



**CAMBODIAN PUPPET SHOW**

**What's Inside...**

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## *DIRECTOR'S NOTE*

### **Greetings from Cambodia everybody,**

In November and in the end of October, there were a lot of important official festivals and ceremonies in Cambodia, such as King's Father's Birthday, Independence Day, Water Festival and Coronation Day. No doubt in Phnom Penh there was crowds of tourists and local people who were waiting to celebrate it all together. You can read all about these in detail in the "Inside and Out" section. In reality if you wish to see how it works come to Cambodia next year.



For current volunteers, especially one month volunteers, I hope you had a good time even if there was not much work. I hope you got to know some of the celebrations in the city.

This month there is good news as some of the placements are not flooding anymore. And we have donated some stuff to our Care placement. I would like to thank our volunteers who donated stuff to the placements. Your help really meet what they needed.

Elsewhere in this newsletter we tell you about our Dirty Weekend, volunteers' interests and volunteers' note which describes their experiences in Cambodia.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone – volunteers, staff and the other team for all your support.

Best regards,

**Mao Pises**

**Country Director**

## **King's Coronation Day in 2011**

The King, Norodom Sihamoni – son of former King Norodom Sihanouk - succeeded to the throne on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 2004 by a vote of the Council of the Throne and following King-Father Norodom Sihanouk's abdication. Therefore, in Cambodia we had celebrated the 7th anniversary of His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni's coronation on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 2011 at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh – the capital city in Cambodia.



That was a special day which Cambodia marked one of its important ceremonies.

## **King's Father's Birthday**

Former King Norodom Sihanouk, the father of King Norodom Sihamoni, was born on Oct 31<sup>st</sup>, 1922 at Chaktomuk Mongkol Royal Palace in Capital of Phnom Penh Cambodia. He was 19 years old when he was crowned as the King of Cambodia in 1941.



After the long era of war and after we got a Paris Peace Agreement, he returned home to Cambodia on Nov 14<sup>th</sup>, 1991.

So, in 2011, the government had arranged a special celebration which was for two events. One to celebrate King Father Norodom

Sihanouk's 90th birthday and the other to celebrate the 20 year anniversary of his return to Cambodia at river park which was in front of the Royal Palace and in front of National Museum in Phnom Penh. Most of the important dignitaries were invited and as well as thousands of well-wishers including students, teacher, police, military and so on. All



were in their formal best holding flags, flowers and photos of the King to welcome him when he arrived at the stage. There was the announcement and welcome-music when he arrived.



There was a lot of celebration among them, there was the congratulatory speeches by His Excellency and the Prime Minister. Once they had finished the king's father, Norodom Sihanouk, stood and greeted the crowd. His voice was so soft but he tried to speak what he want to say, the most important words were that he would be remaining

in Cambodia from now on.

We should mention that there were beautiful decorations around the Royal palace and on the main Blvd. Moreover, According to the National Committee for Organizing National and International Festivals, a big meeting and an exposition with around 70 booths was organized on the occasion. Traditional concerts and a firework display was held at night on 30<sup>th</sup>-31th Oct 2011.

## **58<sup>th</sup> Independence Day for Cambodia (1953-2011)**

Cambodia used to be under the protection of France from 1863 to 1953. Former King Norodom Sihanouk, the father of the current King, was the person who decided to access independence from France after years in 1953. We celebrated Cambodian Independence at the Independence Monument – the statue which was built once we won independence from France.



This year, Independence coincided with the first day of the Water Festival.

Happy Independence Day, Cambodia.

## **Water Festival Celebration**

Undoubtedly, the Water Festival is a popular festival in Cambodia which represents the end of the rainy season and reverses the flow of the Tonle Sap River which is a unique phenomenon where the water pressure of the Mekong River causes the river to change its direction. The Water Festival also



Concert live on Water Festival in Phnom Penh.

marks the start of the Cambodian fishing season and originates back to the reign of King Jayavarman whose navy celebrated in order to keep the god of the river happy to supply a plentiful crop of rice and many fish.

In 2011, the celebration took place from 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Nov which happens at the same time as Independence Day on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011. We still celebrated both of the events.

This year, the boat race did not take place during the Water Festival celebrations in Phnom Penh as the government decided to use the resources for the flood victims, but the Cambodians still flocked to the capital to celebrate this event and there are many celebrations, boat races and fireworks in Siem Reap too. Cultural displays and traditional boat races make up a fantastic weekend of celebration and fun not to be missed!

#### **UPCOMING HOLIDAY**

There is a national holiday in Cambodia in December 2011. On 10<sup>th</sup> December it is a Human Rights Day.

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

#### *FEATURE*

### **It Was Really My Home – Care Project at Mek Chheu By Luc Depuis,**

France article



Lors d'un circuit-découverte, j'avais déjà séjourné une semaine au Cambodge en 2010. Cette expérience de tourisme « fast-food » m'avait laissé sur ma faim. Trop courte et mauvaise approche d'une culture qui a bien plus à offrir qu'un safari-photo. C'est ainsi que j'ai choisi le volontariat comme alternative pour redécouvrir ce pays en partageant la



réalité quotidienne avec la population locale.

Project Abroad m'a proposé une mission « care » dans l'orphelinat UNCAS, une communauté chrétienne d'environ 80 enfants de 5 à 22 ans. Situé dans la banlieue de Phnom Penh, il faut compter une heure de trajet en tuk-tuk dans la poussière et les gaz d'échappement ;-). Mais ces deux heures de navette par jour sont aussi l'occasion de vivre sur la route des situations cocasses ou critiques qui créent une complicité avec le conducteur.

A l'arrivée, une journée d'intégration (induction day) est organisée, au cours de laquelle un coordinateur guide le volontaire dans la ville et l'introduit à sa mission. Ce fut la seule journée structurée de mon projet 😊. Comme la plupart des projets « humanitaires », il n'y a pas de structure à UNCAS pour orienter les volontaires. C'est donc à eux d'organiser leurs horaires et activités en fonction des possibilités.

Ces possibilités peuvent varier suivant le nombre d'enfants disponibles c'est-à-dire ceux qui

ne fréquentent pas l'école, qui ne sont pas réquisitionnés pour les travaux de la ferme, ou qui ne sont pas mobilisés par la visite imprévue d'un groupe de volontaires d'une autre ONG. Flexibilité et pro-activité sont donc les bienvenues ;-)

J'ai eu la chance de faire la connaissance d'un couple d'Australiens, ex-Projects Abroad, qui étaient revenus pour leur compte. Joyce et Greg m'ont fait profiter de leur expérience tout au long de leur séjour.

Je suis le père d'une boule de nerfs mais je n'étais pas préparé pour autant à gérer la sollicitation permanente des plus jeunes, petits diables taquins et gourmands de tout ! Les rapports avec les ados étaient forcément différents, parfois plus distants mais toujours cordiaux. Petits et grands forment une communauté solidaire encadrée par 12 « mums » qui se partagent les tâches ménagères et administratives. Un exemple de cette solidarité est



l'organisation de cours d'anglais internes : les ados de niveau L3 enseignent aux L2 et les L2 aux L1. De manière générale, les enfants d'UNCAS connaissent une situation privilégiée par rapport à celle d'autres orphelinats du pays. L'environnement rural offre de l'espace, la ferme permet de varier l'alimentation, un réseau d'ONG de fournir des équipements ou vêtements. Une fois par semaine,

les enfants reçoivent de l'argent de poche pour gérer eux-mêmes le superflu (friandises, téléphone...).

Dans ce contexte, on ne peut pas parler de mission humanitaire mais l'expérience n'en reste pas moins intéressante pour les deux parties en terme d'échanges. Des échanges d'autant plus variés que la tranche d'âge des enfants (5-22 ans) offre une multitude d'approches différentes et d'autant plus faciles que la plupart d'entre eux se débrouillent en anglais...

J'ai eu l'occasion de partager les activités des enfants à la ferme (plantation de bananiers, papayers...) et à l'orphelinat (jeux, bricolages, lecture...). J'ai pu sympathiser avec les « mums » en donnant à l'occasion un coup de mains en cuisine et en leur proposant des cours de français (en alternance avec cours d'anglais dispensés par un volontaire

anglophone). Mon projet de 3 mois m'a permis de mettre en route un projet plus conséquent : réparer et repeindre des pupitres avec la participation de quelques ados.

Au « campus », les volontaires forment une communauté hétéroclite: pas de profil type et c'est tant mieux ! Cette diversité (d'âge, d'origine et de caractère) offre un joyeux mélange où chacun peut puiser selon ses affinités. Coup de chapeau aux cuisinières des appartements qui se coupent en quatre pour satisfaire tout ce petit monde.

Project Abroad propose une série d'activités en marge de la mission pour favoriser les échanges (diners, ateliers, dirty week-end, spectacles...) Par exemple, nous avons été invités à participer à une cérémonie bouddhiste dans une pagode pendant la période du Pchum Ben (fête des ancêtres). L'occasion de partager un moment intense avec la population locale au-delà des relations de sympathie qui se créent d'elles-mêmes tant les Cambodgiens sont affables et généreux.

Mais c'est une population qui reste meurtrie par son passé douloureux : il n'est pas rare que dans la conversation, un Cambodgien fasse spontanément allusion au régime Pol Pot.

Je ne suis pas prêt d'oublier ma rencontre avec le truculent Steven, un Cambodgien de 52 ans qui m'a raconté son parcours comme réfugié dans différents pays d'accueil. Son retour au pays natal après plus de 30 ans d'absence, son renoncement aux USA et à sa compagne américaine après avoir recomposé une partie de sa famille. Malgré tous ces revers, Steven a conservé un appétit de vivre vorace et communicatif. Une belle leçon de vie...

Le Cambodge a définitivement plus à offrir qu'un safari-photo ;

## *VOLUNTEERS' UPDATE*

### **UPCOMING VOLUNTEERS**

There are 28 volunteers who will come to Cambodia for voluntary work with Projects Abroad in December. They are of various nationalities and will do different projects.

Here they are:

**We are looking forward to  
welcoming and meeting  
you in Cambodia in  
December 2011**

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

### From Charlotte



My name is Charlotte. I am a 20 year old girl from Denmark who is taking a year off school to work and travel. After my stay in Cambodia I am going back to Denmark to study English and history at university. I actually don't really know why I've chosen Cambodia. I've just always wanted to go there since I was a little girl. I'm very excited!

Looking forward to meeting you.

Regards,  
Charlotte

### From Bernhard



Hello, my name is Bernhard, I'm 28 years old and from Munich, Germany. I love sports and have a few more hobbies I fill my leisure time with. I used to work as an IT Specialist but I'm unemployed at the moment, so I decided to do something in the meantime and discover a part of the world I always have been interested in. I will be in Cambodia for 3 months, arriving on December 3rd until the end of February. In the first month I am going to do the Khmer Project as I thought that it would be the best way to learn about the country, its people, the culture and the history, and to get good a impression of what life might be like there. For the remaining 2 months I will stay on the island of Koh Rong Samloem

for the Marine Conservation project. I love the nature and I thought that way I can try to help a little; preserving it and hopefully helping the villagers on the island with whatever is needed, too. I'm really excited and can hardly wait to arrive so I'm looking forward to seeing every one of you there!

Cheers,  
Bernhard

### From Raphaela Wiget

My name is Raphaela Wiget, I am 16 and am currently completing year 11 at Glenunga International High School in Adelaide, South Australia.

I have many interests, mostly music, art and a bit of sport...but I haven't had much time to do them recently as I have exams coming up.

I don't really have any expectations of Cambodia, just that I will meet new people and experience many new and unique things that most people my age would not have the chance to do! I am a little bit nervous about coming alone but mostly just excited and can't wait to go!!



Raphaela Wiget

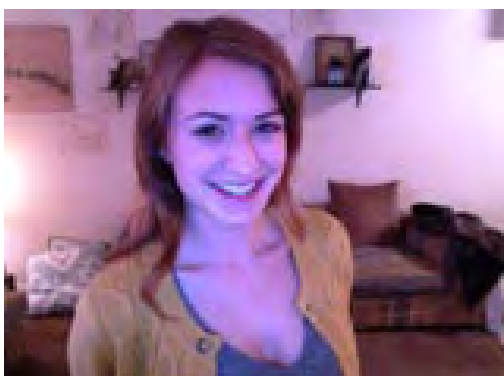
### From Monica Sousa

Hello – My name is Monica Sousa and I'm from Toronto, Canada. I currently work for a construction company as a Human Resource Professional and love what I do. When I'm not taking additional professional courses, I'm playing volleyball, baseball, tennis and golf. I love all artsy things too and am always up for any card or board game. I've travelled a small chunk of the world but this will be my first time to Asia and I'm nervous and excited all at once. I can't wait to meet you all!

### From Rebecca

Hi, my name is Rebecca and I am from Victoria, Australia. I am 18 years old and I have just finished year 12. I am coming to Cambodia for a 1 month Care placement in the Children and Poor Communities Development Organization. I wanted to do something exciting and worthwhile before I start university next year and I decided that Cambodia would be a good place to go. Some of my interests are playing the piano, cooking, travelling, netball, reading and music. I have a younger sister and brother. I have been to New Zealand with my family and to Italy and France on a school trips but I have never travelled by myself before so I am excited and a bit nervous. I am looking forward to coming to Cambodia on 3<sup>rd</sup> December!

### From Christy



My name is Christy Camp and I am an undergraduate student at the University of North Texas. I am currently getting my bachelor's in Social Work with a double minor in Psychology and Addictions & Substance Abuse. I am 22 years old and I live in Denton, Texas. I am absolutely thrilled to be coming to Cambodia for this Winter break! I decided to travel to Cambodia to further understand cultural competency in the field of social services. My main population of interest is individuals living with HIV/AIDS, so I have

requested to work with people and children who have been affected by this particular pandemic. I hope to be humbled by my experiences abroad so I can be a better social worker at home. One of the things I look forward to the most is meeting the other volunteers; I can't wait to be surrounded by people interested in international and humanitarian causes! I love to cook and try new foods, so Cambodia poses an interesting experience for my taste buds. This trip was a long time coming, and I couldn't be more excited.

### From Callum Sandison



Callum Sandison

My name is Callum Sandison and I just completed Year 12 at Marist College Canberra. I enjoyed studying history and hospitality.

I decided to do some volunteer work in Cambodia between finishing school and starting university.

I hope to study International Relations at the Australian National University.

My interests include cooking, Australian Rules Football (AFL), food and listening to music.

I look forward to meeting great people and making lots new friends whilst in Cambodia.

## VOLUNTEERS IN DESTINATION INTEREST

### A PART OF CAMBODIA'S HISTORY BY SUSANA MALDONADO



In Phnom Penh City, along the river side view.

Cambodia. I'm not going to profess that I am in any way an expert on this country. How to describe Cambodia? I've been to over 30 countries around the world and Cambodia is truly incomparable to any other that I have visited. Cambodia's past – I've read its history before, but now that I

have been here for five weeks (has it only been five weeks? It feels like 8 months) I am seeing this country in a different light. Cambodia's history is very difficult to read.

Cambodia was culturally strong from 800AD to 1400AD (thus creating the unique and breathtaking Angkor Wat), but the militarily stronger neighbours of Thailand and Vietnam dominated Cambodia and periodically invaded and claimed political domination of Cambodia until the French strong-armed themselves as 'protectors' of Cambodia in 1863. Wow- France actually DID protect Cambodia from likely invasion from Vietnam and Thailand until 1953. Repeatedly Cambodia has been beaten up by its neighbours and the worst example is during the Vietnam War, when Viet Cong used eastern Cambodia as protection from the US military and staging points for incursions into South Vietnam. The US government began a "Secret War" in 1965, frequently bombing eastern Cambodia escalating to carpet bombing campaigns from 1969 to 1973, thus dropping more explosives than the Allies used during WWII on the Cambodian people. Estimates of the Cambodian casualties range from 30,000 to 500,000 killed.

As a result, the Khmer Rouge managed to come to power based on the political instability wrecking Cambodia. In April 1975, after years of countryside battles in which they killed several hundred thousand, the Khmer Rouge overtook Phnom Penh. Within days of Phnom Penh's fall, the entire population of the city was forced at gunpoint into labour camps in the countryside in order to create a completely agrarian society. In the three years and eight months of Khmer Rouge rule, it is estimated that between 1 and 3 million Cambodians died either due to execution or starvation/disease. Luckily the Vietnamese stepped in to stop the madness and the Khmer Rouge government fell in January 1979.

I guess the reason I'm writing this blog is for several reasons. I finally saw the countryside outside of Phnom Penh this weekend, and saw a small element of the impact of the Khmer Rouge. We had driven through the town of Neak Luong, which was mistakenly bombed by the US in 1973 and killed hundreds. It was shown in the Oscar winning movie, 'The Killing Fields'. The nagging feeling that I should start to educate myself more on the horrors of Cambodia's past drove me to buy 'The Killing Fields' DVD yesterday, and we watched it last night. It was indescribable. A must see movie to educate yourself of the Khmer Rouge, and a positive story, in the end. I have a deeper understanding of the Cambodian people, and today as my tuk tuk drove me to class past the French Consulate, my mind flashed back to the images in the film depicting the Khmer Rouge rolling down the very same street,

victorious in their tanks. Everywhere I looked, I was imagining what the same scene would have looked like with bomb craters and devoid of life, as it would have been during the time of the Khmer Rouge.

I see the impact of the Khmer Rouge still, on my students, as they do not have a strong educational background, as all the teachers were killed and the teachers of today's youth had a very poor education as a result. One of my best students, Sokhang Kong, took me to meet her family in Prey Veng province this past weekend. Her parents survived the Khmer Rouge, but her father is barely literate and her mother is completely illiterate. I stood talking to her about the impact of the Khmer Rouge on the education of her parents' generation, and thus the impact on her generation, when tears began fall down my cheeks. I am so blessed to have been born in a developed, safe, stable country, to educated parents, who gave me all the opportunities that I have had!

Also, I felt so terrible that I knew very little about Cambodia's past prior to a few months ago when I decided to teach here. I just knew it was the most in need of help in Southeast Asia, and I wanted to help. So if you have read this far, I hope this blog provided some additional history of Cambodia that you may not have known.

*VOLUNTEERS' CORNER*

## END OF MY TIME AT CAMBODIA HOPE ASSOCIATION

BY SUSAN WHITTAKER

My last week already at the orphanage and Monday was outing day. We took the children in two separate sessions to the children's playground near the Royal Palace. We had an exciting Tuk Tuk drive through the city and the children exhausted themselves running around and playing on the swings and slides at the park. Eventually we all gathered in the shade for ice lollies and then went back for lunch. We repeated the exercise in the afternoon with the other children who were at school in the morning. Great fun for all!

We had a visit to the slums on Thursday, a real eye-opener to see how the slum dwellers survive on next to nothing. Some had TVs and electric fans in their shacks - electric cabling distinctly dodgy - especially with the leaking roof syndrome...one family of five all sick in one of the houses, sleeping. There were adorable children running round amongst the rubbish -

oblivious to it. Towering above the slums the government built homes that are sadly inadequate to house all the existing slum dwellers. Still, the amazing spirit and resilience of the Cambodian people shines though.

My last day at the orphanage was very sad, children accept that all volunteers will leave them after getting to know them for the brief period of time. There were lots of hugs when I left, lovely gifts of paper flowers and a name bracelet and sweet notes. I cried in the Tuk Tuk on the way home...



On Sunday we visited the provinces delivering food for villages affected by flooding. We arrived at Chivas Shack to help pack food after having a half hour walk to the Riverside as the road had been closed for the King's procession. We were travelling one way and thousands of Cambodians were travelling the other! We had an exciting trip in a truck on pot-holed roads; a surprise visit from a colony of red ants into the truck that were brushed off a passing tree branch, meant there was much screaming and stamping of feet in the truck to kill the pesky biting creatures! We were greeted warmly at villages where we saw the effects of houses and schools that had suffered flood damage. The villagers were grateful for the small food parcels we distributed. We had a hot, dusty and bumpy journey back to the city but it was a rewarding day.

**From Susan Whittaker**

**Care project at CHA**

## MY TRIP TO CAMBODIA – BY EDEN BOUNDY



My name is Eden Boundy, and I am from Sydney, Australia. I had just graduated from high school the year before my trip to Cambodia, and had taken a gap year before starting university. I had always wanted to do volunteer work in a developing country, as I think it is important to give back. Plus it is a great way to really get to know a country, its culture and its people. Being 18, I had never travelled abroad by myself before, and never been to an Asian country, and after learning about Cambodia's turbulent and destructive past during the Khmer Rouge regime, it really affected me. I knew that this country had been through some tough times and I wanted to do my bit to help. When I arrived in Phnom

Penh, my senses were overwhelmed by the heat and humidity, the smells, the busy, dusty streets and the sounds. It was so exciting and like nowhere I'd ever been before! I stayed in an apartment with 4 other volunteers, which was a really good way to meet new people to travel and socialize with. My housemates were a great group of girls who became fun friends and wonderful travelling companions. Along with our cooks Sopheara and Dara--it was like a little family! I applied for a Care placement, however on my first day of work I turned up to my allocated place of work to find that it was an elementary school!

I had not been expecting to be teaching, but I was asked to teach English, and of course I said yes; so my Care placement turned into a Teaching placement. I ended up really enjoying



the teaching anyway, and every night I would try and come up with different lesson plans. The school is a non-government organization called Asia's Hope, which is a school, but is surrounded by 5 separate orphanages, as the majority of the children at the school are orphans, who have lost their parents to HIV/Aids, Malaria, or have simply

been abandoned or their parents cannot afford to raise them. Every weekday I would be driven from the apartment to work on the back of a moto --it wasn't really like going to

work though, because as soon as I would walk through the school gates I would be surrounded by the children who would hold my hand, hug me, and drag me to the playground; some of the younger kids would even shout 'Mummy' when they saw me. As well as teaching them English, I would play games with them, push them on the swings, and one day I did an Art and Crafts lesson with them. I got very attached to all the children, they were so adorable and saying goodbye after a month was challenging!



Other than teaching the kids at my placement, I also did a decent amount of travelling around the country. The city of Phnom Penh had a lot to offer and I enjoyed having dinner at the night market, shopping in the Central and Russian markets, seeing the spectacularly ornate Royal Palace and National Museum, taking a leisurely walk to Wat Phnom Pagoda and I always enjoyed going to the lively Riverside for dinner. I also visited the Tuol Sleng museum and the Killing Fields, which were haunting and terribly sad, but a must see to get an idea about the country's history.

Some volunteer group activities arranged by one of the Projects Abroad staff were very rewarding and totally worthwhile. I particularly enjoyed the Dirty Weekend, which involved a group of volunteers meeting up at a school and painting the classroom walls and staircases using bright colourful paints to create murals, which brightened up the dreary grey cement. One weekend I went to Kratie,



where I went on a boat on the Mekong River and went dolphin spotting, where I saw some Irawaddy dolphins, an endangered species. I also went to a gorgeous place called Mondulkiri (which I think is my favourite place in Cambodia) where I saw a couple of waterfalls (swam in one of them!), zoomed on the back of a moto through breath taking lush, green mountains and visited a Cambodian farming family who lived in straw huts. The highlight of that trip was when I rode an elephant. It was so much fun!

One weekend, the girls in the apartment and I were invited to go and see a rural village called Tuol Pongro, which is the home village of one of the Projects Abroad staff, Sophan

who is very lovely, and that was a beautiful experience. Of course I also went to Siem Reap, and saw the famous Temples of Angkor Wat, which were amazing, as well as the floating village. On my last couple of days I went to Sihanoukville, the coastal beachy place in Cambodia, which was lovely, but I had bad weather (it was the rainy season at the time). I had to deal with a share of culture shock when I first arrived but I totally felt at home after a week or two of being there and was able to speak a few phrases in Khmer. I also got the hang of bargaining prices in the markets (where I shopped like a crazy woman) and with the friendly (and sometimes cheeky) tuk tuk drivers. My time in Cambodia was the most rewarding, inspiring, challenging and amazing experience I have ever had in my life and the five weeks I spent there really flew by. The people are so friendly, the food is delicious and there is always something to do. I will definitely be back some day!

### *Placement Update*

#### SFODA

The flood has gone away, now on the way to SFODA we can drive a moto or tuk tuk to get there. The placements have tried to re-arrange their space to a normal look. Adele is working there. She is our ex-volunteer from last year who come again to volunteer this year at the same placement.

#### CUCO

It is good news to share that there is no flooding at this placement. Everything is moving to the same situation. The kids are able to go to school as normal.

#### SCCDO



SCCDO was a placement with only a house building without any painting or decoration. We had done a Dirty Weekend there, painting and drawing pictures for the placement to create better surroundings. Lately, Susanne, our Care volunteer who was working there for three month, has fundraised the money with her friend to build a new

bathroom for the kids. It is a lot of help and very kind of her as she supported a need at the

placement. A new bathroom will save kid's time, especially in the morning while they need to be ready to arrive at school at 7am. There are 25 kids in total and they only had one bathroom. Now they have the new one which will allow them to take a shower quickly.

Thanks Susanne for your kind help and support.

## *Donations*



We donated 100 notebooks and 150 pens to Save Children and Communities Development Organisation (SCCDO). Due to official teacher meetings at the school, there was no class yesterday so all 30 kids were at the placement. We arranged them in five short rows, told them how important is to take note while we are studying and gave three notebooks and 2

pens to each of them. Finally, we advised them to try to study and pay more attention in class.

The remaining notebooks and pens were given to the Director in reserve for students when they need it.

SCCDPO's director thanked Projects Abroad for all their support.

We would like to thank our two volunteers who helped give the books to the kids.

We also donated two trucks of sand to CUCO for making a path to walk on when the flood was in the placement so the kids don't get wet.



## SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS FOR PROJECTS ABROAD IN CAMBODIA

twitter



Follow us on Twitter at Projects Abroad Cambodia – Here is the link:

[http://twitter.com/Proj\\_AbroadCAMB](http://twitter.com/Proj_AbroadCAMB)

Share your information, ideas or tips for anyone who is going to do voluntary work on our official Facebook Group. Here is the link:

**Facebook Group:** <http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.cambodia>

Be informed about this and that in Cambodia and in Projects Abroad by reading our monthly newsletter. You can read it by just clicking the link:

### **Country Newsletter:**

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

Write down your interests, expectations and feelings before or after coming to Cambodia. Just use your Username and Password to log in. The link is:

**Mytripblog:** <http://www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/2845/Cambodia>

All your contributions – stories, updates and self-introductions etc are very useful for others. We really appreciate it. Thanks.

Please log in Mytripblog by using your Myprojectsabroad username and password. In case, it is not working, please feel free to contact me: kimseang@projects-abroad.org.

Thanks.

## PHOTOS OF THE MONTH



Emilie and Melanie  
taking care of their kids at  
Home of Love.



Yoshi, volunteer from Japan, having fun with kids at SCCDO, Care Placement.



Alexandra teaching her students at Asia's Hope.



Spent their weekend riding a boat along Mekong river to see a beautiful view.



Hang out on Friday night



Volunteers carrying kids at VCAO.

Martin working on his Dentist project with a local doctor.

### Dirty Weekend at SCC



My wish for you all is that you could experience at least one Dirty Weekend in Phnom Penh!! They truly will be one of the most amazing experiences of your life, and I was really fortunate to participate in two while I was there. To put your mind at rest, let me assure you that you're not about to read a story of a weekend of debauchery, but a tale of a bunch of volunteers that got together on October 23, and did an amazing job of painting the two classrooms in the school that I was volunteering at (Salvation Centre Cambodia).

After I started at the school, I realised it was in desperate need of some Dirty Weekend treatment, and asked Seang to add it to the list. Amazingly, we were able to do it sooner rather than later. Around 16 volunteers arrived in our blue Projects Abroad t-shirts, and grabbed the attention of the locals as we arrived en masse in the tuk tuks, and got to work sanding the walls of the two classrooms...it was like a snow storm (check out the photos).

It turned into a very long day, as the sanding took forever, after sanding for an hour or two, most of us had hair full of dust and were looking a very awful shade of grey. Two of my students turned up to see what was happening at the school, took one look at my "grey" hair and told me that I looked like their grandmothers....and giggled uncontrollably for quite some time afterwards. A number of the students also helped out with painting for a short



period of time, and as much as we appreciated it, we were glad that they quickly lost interest in the hard work and decided to be spectators instead as they were a bit hit and miss with getting the paint on the walls; a lot was ending up on the floor. The students were so excited about what we were doing, so I was pretty sure that news would spread

quickly of what we were up to, and that the surprise would be lessened on Monday.

One student stayed all day though and worked like a trouper. He gained so much respect from the volunteers for his hard work and dedication. He also got involved in the drawing of the pictures in the downstairs' classroom, and proudly drew a rooster and signed his name to it. He's normally very quiet during the school day, but is always keen to carry my bag upstairs for me each day, and was such a joy to have around while we were working...I'm sure he will have a lot of pride in his efforts for a very long time to come – and so he should!

I was really excited and pleased when the team painting the downstairs' classroom,

decided to paint animal pictures on the walls, as it would tie in really well with our trip to the zoo later that week.

One other really positive note is the fact that a lovely friend (Gwen) from work, that reads my blogs religiously, recently gave me some money for the kids. I was really touched by her kindness and knew that it would come in handy at some stage. The classroom downstairs was in a huge mess and the existing vinyl barely covered the floor, yet the area is used for so many activities apart from teaching. So I matched Gwen's donation and bought new vinyl for the two classrooms - the cement floor is now completely covered and it looks so much better. The senior monk dropped in late in the afternoon, and he expressed his gratitude so many times to me, regarding



the painting efforts and new flooring.

It was an awesome day and everyone really felt fantastic at the end of it because we could see the amazing transformation, and knew that we all had a part in it. We also saw the joy on the kids faces that stopped by and it was evident that we'd made a positive impact on their lives.

**Robyn Donaldson**

**Teaching Volunteer – 19<sup>th</sup> September – 18<sup>th</sup> November**

### **Monthly Dinner Party**



As usual, we celebrate this event- the event that everyone is looking forward at the end of the month on Friday. The schedule is always the same but the taste and the restaurant always differs from month to month.

In October 2011, we tried a new place called iBBQ restaurant. There was a lot of food to choose from.

The food was really good and the atmosphere was great. What we never forget is the last picture before the end of the evening. See you next month.