



# ProjectsAbroad

The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad



*Sri Lanka*



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## EXPERIENCE SRI LANKA

2013 June- Issue no 99

**THE LAND LIKE NO OTHER**

# TWO WEEKS SPECIAL 2013

We met three excited teens at their host family on the morning of Monday 24<sup>th</sup>. Dalal (Kuwait), Ima (Scotland) and Minh (Vietnam) were so enthusiastic about their two weeks in Sri Lanka, the children they would work with and the way in which we could improve the school in the afternoons. We spent a bit of time talking about the country and culture and introducing the ways of the placement (Welipitiya Montessori).

We went over to the Montessori and immediately the children greeted them with cheeky wide-eyed smiles and giggles. They spent half an hour with the children drawing pictures of butterflies, dotted pictures to join and then colouring. I was surprised at the quick yet creative pictures they gave the children and at how they were eager to learn words to try to get the children to understand them ("how do I say good or beautiful?"-Lassanai - beautiful, good-Hondai, or "how do I tell the children "different colours"- wenas pahta).

Our first work day on Tuesday was spent giving the children warm milk in little coloured plastic cups that I could hardly get my stumpy fingers through, then morning prayers with the children, songs, recaps of ABCs, 123s, shapes and colours and the main activity for the morning- making Chinese lanterns. Remember when we used to make those in school with the crepe streamers fluttering below? And how much fun it was? I always thought that any moment there would be a light that would shine from it sending streams of light everywhere-funny thing is...I still do! That was exactly the same for the children and us as well.

Once everything was cleared up Minh, Dalal and Ima helped with the children's lunch. Opening and giving the food, then clearing up the projectiled-crumbs of food that, at this age I can't understand how food got that far away from a child's lunch box with us all looking at them all! The remaining time was given to giving the children things to draw and color and then to prepare activities for the next day.

## Message from the Editor

June 2013 - Projects Abroad Sri Lanka became busier than usual as we had the first "Two Weeks Special" group arrived in June. This means we are having three groups in this summer in Sri Lanka in July and August. Instead of organizing Two Weeks Special programme only in Panadura area, this year it is planned in Kalutara and Negombo as well.

Negombo – a tourist area with lot of vulnerable children and beach, we are slowly but surely developing many placements for our volunteers, which so far has been great for beneficiaries as well as volunteers. In addition we have a huge technical school to place any number of skilled volunteers. This school is also comply with our main focus regarding children in the school (who dropped out schools either low education level or low financial situation).

There is also a football club which already produced 09 players to the national football team. We already have started working with them and those experienced football coaches are highly welcome to volunteer in this club.

On 21<sup>st</sup> Friday saw the outreach programme at Panadura Dutch Annes' Montessori and Tsunami Camp with most volunteers in the country.

Next month July seems to be the busiest month of the year and June was busy with planning and preparing for influx.

Gishan C Perera  
Desk Officer  
Sri Lanka



When I asked Ima, Minh and Dalal how they felt about being with the children, I half listened to their voices -it was in their eyes I saw the warmth....they were excited, loving the children and enjoying being able to bring smiles to the children of this Montessori who come from struggling and broken families, from Tsunami-destroyed homes.

The afternoons of our first week were dedicated to building a fence for the Montessori. This is so "haraka" (cows in Singhala) that come or are given a home at the temple grounds, do not find the need to make the plants and shrubs at the Montessori their breakfast. Also, on a nastier level-cow poop smells terrible unless you have a severe nose block!!!

So our first afternoon we cleared the place where a fence were to be set up, then with the help of someone (a Mason) who knew what he was doing we were digging holes in the ground with an "allawanguwa" or a kind of pick ("alla" in Singhala meaning potato-and don't ask me what it has to do with potatoes... "wanguwa" meaning a bend-in the road...again...no clue!). The only thing was none of us had ever seen this long metal pole with a sharp bit on the end that we would eventually ram into the ground to make the holes to drop the poles for the fence.

Then to scoop the soil out, we used coconut shells and were almost done when the rain began and just fell to the ground in massive drops with NO intention of stopping-there went our plan to finish the holes by the end of the day....or did it? NOPE...equipped with parkas and umbrellas, we went out and began the digging and shoveling, using coconut shells, getting muddy and wet and just loving that we would actually finish by the end of the day...and WE DID!! And wasn't it funny when just as we finished, the rain stopped. So wet, muddy and extremely proud of ourselves, we stopped for the day and went home to showers, warm meals and a rest.

The next day the children had been told to dress in their white children's sari (or traditional clothes...and oh my gosh...I would never imagine they made them that tiny!) to show the volunteers what they wore for Posson Poya celebrations at the Town Hall the previous day. So, after morning prayers and thanks we all walked bare-foot to the Welipitiya temple (Weliptitiya Montessori's name comes from the fact that the Welipitiya Montessori was built on the temple grounds for children whose families were affected by the Tsunami). The children then sang and had their pictures taken by the volunteers for remembrance sake. The children looked adorable!

Then in we all went, children, volunteers, teachers and me to begin activities. The volunteers helped change the children to regular clothes and then distributed a warm cup of milk.

Paper Mache balloons for our next item and boyo, what a mess we made and how fun it was!! The paste was made from flour and water cooked on the stove, balloons were blown and news paper was torn, dipped into the paste and plastered on the balloons. Occasionally a flying lump of flour-paste would land on me and the child sitting next to me would reach out with paste-filled fingers to rub it off (in an attempt to help of course) and I turned into Lumpy Paste Aruni! Minh's and Dalal's groups finished quickly while Ima and my groups came second. All good fun and a bit of work clearing up.

By the afternoon, sunshine and cement were getting mixed and poured into the holes to hold the poles and at the end of the day we were done and would wait for the cement to set the next day. All in all, three days of noisy fun, muddy joys and the job getting closer to being done and our highlight was when we thought we saw a small snake (honestly it was a worm)...and all of a sudden we couldn't find Minh....

....She'd zoomed off and climbed the children's climbing frame in fear of the poor worm scrambling to get back into the earth after we dug it up! Hilarious!!

*Aruni Jayawardane*

**Teaching & Care Supervisor**



# Medical Seminar!

Date : 28th of June, 2013  
Location : Sunview, Panadura  
Task : Health System in Sri Lanka



## PROJECT UPDATES

# Awareness programme for kids





Date : 21st of June, 2013  
Location : Tsunami Camp, Panadura  
Task : Painting the wall & Cleaning

# June's Social Outreach in Sri Lanka!



Every month we arrange a Social Outreach where we gather all the volunteers to do some helpful work at one of our lovely placements.

Friday the 21<sup>st</sup> of June we had our monthly Outreach at Dutch Anne which is a preschool placed in Modarawila Tsunami Housing in Panadura.

The Tsunami Housing is hosting 265 families that lived on the coast line when the Tsunami hit Sri Lanka in 2004. The preschool opened in 2009 and was founded by two previous Projects Abroad volunteers. At this point about 30 kids in the ages 3 to 5 attend morning classes there.

In the afternoon when the older children finish school, Dutch Anne is open for them. They learn English and are also given room for fun times...



In this picture we're putting our hand prints, names and countries on a bare wall making sure not to be forgotten! :)



As you see on the pictures the work was interrupted a little by the adorable and playful kids seeking some attention from our volunteers...but don't misunderstand...the interruption was met with great excitement and enthusiasm from the volles as well!!

The Social Outreach was great and all the volunteers managed to join the little project and make the daily life at Duchth Anne a little more colorful!

Even the volunteers placed as far away as Galle and Negombo made their way to Panadura and it's highly appreciated

– GREAT job everyone – Keep it up! :)



*Nichole Antonia Mouritsen*

**Social Manager**



# Danish Article.

At være frivillig på Balapitiya Base Hospital!

Mit ophold på Balapitiya Base Hospital har indtil videre været en kæmpe udfordring men ikke mindst en lige så stor oplevelse for livet. Jeg startede mit projekt på børneafdelingen, og da min rolle mest er at observere, får jeg et indblik i hvordan en almindelig afdeling fungerer på et basehospital i Sri Lanka.

Tingene er ret anderledes fra Danmark, og jeg fik mig nok et mindre kulturchok, men det viste mig en hel ny verden jeg slet ikke kendte til. I Sri Lanka er der på ingen måde travlt, og der sker måske derfor heller ikke så meget på børneafdelingen. Jeg har fået lov til at se nogle enkelte blodprøver blive taget, temperaturmåling og lægerne der lytter til hjertet. Det er primært mødre til børnene som faktisk tager sig af børnene, de har mad, sengetøj osv., med til børnene. En enkelt ting jeg synes der er svært her på hospitalet er kommunikationen. Sygeplejerskerne ikke er så gode til engelsk, så der var rigtig svært at snakke med dem, og forstå deres accent, men det er heldigvis noget man vænner sig til og man lærer med tiden at forstå dem bedre.

Jeg besluttede efter to uger, at det var tid til at se noget nyt. Derefter kom jeg på fødeafdelingen, og jeg fulgte med lægen hen til OTC (operation theatre ) hvor jeg praktisk talt blev kastet direkte ind til et kejsersnit, hvilket var helt ekstremt overvældende og spændende at opleve, og derefter fulgte 5 mere. Den næste uge, skulle jeg følge en kirurg, og jeg så igen en masse kejsersnit og livmødre og cyster der skulle fjernes. Derefter kom jeg i 2 ½ uge ind i et andet OTC, hvor jeg så mere almindelige operationer, som sår der skulle renses for svær betændelse (og vi snakker oftest rigtig slem betændelse her), fjernelse af blindtarm, brækkede arme eller ben, sår der skulle sys sammen, et bryst ramt af kræft der skulle fjernes osv.

Jeg har også fået lov til at røre, mærke og se patienter på klinikken, bl.a. en patient med kræftknode i brystet, et par kvinder med mangel på salt, som havde hævet hals og en kvinde med navlebrok. Jeg syntes det var rigtig spændende og lidt grænseoverskridende at få lov til at mærke med egne hænder, men det var så fedt alligevel!

Generelt synes jeg lægerne er gode til at fortælle hvad de laver og hvad de forskellige operationer går ud på, og det syntes jeg er kanon, for det kan jeg få endnu mere erfaring og viden af udover ren observation! Det har indtil videre været spændende, lærerigt, oplevelsesrigt og en god og sjov udfordring at være med til alle disse slags operationer, og det giver et godt indblik i hvilke slags sygdomme og skader der her i et land og verdensdel så langt fra mit eget. Det har kun givet mig endnu mere blod på tanden til at studere sygepleje og kan slet ikke vente med at komme i gang!

Heldigvis har jeg stadig tre måneder tilbage med endnu flere oplevelser i Sri Lanka og på hospitalet.

JulieChristensen



# *Dutch Article.*

Er zijn alweer twee weken voorbij sinds ik vertrokken ben uit Nederland; de tijd gaat hier zo ontzettend snel en ik heb me nog geen moment verveeld...

Nu ik sinds vorige week in het ziekenhuis aan het werk ben, begint ook dat een beetje te wennen! Ik heb al tal van bevallingen gezien, veel moeders mentaal bijgestaan en op de OK geweest waar me alles werd verteld en getoond tijdens een keizersnede. Verder heb ik wat uren doorgebracht op de *Premature Baby Unit* waar echt innie-minnie-kleine baby's liggen die net even wat extra zorg nodig hebben.

Afgelopen weekend heb ik wederom m'n rugtas ingepakt om dit keer de bus naar Kandy te nemen! Het was een onwijs lange rit, omdat de Sri Lankaanse vakantie toen net begon, en dus had iedereen het idee gehad om de stad uit te trekken. Wat natuurlijk resulteerde in een hele grote file!

In Kandy heb ik heel erg veel gedaan: een olifantenweeshuis bezocht, de botanical gardens met tal van apen, reusachtige vleermuizen en het landschap van Jungle Book met de boom uit Pocahontas ontdekt, in de spice gardens en de tea factory geweest, ... Al met al heb ik dus heel erg veel gedaan op een enkele dag! Bovendien ook 's avonds mijn record pikant eten nog eens verhoogd; ik stond weer even in de fik, maar het went zelfs voor mij erg snel!

De volgende dag hebben we heerlijk ontbeten op het balkon/terras van ons guesthouse, waarna we een wandeling door Kandy hebben gemaakt, waar zich trouwens een prachtig meer bevindt... Ook hebben we de Temple of the Tooth bezocht, een Boeddhistische tempel waar de heilige tand van Boeddha zou liggen! Helaas was het er erg druk aangezien heel veel Sri Lankezen hun offer kwamen brengen aan de tand.

En nu ben ik weer lekker in hometown Panadura, waar ik me ook zeker niet verveel!

Maren Schaatsbergen