



GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS AND KIDS

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

### Welcome to Projects Abroad Cambodia

How are you all readers? We are well here after a long holiday for Khmer New Year and now we are busy with the arrangements for the arrival of new volunteers and their stay. In May we will have 32 volunteers who will mostly be based in Phnom Penh and happily most placements will have a volunteer to help and to work with which is very useful for the kids and in society.

In May there are many holidays and celebrations, I just hope the volunteers who are or will be in Cambodia will experience all those events such as Labour Day on 1<sup>st</sup> May, King Norodom Sihamoni's Birthday from 13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>, Visak Bochea on 17<sup>th</sup> May and Royal Ploughing Day on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

In April, as it was the Khmer New Year, we had celebrated with a staff party and Monk Blessing in the office which involved the gathering of all staff except those who were sick or busy. It was great! I hope they enjoyed it and keep working well. Besides, we have a Dirty Weekend at VDTO and our monthly dinner on 26<sup>th</sup> May to look forward to.

This month Projects Abroad Cambodia donated to MOC. We will never forget to thank Sebastian Lamour, Sharom Fleming and Patricia who donated the materials to their placement. Thanks everyone.

Currently Projects Abroad has many different ways to keep communicating such as by Facebook and Mytripblog, and now we have a new one; Twitter. I believe you know it and will kindly be one of our followers. Please take a look on the link below.

We will update you with some other useful information in the newsletter but if you want to express your viewpoint or suggest something to be published in the next issue please kindly comment on our FACEBOOK group or contact our editor by emailing: [kimseang@projects-abroad.org](mailto:kimseang@projects-abroad.org).

See you next month.

**Best regards**

**Mao Pises**

**Director of Projects Abroad in Cambodia**

## KHMER NEW YEAR 2011

Not only have we celebrated the International New Year's Day which falls on 1<sup>st</sup> January, but Cambodians also get to celebrate the official traditional ceremony of its own New Year, which is called Khmer New Year (in Khmer language "Bon Chul Chnam Thmey"), every mid April from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> in accordance with Moha Songkran and each celebration day has its own name. The first day we call in Khmer: **Moha Songkran** which is the ending of the year and the beginning of a new one. People dress up and light candles and burn incense sticks at shrines, where the members of each family pay homage to offer thanks for the Buddha's teachings by bowing, kneeling and prostrating themselves three times before his image. On the second day, **Virak Wanabat**, mostly people contribute to charity and to the less fortunate by helping the poor, servants, homeless, and low-income families. The third day, **Thngay Leang Sak**, is when we will cleanse the Buddha statues and their elders with perfumed water. Bathing the Buddha images is the symbol that water will be needed for all kinds of plants and lives. It is also thought to be a kind deed that will bring longevity, good luck, happiness and prosperity in life. Moreover, people also take a bath for their grandparents and parents, children can obtain from them best wishes and good advice for the future.



Khmer form astrology consists of twelve animals: Rat, Cow, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Chicken, Dog and Pig. Rabbit is the sign of this year which will start from 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at 01:12pm.

Cambodians who are Buddhist prepare the materials to welcome and offer the angel named **Ke Ri Nai Tevy**, who will visit on 01:12pm on 14<sup>th</sup> April. That material includes a table covered with white cloth where they put 5 candles, 5 incenses, 2 bottles of perfume, fried rice, a pair of Baysei prumbounnak (a ceremonial ornament made from banana trunk with 9 levels), a pair of Baysei prumpitnaks (7 levels) and Baysei prumtnak (five levels), flowers and 11 kind of fruits. This year we should offer bean and sesame. Then the family gathers around these offerings to pray for happiness, health and prosperity for the New Year. During the three day celebration people go to visit their hometowns and go to pagoda to play traditional games, especially in the provinces.



Do you want to know the history of Khmer New Year? Well, It is believed that the history of the Khmer New Year is closely related to the seven signs of the zodiac for the week. The legend of the New Year is detailed in the Almanac which says: In ancient, happier times, a young man, Thoamabal, the son of a tycoon, had an extensive knowledge of three Vedas by the age of seven. Thoamabal's father built a temple under the spread of a large tree on the banks of a river that was home to many species of birds. He had an innate ability that enabled him to understand the languages of some birds.



Thoamabal's attributes allowed him to become a layman in charge of religious ceremonies for all classes of people. Upon hearing this news another religious leader Kabel Maha Prohm, decided to challenge Thoamabal with tree riddles. He vowed that if Thoamabal could successfully answer the riddles he, Kabel Maha Prohm, would be beheaded; however if Thoamabal could not answer the riddles correctly then it would be Thoamabal who would be beheaded. Thoamabal insisted on having seven days to answer the puzzling enigma until Kabel Maha Prohm agreed.

For six days Thoamabal could not solve the problems and knew that he faced the prospect of being killed by Kabel Maha Prohm the next morning. He therefore decided to hide himself and let his life fade away by natural causes. He hid beneath a pair of sugar palm trees in which a pair of eagles were nesting, that night Thoamabal overheard the eagles talking.

The female asked, "What will we eat tomorrow morning?" The male eagle replied, "We will eat the flesh of Thoamalobal because tomorrow he is going to be beheaded by Kabie Maha Prohm due to his inability to solve the riddles". The female then asked, "What are the riddles?" The male answered, "The first riddle is, where is luck to be found in the morning? Of course the answer is that luck is on the face because people always used water to wash their faces.

The second riddle asked where is luck located at noon? It is on the chest because people always take water to wash their chests. Finally, the third question asked, where is luck located in the evening? The answer is that luck is on the feet because people always wash their feet in the evening." Thoamabal overheard the whole conversation and



so happily returned to his temple. In the morning Kabel Maha Prohm came to ask Thoamabal if he could answer the three riddles.

Thoamabal successfully answered each of the riddles. Kabel Maha Prohm realising he had failed, called his seven daughters, who were maids of Branma, to learn of his fate. Kabel Maha Prohm said, "Your father is going to be beheaded in front of Thoamabal. If my head is set on the earth it will set fire to Earth, if my head is thrown into the air the rain will evaporate, and if my head is thrown into the sea the sea will dry up. Therefore I ask you, my seven daughters to get a holy metal tray on which to set your father's head". Having said this, he beheaded himself and his head was passed to Neang Toungsa, the eldest of his daughters. She placed her father's head on the holy tray and then proceeded to walk around Mount Meru for one hour, respectfully keeping the tray on her right hand. She then took the tray to the temporary sanctuary of Phnom Kailas. At Phnom Kailas, Preah Visakam created a hall where seven holy glasses (Pheakabatei Saphea) were set. The glasses were for use by angels during ceremonies. Each year the seven angels took turns to invoke the head of Kabel Maha Prohm to complete a holy procession around Mount Meru. Following the holy procession the angels returned to heaven.

The Seven Angels of the Almanac: If the annual procession falls on a Sunday then the day will be known as Toungsa Tevi, Monday is Kooreak Tevi, Tuesday is called Reaksa Tevi, Wednesday is Kerenev Tevi, Friday is known as Kemerea Tevi and Saturday is Mohouterea Tevi.

That is some part of Khmer Tradition:-). Happy Khmer New Year 2011.

### **UPCOMING HOLIDAY**

In Cambodia there are many holidays and ceremonies in May. On 1<sup>st</sup> May it is **Labour Day**.

From 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May it will be the **King Norodom Sihamoni's Birthday**. 17<sup>th</sup> May it will be Visak Bochea Day, on 21<sup>st</sup> May there will be a **Royal Ploughing Day** and 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> is a Sunday so are able to take a Monday off instead.

So we will have holiday on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2011.

We at Projects Abroad Cambodia would like to announce that on the above dates our staff Will be on holiday, but will still be contactable if you have any urgent problems.

**HAPPY HOLIDAY IN CAMBODIA**

## My time at Lighthouse Orphanage (LHO)



A day after arriving at Phnom Penh I was taken to my placement where I was shown around and introduced to the staff and some of the children – there are currently 98 children living at LHO – their ages range from 4 ½ (Vishna) to 18 (there are a few older young people living there who would appear to help the staff).

I was informed by Mr Lee, the manager, that I would be responsible for doing the laundry. Rather a daunting task I first thought, but he quickly informed me that thanks to the kindness of a sponsor the orphanage had a washing machine. That was a relief; I mean can you imagine washing the clothes of 98 children by hand? No, me neither!

The paperwork that I received from Projects Abroad indicated that I would work from 9.00a.m until 4.00p.m. with a 2 hour lunch break. Mr Lee, however, wanted me to work from 8.00a.m. until 4.00p.m. I agreed to do this, but taking into account that I was not able to return to my apartment for the lunch break as I had to travel approximately 40 minutes by moto to and from LHO back to the apartment, after a few days I spoke with Mr Lee and changed my starting time to 9.00a.m.



I spent the mornings endeavouring to do the laundry and the afternoon gathering it back in. It was very frustrating in the beginning as I was reliant on Mr Lee being available to connect an electric supply or to provide the fuel for the generator. Some of the older boys at LHO would help me to start the generator. Thankfully though, through further donations, there is now a permanent supply of electricity so these

“teething” problems no longer exist.

The children were apprehensive about using the washing machine, especially for their school shirts as the water was not “clear”. Sometimes the water was a yellowish/pinkish colour. I wouldn’t want my white shirts changing colour, so I could see the children’s concerns over this. Whilst I would do a lot of washing using the machine, teaching some of the older children how to use it, the children continued to do their whites and other items by hand. I tried to assist with the hand washing but this was rejected by the children on the



grounds that they are “young” – I have to chuckle to myself at this.

I did manage to teach one young boy how to do his hand washing better, by asking him to teach me how to do hand washing and then following his instructions, but using the scrubbing brush (informing him that I have

“old” hands and this would be easier for me) and gently scrubbing the collar and cuffs of his school shirt. The lesson was very well received and Map was most impressed at the volume of dirt that I managed to remove from his shirt. He vigorously washed the rest of his clothes in the same manner.

I am pleased however to say that it would appear that my laundry services are no longer



required as, thanks to yet another sponsor, LHO now has a new water tank and a lovely clean clear supply of water – now the children are more than happy to use the washing machine, assuming there is enough soap powder of course!

When I wasn't doing laundry I would play with the children that were not at school. I bought

several word search books during my time at LHO and it would seem that the children have still not grown tired of these. I found it difficult to purchase easy puzzles for them but took the attitude that even if they didn't understand all of the words they were still practising the alphabet and learning to say new words – there were times when the puzzles contained words that they had learnt at school, so there would be great excitement when they found these words hidden within the puzzle.

We also played volleyball, basketball and occasionally I would play football too.



I also spent time assisting Mr Seiha, the English teacher. He has his own curriculum that he is working from so thankfully I didn't have to worry about what was being taught or spend hours doing lesson planning.

I was asked by the sponsor who pays Mr Seiha to spend time helping him with his pronunciation. It should be noted that Mr

Seiha is only a young man himself and that he is currently studying English at university himself. I agreed to this request subject to Mr Seiha having no objections to the lessons

being during what should be his lunch break. Mr Seiha was more than happy with the arrangement. Initially we managed to allocate a set time for our conversations, but it soon became apparent that it was not going to be easy to continue with a set time as during the early stages of my placement I would often be asked by Mr Lee to check the laundry situation. Thankfully Mr Seiha was not opposed to the time for his lesson varying. In fact, at his request we set up conversation lessons with some of the older students during their lunch breaks.



Mr Seiha prefers the “topic” approach to conversation lessons, whereas I prefer the “free flowing” conversation approach – finding out from the children what they like to do, what their interests are, how they spend their time when they are not studying either at the orphanage, public or private school etc. Furthermore, I found that some of the topics that Mr Seiha wanted to engage the children in were too

difficult for them, not to mention at times perhaps “delicate”. After speaking with Mr Seiha about the topics that he chose, and explaining my concerns about them, he found some more ‘traditional’ and ‘acceptable’ topics for conversation and actually introduced them into the classroom, thus varying his curriculum slightly. No more 9.00a.m starts for me as of March, back to 8.00a.m. to participate in the conversation class with the older students.

Whilst Mr Seiha continued to teach I continued to assist with pronunciation and also took some of the classes on his behalf.



You never really stop teaching just because you are not in the classroom. I found myself helping some of the older children with their school homework, explaining words to them, giving them ideas to describe rooms such as a bedroom/lounge/kitchen (drawing my descriptions from mine back at home, but keeping them limited) and even, to my own surprise, helping one young girl with some

geography.

The children really appreciate help with their homework. They don't want you to do it for them; they merely need some guidance and sometimes explanations of words and assistance with pronunciation.

About 3 weeks before I left LHO I was informed that at 3.00p.m. Mr Seiha only has 2 children to teach (the school timetables change every month). It had been discussed amongst the staff and with the Director of LHO whether they should use the classroom to teach English to some of the local children instead. I won't go into the ins and outs of the discussions but it transpired that Mr Seiha was prepared to teach the other children, free of charge, for 1 hour a day. Having established this I asked if he needed any assistance with the class, to which he replied "yes" so I found myself no longer leaving early because my driver had arrived and in fact staying until 4.00 p.m. So, my hours reverted back to 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. without a 2 hour lunch break, but I enjoyed every single moment of it, even though, I must confess, I was totally exhausted.

I decided, after a few weeks at LHO, that I did not want to do what appears to have fast become the norm for volunteers and to throw a party, providing cakes, pizza etc. I had observed that many of the children did not have school bags, their shoes were falling to pieces, they appeared to be lacking in clothes, they didn't have Khmer/English dictionaries, toiletries, and the list goes on. So, thanks to my own funds and the kindness of my friends back home, I was able to assist with:

- Having 20 bicycles repaired (new tyres/chains/inner tubes etc)
- Providing toiletries for the older boys (namely 10 bottles of shampoo, 10 bars of soap and 10 bottles of deodorant) which is what they specially requested, they even asked for Nivea deodorant!
- Countless packets of feminine products for the 16 young women in need of them
- Shampoo to treat lice – a task that seems to never end and one that I spent many an hour trying to fight against
- 56 bottles of conditioner to use against the fight with the lice when the lice shampoo ran out
- Nit combs – those that were too young didn't really need one as the older children/staff would do their hair for them
- Several new good quality school bags (shoulder ones) for the older children and backpacks for the younger children
- New shoes for some of the children that needed them (not the very cheap flip flops as they don't last for more than about a month)
- Clothes for a couple of brothers



- Toy cars for the younger boys to play with
- Countless pens/pencils, rubbers etc and a strong pencil sharpener for Mr Seiha to keep in the classroom
- Word search puzzles (these were distributed one page at a time to the children to make them last longer)
- One good quality webcam
- One good quality headphone and microphone set

I also paid for the transport to take 26 children to the dentist and provided a snack for each of them.

Thanks to the extremely generous donation of one friend I went to university with, one of the young men from LHO was able to pay for his next term studying construction engineering as, for some unknown reason, his sponsor had not paid the fee. This was certainly one of the many highlights of my time at LHO. I



had observed that he was very low after his Grandmother had died and put it down to him missing her. We had a chat and he explained that he was no longer able to go to school. He explained the situation and quite frankly I couldn't bear him not being able to continue, so I was prepared to pay the fee myself. However, my friend back in the UK, upon hearing this, wanted to assist with the payment. As it happens she actually transferred the whole sum required for the term into my bank account – thus putting huge smiles on the faces of 3 people. This young man has promised to study very hard and as a thank you, when he is not at school (which isn't too often bearing in mind he studies Construction Engineering, English and Khmer), he drives me to the market and helps me get good prices for some of the items that I have bought. He has also said that when I come back to Cambodia if I need a driver then he is my man!

The last thing I did was to pay to take one young lady to see a doctor for a skin condition that she has – it seemed pointless just buying the cream which she uses as apparently as soon as she stops using the cream the condition returns.

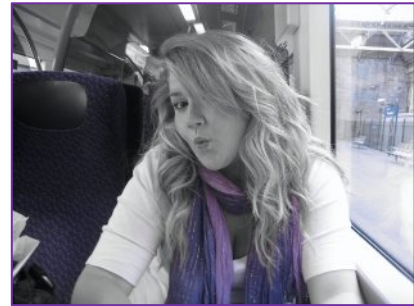
**Patricia Speight**  
**Care project 2011**  
**From United Kingdom**

Let's hear the messages from some of our prospective volunteers who will be coming in May 2011.

### Introduction

I am so excited for Cambodia.

Hey guys, my name is Nicola, Nic, Nikki or any other nickname for Nicola you can come up with! :) I'm coming to Cambodia at the end of May to work in the National Children and Babies Centre as a Physiotherapist. I really love working with children, and it's all I have been able to see myself doing for as long as I remember. I'm hoping that I'll be able to make a small difference in these kids' lives for the small amount of time I'll be there. I'm currently studying in Glasgow, Scotland, which is an amazingly fun place, but there is not much to do in the way of adventure, so I'm hoping Cambodia will be my adventure. I've travelled a fair bit, and it's a passion of mine, but I've never ventured this far away from home so I'm just as much nervous as excited, but mostly excited! I would like to say that I am a social person, I've moved about a bit so I've had to be good at readjusting. And I think my friends think I am funny, if not they are just too nice and laugh anyway. I can't wait to meet all of you and hear about what you all will be up to! See you all soon, in the meantime please feel free to add on facebook if you've got it! (Nicola Blair) :o)



**Kind Regards,  
Nicola Shand**

### Introduction

Hi, my name is Matthew Whiteside. I come from a Bangor, Northern Ireland but am currently living in Glasgow studying Physiotherapy. I got into physiotherapy from playing a good bit of sport (rugby mainly, bit of social football and the odd bout of skiing) and from working in a summer school with disabled children. It's definitely been the right calling for me and I wouldn't change a thing. All you really need to know about me is I'm an avid Manchester United fan, enjoy eating a lot, have a terrible (some say great) sense of humour and I'm pretty easy to get on with.



I'm coming to Cambodia to help out in the National Centre for Babies and Children. I'm pretty excited about learning more about paediatric physiotherapy and I hope that with my help more children can benefit from the best care we can give. From this experience I hope to have fun, learn and grow as a physiotherapist, and have great memories that will stay with me for many years to come.

**See you soon  
Matthew Whiteside**

## Introduction

Hi Everyone,



My name is Verity Rye; I'm 21 years old and from Adelaide, Australia.

I am currently working for Bendigo & Adelaide Bank and have taken a month off to be part of the Care Project in Phnom Penh.

I have been all over Asia except Cambodia so am feeling very excited about experiencing the different culture.

Looking forward to meeting you all soon!

**Verity Rye**

## Introduction

Hi Everyone

My name is Norma and I am 38 years old, I live on Lake Macquarie in NSW Australia (which is about 2hrs north of Sydney).

I am taking a break from work to come to Cambodia and do a Care placement. I am very excited to visit the country and meet all the good people at Projects Abroad. I am also looking forward to working at the orphanage and helping out where needed.

I don't really have any expectations of my time in Cambodia, I am just looking forward to a challenge and a change.

I look forward to meeting you all soon...

Cheers ☺

**Norma**



## VOLUNTEERS' CORNER

### My Life In Cambodia – Care project at CPCDO – By Chloé Compérat



Aujourd'hui, cela fait exactement 2 mois que je suis rentrée du Cambodge. Une telle expérience est inoubliable, il n'y a pas une journée où je ne pense pas à mon petit mois, pourtant bien rempli, passé là-bas. Bilan plus que positif, un seul regret : ne pas être resté plus longtemps.

Étudiante, je me suis retrouvée avec 1 mois et demi de libre en Janvier et Février 2011... que faire?

Un matin, je me suis levée et l'idée m'est venue :

partir sur une mission humanitaire! Étant dans une école de commerce, l'idée ne m'était jamais venue à l'esprit, disons que, en plein milieu de la course aux études, le « social » n'était pas vraiment ma priorité pour le moment. Mais là, ne me demandez pas pourquoi, l'envie d'aller donner de mon temps libre et de ma personne à des personnes dans le besoin est soudain devenue très forte. J'ai commencé à y penser tous les jours, il fallait y remédier.



J'ai alors commencé à chercher des idées sur internet mais n'y connaissant rien ce n'était pas évident... Où partir? Quoi faire? Avec qui? À qui faire confiance? C'est là que je suis tombée sur le site de Projects Abroad, sérieux, très bien fait, ultra détaillé et qui correspondait parfaitement à mon « projet ». Je n'avais pas d'idée de pays en particulier mais je savais que je voulais travailler avec des enfants dans un pays en voie de développement. L'Asie m'intriguait, j'avais besoin de dépaysement, je voulais sortir de ma zone de confort et étant le seul continent où je n'avais jamais été, le tri a été vite fait parmi toutes les destinations proposées. Touchée par son histoire tragique et par des reportages sur les orphelins, les adoptions et le trafic d'enfants, j'ai finalement opté pour le Cambodge.

N'ayant pas le temps de m'occuper de toute l'organisation du projet, Projects Abroad a été la solution parfaite, je partais en toute confiance.



Je n'ai réalisé que je partais que 3 jours avant le départ. Et là j'ai eu peur, oui j'ai commencé à me demander ce qui avait bien pu me passer par la tête pour m'embarquer là-dedans! Je suis pourtant d'un

naturel très aventureux, ce n'était pas mon premier voyage seule, mais là c'était trop « inconnu », je ne savais pas à quoi m'attendre, je ne m'étais jamais occupée d'enfants de toute ma vie, j'avais la trouille de ne pas être à la hauteur et l'angoisse du choc culturel.

A peine arrivée, l'angoisse s'est envolée. Un membre du bureau de Phnom Penh est venu me chercher à l'aéroport et m'a conduite à l'appartement où logent tous les volontaires. Oui je me suis sentie perdue dans cette ville chaotique et face à toutes ces nouvelles têtes inconnues, mais j'ai tout de suite compris que j'étais tombée entre de bonnes mains et qu'il n'y avait pas à avoir peur, tout allait bien se passer.

J'ai été frappée par la gentillesse et la disponibilité du personnel sur place mais aussi des Cambodgiens en général. Une cure d'un mois de sourires.

Mon premier jour à l'orphelinat, je n'étais pas à l'aise. A part les 2 autres volontaires déjà sur place, personne ne parlait ni anglais, ni français. J'ai commencé à me demander si j'allais arriver à dépasser cette barrière de la langue. Finalement, la langue n'a jamais été un problème. Je me suis munie d'un petit dictionnaire Anglais-Khmer et ai beaucoup utilisé le langage des signes! Je n'avais pas non plus de tâches précises, j'étais totalement libre de faire ce que je voulais, ce qui a été très perturbant les premiers jours! Très



vite j'ai pris mes marques. Il a fallu faire preuve de beaucoup d'initiatives et d'un peu d'imagination. Ça n'a pas été difficile, les enfants étaient toujours ouverts à toutes propositions et ils ont fait de chaque activité un succès. Il n'y avait finalement pas de pression à se mettre, le plus important était de leur porter de l'attention, de l'affection, de passer de bons moments avec eux. Je n'ai eu qu'à écouter mon cœur et à faire ce qui me semblait bon pour eux. Je les lavais, leur donnais à manger, les divertissais avec des jeux, je me suis même retrouvée à leur donner des cours d'anglais qu'ils me réclamaient ensuite tous les jours! Je me suis très vite attachée à eux, je me suis dépassée et j'ai découvert un aspect de ma personnalité que je ne connaissais pas.



Mes 2 premiers week-ends, j'ai voyagé à travers le pays. Cette découverte merveilleuse a dépassé toutes mes attentes, tout me fascinait, je suis tombée sous le charme!

Puis, j'ai très vite voulu passer plus de temps avec les enfants de l'orphelinat car, après tout, ils étaient le but premier de mon voyage. Je ne rentrais donc plus à l'appartement pour la longue pause de midi et m'apportais mon déjeuner pour manger avec eux. Les journées étaient alors beaucoup plus longues et très éprouvantes mais les enfants m'en ont été très reconnaissants. Je suis même allée à l'orphelinat mes 2 derniers week-ends.



J'ai organisé une sortie dans un parc de la ville, ce fut un dimanche merveilleux, c'était pourtant une initiative toute simple mais ça signifiait beaucoup pour eux, je n'avais jamais vu d'enfants aussi heureux et ils m'ont remerciée comme jamais personne ne m'avait remerciée. A travers de petits gestes très simples, on peut apporter beaucoup. Pas besoin de sommes d'argent astronomiques, ce ne sont pas les biens matériels que les enfants retiendront mais plutôt l'intérêt qu'on leur a porté.

Bien sûr, ça n'a pas tous les jours été facile, dans un pays si différent, il y a forcément des pratiques qui nous choquent un jour ou l'autre mais ça apprend à être plus tolérant et ouvert d'esprit. La confrontation à tant de pauvreté et d'injustices vous remet également très vite les idées en place.

En conclusion, cette expérience est très enrichissante sur tous les plans et elle est autant bénéfique pour nous que pour les enfants, je ne peux qu'encourager de telles initiatives. Le Cambodge a quelque chose d'enivrant et le quitter est très difficile. Je n'ai qu'une envie aujourd'hui, c'est d'y retourner. Ce mois exceptionnel restera à jamais gravé dans ma mémoire et dans mon cœur. Je ne peux donc que remercier tous ceux qui ont fait de ce séjour une réussite.



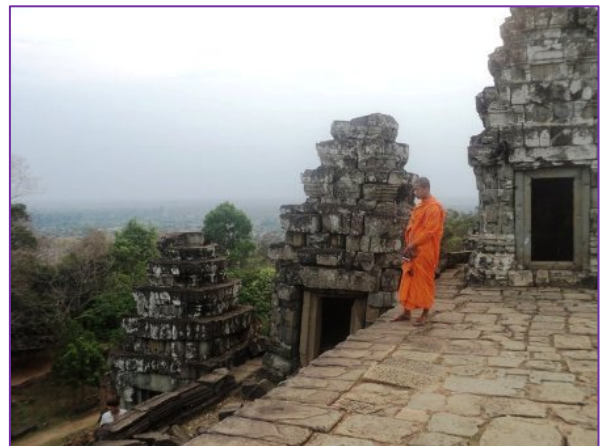
## Projects Abroad Cambodja: Khmer Projektet

Det var aften d. 2. marts 2011 og flyet var få sekunder fra at lande i Cambodja. Jeg havde forladt enden på den peruvianske regntid 3 dage tidligere for at videreføre min rejse som frivillig og rygsæksrejsende – næste stop var Cambodja. Efter to måneder som frivillig i Andes bjergene var forventningerne om et liv i Cambodja allerede store, men udmattelsen efter 3 dages rejsen undertrykte dog stærkt min store begejstring om en besiddelse af et fantastisk privilegie.



Jeg træder ud af flyet og bliver med det samme overvældet af en ekstremt tung varme, der ved førstehåndsindtryk næsten er kvalmende. Jeg kan for alvor mærke det nye, anderledes og spændende klima – jeg mærker Asien. Jeg er langt væk hjemmefra.

Jeg begiver mig roligt over i køen til koeb a visum og fortsætter efter et kortere ophold mod udgangen. Jeg bliver med det samme modtaget af en ung Khmer-gut der med stolthed og stor imødekommenhed fremviser et skilt, hvorpå der står Projects Abroad. Kort efter ankommer en ung fyr, Andy fra Australien, der skal være min partner i mit første projekt - Khmer-projektet. Efter en kortere tur i taxa ankommer vi til lejligheden og bliver hurtigt vist hen til vores værelse. Dagen efter går det løs – Khmer-projektet skal begynde og vi har begge høje forventninger, men bekræfter dog vores usikkerhed omkring, hvad der skal foregå.



Kl. 14.30 dagen efter bliver vi mødt i vores lejlighed af Sophan – vores midlertidige guide, der skal introducere os til historien og livet i hovedstaden Phnom Penh.

Med ture til det kongelige palads, lokale templer, markeder og museer, får vi hurtigt en idé om den store kulturarv der er forbundet til Cambodja og vi føler os for alvor klar til at springe ud i en måned fyldt med udfordringer og oplevelser.

Mandag morgen går det for alvor løs. Sophan er blevet erstattet af Sython, organisatoren af Khmer-projektet og vores rejser til omkringliggende samfund kan begynde.



Vi rejser til en verden af død og ødelæggelse – S-21 fængslet og de barbariske Killing Fields, der voldsomt og livligt beskriver forfærdeligheden ved Pol Pot og de Røde Khmers masseødelæggelse op igennem 1970'erne. På trods af en i forvejen stor interesse og viden



omkring disse forfærdelige hændelser, møder vi oplevelserne med stor forbløffelse. En forbløffelse og en undren om den totale overseelse hos de danske medier og



ellers omfattende historietimer op igennem min skolegang. Jeg føler en vrede overfor den ødelæggelse og det had som et menneske kan kreere. Et samtaleemne der holder munden beskæftiget gennem vores tur rundt i områderne. Men fra den depression og melankoli, som den visuelle læren om Khmer Rouge med lethed kan skabe, begiver vi os videre i projektet, med læren om landbrug og traditionel kunst.

I løbet af uger med cykling langs marker og floder, pottemageri og samliv med lokale landbrugsfolk, mærker vi begge hurtigt en tilfredshed med valget af vores projekt. Efter en måned med udfordringer og rejsen igennem landet Cambodja er vores tørst for mere kun blevet større.

Jeg er klar til at drage videre. Med en viden og forståelse om samfundet i bagagen er jeg klar på at drage videre ud i ny udforskning af nye, spændende og anderledes samfund og kulturer i Cambodja.

**Simon Nielsen**

**20 år**

**Danmark**

**Frivillig for Projects Abroad i Cambodja, marts – maj 2011.**

## DONATIONS



Projects Abroad has donated food items to Marathan of Cambodia (MOC).



Shamron and Patricia donated soap, shampoo, snacks and other useful stuff to the people and kids at the slum area.



Sebastian Lamour donated two packs of 25kg to SCCDO. One pack is all about study materials and the other one has clothes for the kids :-).

## STAFF UPDATE

### New Staff

Three months had passed by and it was the same time to say goodbye to two of our Interns, Mr Ly Chetra and Mek Chhieng, and welcome to two new interns, Miss Soun Kanika and Mr Roewn Bunroeun, to be our full time General Assistants in Projects Abroad Cambodia.

All four interns are good and have worked hard. We hope that after the internship period ended Chetra and Mek will be able to find a good job that they like. For Kanika and Bunrouen we hope they already understand the work system and they will cooperate well with all the other staff members. Let's see the short introduction of Miss Kanika and Mr Bunroeun:

### Miss Soun Kanika

She is 21 years old and originally from Phnom Penh Cambodia. She is a fresh graduate student from Royal University of Law and Economics, majoring in Economics under Management Enterprise. Besides graduating from Rule University, she is a 4<sup>th</sup> year student of Pannasastra University of Cambodia majoring in Finance and Banking as well. She has completed a short course in General Accounting at Vannda Institute too. With her qualifications she really is useful to assist our Accountant, Mrs Mok SopheaKvattey, while she takes



maternity leave and helps other staff as needed.

### **Mr Roeun Bunroeun**

He is 25 year old from Battam Bang – one of the provinces of Cambodia. He is currently studying at the Build Bright University, majoring in General Management. He is very fit for the position as a General Assistant as he can work in the provinces sometimes, especially at Koh Rong Somloem, the placement for the Diving project.



We really appreciate that we have Chetra and Mek as our interns and wish them good luck in life and we really hope that Kanika and Bunroeun will happily and cooperatively work with Projects Abroad in Cambodia.

## *NEWS & UPDATE*

### **Extra Information - Twitter**

There is another media link that you can check to see the Projects Abroad in Cambodia news or for getting some information. It is by Twitter :-). Here it is:



Follow us on: [http://twitter.com/#!/Proj\\_AbroadCAMB](http://twitter.com/#!/Proj_AbroadCAMB)

We have also created these media links; just click on them to see our Facebook group, monthly newsletter, and blog posts to keep contact as well.

**Facebook Group:** <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=29195831915>

### **Country Newsletter:**

<http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/cambodia/newsletters-from-cambodia/>

**Mytripblog:** [http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group\\_blogs.php?gl=true&group\\_guid=2845](http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=2845)

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH



## SOCIAL EVENTS

### Dirty Weekend

On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2011 we had our Dirty Weekend day which was the exciting day in Projects Abroad Cambodia. There were 20 participants eagerly waiting to join and help take part this event. We all met at Apartment 1, accommodation for volunteers in Cambodia, and left to the Vocational Development Training Organisation (VDTO) which is one of the partners of Projects Abroad in Cambodia. The main objective of the placement is to provide education to the kids; no doubt it is classified as a teaching placement (School). Talking about teaching, both the classroom and library environment are important. Therefore the Dirty Weekend was mainly to paint and draw on the walls of the library space.



Everybody, I thank you so much for your active participation. The great cartoon pictures on the wall will perfectly encourage student to learn and self-study in the Library :-).

### Monthly Dinner Party

Every month we celebrate the Monthly Dinner Party no matter how many volunteers we have. Almost everyone joined except those who were busy. We had it at Samot Phnom Penh on 26<sup>th</sup> March from 7pm till late. Everybody really enjoyed it and went back home after.



### Office Celebration before Khmer New Year



As Khmer New Year is closely coming up from 14-16 April 2011, so Projects Abroad in Cambodia had celebrated a traditional event in the office. In Khmer language we call "PITI SOTMON" or Monk Blessing on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2011. It took around an hour to finish everything; all staff, volunteers, cooks and guides were invited but unfortunately some staff and volunteers were unable to come because some were busy and

some volunteers travelled to a different part of the country. In Cambodia, monk blessing is classified as a traditional event especially before Khmer New Year. We believe that by doing so we will have good fortune and luck. Most Cambodian families invite a monk in order to celebrate this ceremony at home before Khmer New Year. However, some may invite only one or two monks, it depends on the participant or how many people will attend. For Projects Abroad we had invited three monks and prepared the gift for the monks.

## Staff party before Khmer New Year

Week by week, we reached the Khmer New Year which is a big ceremony in Cambodia and is an important event for Cambodians. Most institutes, organisations and companies always party with all their staff to celebrate this before Khmer New Year. Projects Abroad in Cambodia did the same as last year and created a staff party. It took place on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at Tonle Bassac restaurant which is a kind of buffet restaurant. I believe all were happy and enjoyed themselves.

### *Miscellaneous*

## Food Item: Main Dishes: Hot and Sour Steak (Khmer recipe)

It is easy to cook, just spend 15 minutes and follow the instruction. You will get a Hot and Sour Steak dish for your dinner. Let's go.

### Ingredients and Sauce:

- Some lettuce leaves (for covering a serving dish)
- 225 g tender steak
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce and lime juice
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 sliced spring onions
- 1 -2 red chilli chopped
- A few mint leaves



### How to make it:

1. Preheat a griddle, or you can use a grill.
2. Cover a serving dish with lettuce leaves and set aside.
3. Grill the steak; cook it as long as you prefer. When it's done, remove to a board on which to carve it and pour any juices in the grill pan into a bowl.
4. Thinly slice the steaks and put it and any more of the juices into the bowl as well.
5. In another bowl, mix the fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, chilli and sliced spring onion stirring well.
6. Then mix the contents of the two bowls together, adding the mint leaves and quickly turn out on the lettuce and serve while still warm.