Khmer language lesson and a royal traditional dance class. It was really nice to learn the language. It helped me communicate with the local people in the market or with tuk tuk drivers. Of course, I didn't get the accent right, so some people would laugh about it, and then I would laugh back. The dance class was very hard. I had a seven-year-old kid teach me. It was funny but hard to do because it requires you to be very fit. I also had the chance to learn one musical instrument, which was amazing. The next week, we went to Kampong Chhang village, where I was introduced to pottery. A very lovely lady welcomed me with her six-month-old baby. I tried to do few pots myself but I ended up breaking them. It's hard but very interesting skill to learn. The lady was also very happy when I



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### My time with Khmer Projects



was taking pictures of her baby and she asked me to send them to her which I promised I will. The next early morning, Sython and I saw a mountain so we decided to climb it. It took us two hours, got lost in the way, but we made it and it was fun. The other volunteers and I also had one night with Sython's family in the farm. It was really nice to experience living just as locals. We went rice planting with the people. They thought we were joking first, but then they were very happy to have us help them. Though it was exhausting work, but we really enjoyed it. That night, we slept on wooden floor, ate from one plate, cheered "cholmoy" with the Cambodian beer, ate frogs as appetizers, heard old stories from the parents, played with the kids and others started

teaching us more Khmer language since they had spoken good English. One of my best nights in Cambodia was also amazing to notice how little do these people own, yet they are happy. Then, the next week, we went to Siem Reap, and visited the temples. It was breath taking, very beautiful, and amazing place to be. We watched sunset and sunrise at Angkor Wat and we learned about the history of these magnificent temples. There is so much history and culture in there. On that weekend, I stayed in Siem Reap and met the other volunteers visiting. So we went to Angkor Wat again, and there we built our own pyramid. It was kind of our special tradition to build a pyramid every weekend, where Andreas, Mark and I are at the bottom and Devi on top. In Cambodia, all volunteers lived

together in apartments. It was really nice because it helps build close friendships. In the evenings, we always had occasions to go out for a drink, ice cream or dinner together. We also had few good bye parties for whoever is leaving. It was very special experience. By mid July, my time in Cambodia was almost over. I spent the last few days in Phnom Penh visiting the Central market and Russian market where I was able to buy lots souvenirs. Then in my last night, the group of volunteers I used to always hang out with especially Devi, Hillary, Kelly, and Mark (without forgetting Nicolas, and Andreas who finished the project earlier) took me out for a spa, dinner and gave me few gifts which I love and been using every day. They were really special volunteers and we all considered ourselves lucky to have met each other. In the end, it was really hard to say good bye to them. We left but we knew we became life time friends. Now, we always communicate with each other. I miss them very much. I miss the crazy, beautiful life in Phnom Penh. I miss the staff of Projects Abroad. In simple terms, best life time experience I ever had, that I wish I can go back in time to do it again.

**By: Hala Ayoub , Khmer Project Volunteer**



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### 2 Week Special in Siem Reap



As I stepped off the plane the heat and humidity hit me like a brick wall. After approximately 27 hours of travel I had arrived in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Rey, a Projects Abroad staff member who became the most wonderful guide I could have asked for, greeted me. As it was already late, myself, and the rest of my group members who had just arrived took our first tuk-tuk rides back to our accommodation to get some much-needed sleep. The following day was our induction and formal introduction to the city as well as each other. My group was comprised of 9 volunteers ranging in ages from 16 to 18 and representing 5 different countries. English was our language of communication along with a never-ending game of charades. We had all traveled from our homes to take part in the 2 Week Special Care & Community Project. Our placement was the New Hope Orphanage, which was about 45 minutes out of town by tuk-tuk and home to 37 of the most adorable children between the ages of 3 and 15. My second day in Cambodia was my first day at the orphanage and immediately I knew that-

it was going to become a place that I would hold in my heart forever. Upon arrival, we were greeted by the children, who reached to hold our hands or gave us quick hugs before running away giggling to get a glance from afar. Within a matter of hours a connection was formed and our volunteer group was dispersed among small groups of children playing various games, coloring, dancing, and running around. Most of our responsibilities were centered on playing with the children and giving them the attention they so unquestionably deserved. Our day was usually devoted to fun and games but we also washed the children's clothing, washed mosquito nets, served the children lunch each day, and worked on some painting projects. Our first paint job was repainting a fence in a vibrant green. The children were so intrigued and had such a desire to be helpful that more than once I found myself standing on the sidelines wondering how my paintbrush had been confiscated by a boy or girl eager to make their own contribution. As we were placed at a Christian orphanage one of our other duties was to paint a mural on the surrounding wall depicting biblical images. Although working in the hot sun for a few hours each morning was tiring, the end result of our hard work was rewarding. The one full weekend we had in Cambodia was spent partaking in tourist activities. We traveled to Angkor Wat, along with a few other temples, multiple Pagodas, the Pub Street Night Market, and the floating village. The personal sense of reward I gained from volunteering in Cambodia along with the memories I've made will be something I cherish and keep with me for a lifetime.

**By: Marley Miller, 2WS-July Volunteer**

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### My Life During 2 Weeks in Phnom Penh



#### Impressions of Cambodia before Going

Before travelling to Cambodia I had mixed feelings for I was nervous yet excited. I could not wait to work in an orphanage and help the children. Although I had not met any other volunteers I knew they probably were having similar feelings and concerns about travelling to a different country all by themselves. I had also briefly heard about Cambodia's history and its troubled past, it sounded fascinating and something important to see.

#### Getting to & Arriving in Cambodia

I was concerned about travelling to Cambodia all by myself; I had just turned 16 and had never travelled by myself. I had a connection in Doha and was worried about my stopover as it was only over an hour. However I made my stopover with ease and my flights

were not delayed. I arrived in Phnom Penh late at night after filling out three pieces of card for my visa and immigration. I was perplexed but Projects Abroad helped as they gave visa instructions making the process much more simple and clear. As I collected my luggage I hurried towards the exit to look for a member of staff from Projects Abroad, as soon as I turned the corner there stood a crowd of about 50 people with most people having signs for somebody, but a man with a sign saying 'Projects Abroad' stood out immediately. I walked over and he greeted me before kindly taking my heavy suitcase and loading it into a car. Overall my journey was hassle free, simple and as hoped.

#### Immediate Impressions of Cambodia

I had impressions that Cambodia would be a colourful, vibrant city with people smiling everywhere however this differed to what I saw, this did not disappoint me however. I realized the immediate differences such as a man casually peeing on the side of the road, the smell of sewers every couple of minutes or so and the fact that the flats and houses did not look like the western houses in England, they were much smaller and some of the roofs were made of metal. Cambodia was a poor country, I knew that before I went but it was not as expected, it never is, it was a little bit of a shock but I could not wait to explore the people, the culture and the history.

#### Living Conditions and Food

I was surprised when arriving at the apartment, after looking at the city from the car journey I was not expecting much but was smiling when I was at the apartment because it was modern with clean bathrooms and albeit simple, the bedrooms had air conditioning units and a fan. The fridge in the kitchen was for everyone and was filled with bottles of water as Cambodia's water was not safe to drink. This was very reassuring as my parents had stressed the need to-





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drink lots in a humid climate as one major thing I didn't want to do was to get dehydrated. The apartment had a cleaner and a chef who were great, she cooked three meals a day, and all the meals were brilliant with rice, noodles and another dish which would be made from local ingredients, and there was always a vegetarian option available as well for those who did not eat meat. At restaurants, although the food was paid for already you could order anything from the menu as long as it cost less than ten dollars; it was fine because most of the food would cost less than five dollars anyway.

#### My Project in Cambodia

My project in Cambodia was to work in an orphanage called 'Home of Hope' which was for the mentally handicapped and those who had Aids and HIV. My first impressions were that it was peaceful as I was met with an idyllic atmosphere. The centre was just outside of Phnom Penh and it was large with a climbing frame area and several buildings in which the brothers who ran the orphanage lived and another where they taught English and other subjects to the local community children and the main building which housed the mentally handicapped children. I was not shocked when I first met the handicapped children as I knew about their condition, however I was shocked at how skinny all the children were, my wrist was the same size as some of the mentally handicapped children's legs! My work there consisted of removing old paint from the -



climbing frame and repainting the climbing frame. It was good fun as we could decide all of the colours. Additionally we played with the mentally handicapped children as well as massaging them with baby oil and feeding them. Playing with the mentally handicapped children was the most rewarding due to the reason that they do not have parent's everyday to show them love and attention so making them smile and laugh was really good and rewarding. Additionally some of the mentally handicapped children needed physio so some volunteers and I massaged them with baby oil to help them. Also I was interested to feed them after seeing how skinny some of the children were. However no matter how hard I tried some of the children would not eat more than half a dozen spoons which was slightly upsetting. I could not blame them because the food served was rice with a sauce that had a few vegetables in and either a small piece of fish or chicken. Another side of my placement was to teach the local community children basic English. This was very fun and restless experience as the children are eager to learn and they respect you. Sometimes, however you would be stuck in the front

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of the class with a blank mind about what to teach and you had to think on your feet and all the children would stare at you wanting education. This was a definite shock as in England, most children would prefer to stay at home and watch television. However all the children in Cambodia loved to get an education as they knew it gave them life skills and hope for a good future

#### Cambodian Culture

Cambodia's culture was fascinating and they were the friendliest nation without a doubt. Everyone was kind, generous and helpful. Although the streets were generally busy and the smell sometimes too much, the local people did everything to make sure you enjoyed your time at Cambodia. One thing that you will notice is that whether you are shopping at the Russian market or finding a tuk-tuk, people will try to rip you off and you have to cleverly negotiate a deal so they get

a profit and you get a good deal. One t-shirt I brought at Siem Reap's night market originally cost six dollars and after five harrowing minutes of talking I was able to get it down to one dollar fifty! Some other volunteers I was with found it nerve-racking every time you passed a tuk-tuk driver as they would all ask the same question, 'Tuk-tuk?', I think it may have been one of the most said words in Cambodia and by the end of the trip it became an annoyance to myself as well. The Cambodian food was certainly interesting with popular foods including snake, fire ants and even deep fried tarantula. I never ate any of these as they did not look appealing, however they also have Costa Coffee and KFC which was good to have every so often. One thing I immediately noticed in the first few days in Phnom Penh was that I did not have any Wi-Fi. However I soon noticed that all bars, coffee shops and restaurants had Wi-Fi which was a relief as every few days I would get in contact with everyone at home whilst being bombarded with emails and Facebook messages.



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#### Trip to Siem Reap at Weekend

I was spoilt as I had the chance to go to the tremendous temples of Angkor Wat. We left Phnom Penh early on Saturday morning in our air conditioned minibus for Siem Reap. It was not far away, however due to the roads in Cambodia not being very developed it took a very long time. It was a very memorable road trip experience filled with pot holes and views of Cambodia's elegant countryside. We arrived in the afternoon, went to the hotel before going to one of the temple sites to see the sunset onto the temple. It was magnificent seeing all of the colours. The next day we began our journey looking at all of the famous temples, taking our photos, listening to the tour guide and sweating in the intense humidity whilst guzzling down as much water as possible. It was beautiful and interesting, learning about Cambodia's history from hundreds of years ago. In addition to the weekend trip we also visited the very upsetting

but necessary trip to the Choeung Ek which is known as one of the killing fields in Cambodia. It was a place where the Khmer Rouge began a revolution and killed the educated people in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979; they executed nearly 1.8 million people which was 20% of the population. It was really sad listening to the audio tour and going through the killing fields seeing bones and mass graves everywhere. It was a moving experience and everyone was silent as we learnt the troubles which haunted the area over 30 years ago. After visiting the killing fields we went to another interesting and moving site called the S21 prison where they tortured and killed people. It was also known as the genocide museum and at the museum I was privileged to meet a survivor of the prison who had some jaw dropping stories.

#### Free Time

Most of the days we would finish around 4 in the afternoon when the children went to sleep, and so we would arrive at the apartments at 5 leaving 2 hours free for something to do. We would maybe go to an internet café and order some soft drinks or even play cards or Uno on the roof of the apartment where a nice breeze would go by. Additionally, if you are in need of some western food or food for the plane journey then the local supermarket is great as it has food from Oreos to Pringles and peanuts to ice cream. Before the plane journey I brought three boxes of Pringles as well as some Oreos and other chocolates as I knew the plane food wasn't good. Also I saw a halal sign on the KFC at the Russian Market so if you are Muslim, it is a good place to go.



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#### Final Thoughts

Overall Cambodia has been an eye opener for me and has let me explore a truly magical culture, albeit the people are less fortunate than me, they are the friendliest nation with the biggest hearts. The placement at the 'Home of Hope' was spectacular as making the mentally handicapped children smile and laugh was the most rewarding experience anyone could ever get. It was important to learn about Cambodia's troubled past about the Khmer Rouge and how it may shadow the country for some time; however the country is developing rapidly and by going to Phnom Penh and Siem Reap as well as Angkor Wat, you can understand that Cambodia is truly magnificent and that it really is the 'Pearl of Asia'. I really miss Cambodia and would definitely recommend it to anyone wishing to go!

By: Adil Yaqoob, 2 WS-August Volunteer





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### Social Event Announcement

Dear volunteers,

As Social Event is an most important event which can drive any of our volunteers to get involve and can interact to other volunteers during this event, we arrange this event every month, and the one who responses for this activity is Social Manger, Mrs. Seang, but last month, August, in Phnom Penh, we have cancelled any social activities because our Social manger admitted to stay in maternity clinic since the first week of August, and August was the busy month, and we did not have any staff to be in charge for this Social Activities; therefore, we decided to cancel any activities in August. However, since our Social Manager is still on maternity leave for other three months, and she will come back to work as normally in November, yet September Social activities will be not cancelled anymore, we will run as normally, and I myself, Nafy, will be in charge of the social events from September until Mrs. Seang is back; that's why, I am writing this letter to inform all you that our any Social Event since September will run as normally, and we would like to say sorry to all volunteers that we have omitted any Social Activities last August. From now on, I hopefully you, volunteers, both staying in Apartment 1-4 and Apartment 5-6 will join any social activities which I have posted on the information board in every Apartment since early September. Therefore, please have a look for detail Social Event and if all of you interested in joining with us, please sign up your name and what Apartment you are from on the participant list or you can read bellow list to get more detail of our Social Actives in September. Please spend your time with us to join our event to explore new thing especially Cambodian culture, tradition, and civilization which all of these will be found in our Social Events and your participation will be highly appreciated. Any inquiries please refer to me, and we looking forward to meeting you in our Social Event.



### Sum Up List - Social Activities Schedule - September 2013

Dear All,

This is our Monthly Social events in September, we hope you will enjoy meeting each other from all apartments for each events. Please look for details.

No	Activities	Details	Date & Time	Location	Remark
1	Social Gathering	Hanging out for dinner with all volunteers, then go to night market. Time to meet everyone from all apartments.	Friday 6th, 6:40pm	Titanic restaurant, on Sisowath Quay, riverside, near Night Market. +855 (0) 23 427 209	All cost is your own responsibility. I will wait for you at the restaurant, but I will arrange tuk tuk for you leaving at 6:30pm.
2	Traditional Arts Show	It is the original Cambodian arts show, it includes Cambodia passage of life and other Cambodian ethnic minority cultures (Highly recommended to see from previous volunteers). Then, we go for dinner.	Friday 13th, from 7:00pm to 8:00pm	The National Museum, Phnom Penh +855 (0) 23 986 032	Tuk tuk will be arranged for you. We will leave apartment at 6:40pm. Be ready. Ticket 125 food and transportation are your own responsibility.
3	Traditional Photo	Weekend free, we are going to take a Cambodia TRADITIONAL photo, wearing a Khmer traditional dress with a free make up. It's fun and something you should experience.	Saturday 14th, from 3:30pm	SPK Kodak Studio, Phnom Penh. +855 (0) 12 1707095	I will arrange tuk tuk for you leaving at 3:15pm. Transportation fee is your own responsibility. It is from 5\$ per shoot, it requires 3 shoots per person.
4	Cambodian Puppets Show	Have you ever seen the puppet show in Cambodia. If not, come with us to see the great traditional puppet show and Apsara dancing.	20th, Friday, from 7:30pm	Sovanna Phum Art Theatre	Tuk tuk will be arranged for you. We will leave apartment at 7pm. Be ready. Ticket 5\$ and transportation are your own responsibility.
5	Sporting event - Soccer	All volunteers and staff are welcome and encourage to join. It is not only to keep you healthy but also to strengthen to friendship.	Saturday 21st, at 6:00pm.	Soccer Space in front of National Assembly	Please meet at apartment 1 & 6 at 5:45pm. Transportation and other fee are your responsibility.
6	Blood Donation	A humanitarian charity. We are going to donate our blood to the hospital for helping the people who suffer from accident or any operation and need blood to survive.	Saturday 28th, from 4:00pm	Ang Dung hospital +855 (0) 78 763 745	We will leave apartment at 3:45pm. It would take 30 minute to complete the process.
7	Dirty Weekend	A Weekend activity, we usually do it at the school or orphanages. You can contribute your time to make a good thing for kids.	Sunday 29th, 9:00am-3:00pm	Will Inform later	Tuk tuk and food will be arranged for you. Please kindly sign your name on participant list at apartment 1 or 5.

If you interest to join please wrtie down your name on **participant list** or Text to Nafy 081 280 060 for **any queries**. We really appreciate for all your participation.