



## Contents...

Page 2	Editor's note
Page 3	Introducing Daniela
Page 4-6	The Peace Academy
Page 6	Volunteer Donations
Page 7	Recipe of the Month
Page 7	World News
Page 8	Wish Lists
Page 9	What to do in Kathmandu?
Page 10	Top Tips and Staff Contact Details

# NAMASTE!!

Hello All,

It never ceases to surprise me how fast a year travels. This time last year I was packing my bags in Paris and getting ready for my volunteer work in Ethiopia. After that, I had no plans. I never imagined that I would spend the rest of 2011 (and heading into 2012) living in Nepal.

This past year I've accumulated a whole lifetime of experience. Not only have I learned of the country and its culture, but also the nature of myself, of others, and the often precarious nature that is involved in volunteer work.

2012 starts with plenty of promise. In this month's newsletter we hear from Daniela, our much experienced colleague from our Romanian office for 3 months as she will train our new Care & Teaching Coordinators, and from the very first volunteers of our newest placement, the Peace Academy.

As usual we have also included the next month's schedule of social events and trips, along with the top tips for Nepal and the wish lists for various placements in and around Kathmandu. This page is especially for future volunteers who would like some idea of how they can contribute further to their placement.

Finally, why not click over and have a look at Projects Abroad Nepal's Country Blog or Facebook and Twitter pages to read about the latest goings-on in Nepal!

**Facebook = Projects Abroad Nepal - The Official Group!**

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/projectsabroad.nepal/>

**Blog =** <http://www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/3014/Nepal>

**Twitter =** [http://twitter.com/#!/Proj\\_AbroadNP](http://twitter.com/#!/Proj_AbroadNP)

See you around! ☺

Projects Abroad Team, Nepal

# Introducing Daniela Cristea

Namaste!

If you come to Nepal in January you should prepare yourself for almost freezing cold, and take into consideration that there is no heating anywhere indoors.

That doesn't mean that you won't have the time of your life, it only means you need to take some good measures to stay warm and healthy. But for the ones like me, who ideally thought that Kathmandu valley is somehow warmer and brought mostly t-shirts (well, it's not) there is still hope.

Thamel, the tourist neighbourhood has countless shops with warm clothes and shoes of different kinds: trekker boots, wool socks, gloves and hats, sleeping bags, fleece trousers, tops and so on. I got to spend some time in these kinds of shops on my first day in Nepal, when I completed my sleeping kit with wool socks and gloves, hat, fleece top.

This was back in December, when the weather forecast, until February, said it was going to get colder.

You're warm or you're cold, you still find yourself talking about how cold it can be. Not that I got that off of my chest, but I must go on with my story.

The airport is where you get your first impression about a country. Tribhuvan Airport seemed to me very busy and a bit chaotic, with everything working after some mysterious rules. I would have the same feeling sometimes in the country days after that.

Upon my arrival Megan, my amazing colleague and apartment mate was at the hotel waiting to take me to my new home.

She, Chris and Henry, two other staff members, were awesome guides in my first days, helping me to get from A to B, to find the best Indian, Thai, Chinese, Tibetan and of course Nepalese restaurants, to learn how things work around here. Due to the strike that happened after I arrived, I got to meet the Nepalese colleagues a few days later (no traffic is allowed when there is a strike) when we had a Breakfast work meeting and I got a very warm welcome, with useful tips about the customs and culture.

Spending Christmas in a country where the national religion is Hinduism is more interesting than I would have imagined. For me, it meant thinking more about the meaning of it than the shopping, foods and social meetings. Still, for the Christian foreigners celebrating it, it was possible to go to a Christmas dinner, available in many restaurants.

There is a different story when it comes to New Year's Eve. Even if the year doesn't end on 31st December here in Nepal (where, by the way, we are in year 2068-2069) they still celebrate the New Year's Eve Festival like it's the end of the world. Pokhara, where I went with my colleagues and many of the volunteers, had incredible busy streets with a mixture of games in the middle of the street, ambulant restaurants and dancers.

To be continued...

Daniela, Care and Teaching Manager

[www.projects-abroad.net](http://www.projects-abroad.net)



# Our stay at the Peace Academy

By Daniel Weiler and Julian Dion

On our first working day at Peace Nepal Academy, it was not immediately obvious what had to be worked on as we were the first volunteers. However after brainstorming for several days, ideas started coming rapidly. We started by creating a miniature football pitch which was modified



regularly during the course of our stay. After a while it became a 'long-term' project since we built bamboo goals which were upgraded to proper iron football goals, making corner flags, and creating proper boundaries. We are pretty proud of our small field since the children put it to very good use, which wasn't the case before we arrived. The football pitch may be one of our most successful projects at the school, but there were plenty of others. These included rearranging and organizing a bookshelf containing the schools textbooks, making bulletin boards allowing much easier ways of informing students of upcoming

events and notices, and finally initiating a *dirty weekend* with Projects Abroad, resulting with four classrooms and the playground being re-painted.

Obviously these were all practical ideas which did not require any time in the classroom. We realized though that teaching would become a significant part of our work at Peace Nepal Academy. At first we used simple English word games as a means of teaching, including "Hangman" and "Pictionary". A game we found worked very well was "Stop the Bus". Four categories are chosen (for example Country, City, Food& Drink) and the students then have to find appropriate words for the respective column, all starting with the same letter which is chosen at random. Unique words will receive more points, stimulating imagination, a lacking ingredient in Nepali classrooms.

Another classroom game which tested the student's ability to think for themselves was the "Adjective Game". In groups students try and use as many adjectives and countries as possible (It doesn't have to be countries, eg. animals for lower levels) to form grammatically correct sentences.

Although the students were always very motivated whilst an English game was being played, we felt like we needed a more orthodox approach towards teaching English (Simple grammar lessons, vocabulary, letter writing and conversational skills). We noticed that if a game was included into a lesson, typically at end as a form of reward, the students were much more eager to participate in the 'boring' part of class. Creating a friendly but competitive environment in the classroom often gave us better results than when we just dictated. Rewarding individuals and the use imagination seemed like a good idea to us because copying is very common among students. Activities such as 'invent your own country' and 'invent your own superhero' were fun but still required the students to think independently.



Choosing a theme for specific classes often worked well. A popular theme for us was 'sanitation', general hygiene and cleanliness. For example before games and sports outside, we would tell the students that all rubbish had to be put away before any type of fun could be had. Surprisingly our efforts paid off and the school is significantly cleaner than it was at first.

Much of our day was spent outdoors playing organized sports with the older students, as well as fun games with the younger ones. "Sharks and Fishes" was a favourite amongst the children. The class was divided up into girls (fishes) and boys (sharks) and then aligned on either end of the playing field. The aim of the game is to run across to the opposite side without being caught by the 2 chosen octopuses. Another popular game was "What's the time Mr. Wolf?" It's a game where one individual is the 'wolf' and the rest are its prey. The 'prey' asks in unison "what's the time Mr. Wolf?" The 'wolf' will reply a certain time (eg. 4 o'clock = 4 steps towards Mr. Wolf) and at anytime decide when its 'dinnertime', allowing him to chase his prey.



Looking back on the past two months is difficult since it seems like it has been two weeks. This a clear sign of us enjoying our work at Nepal Peace Academy. The friendly and helpful environment in the school always had the days passing rapidly, even in times of low energy and motivation. In our opinion we were spoiled with some of the best Nepali delicacies. Cheese Na'an, Chicken Curry, and the best Momos in Jorpati, always ensured a very pleasant lunch. Last but definitely not least we would like to thank the director, Karmendra Vimal, for being a legend. He was the best host a new volunteer could ask for. His friendliness and eagerness to help was very impressive, but also made our stay at the placement very pleasant.

Thank you Projects Abroad for making this experience possible, but an even bigger thank you to the individuals who made the past two months unforgettable.

# Volunteer Donations

**Volunteering in itself is always a fantastic way to help people that are less fortunate than ourselves but this month there have been a few volunteers in particular who have contributed above and beyond what is expected of them...the whole team just want to give a special thanks to everyone! These contributions are very gratefully received and we just hope you realise the amazing difference you are making.**

## Snowland Ranag School & MSPN

We would like to thank Jessie Brittain and her wonderful friends and family back in Australia for all the great things they brought for the children of Nepal – 34 children's books, 7 buckets of chalk, 18 sticky notes, 2 packets of textas, stickers, stencils, 6 decks of cards, 2 packs of UNO cards, an Australian football, skipping ropes, Frisbees, 10 sock puppets, 2 bubble blowers, 132 koala and kangaroo key chains, more than 100 tooth brushes, 2 books about brushing your teeth, and a bag of clothes!

# Recipe of the month

## Shikarni - Cinnamon-Flavored Banana Yogurt

The Shikarni looks fancy but it is the simplest dessert to prepare; especially great if you need to make something last-minute.

Ingredients:

- 500 g hung yogurt (hung in a cheesecloth overnight)
- 2 bananas (1 chopped, one sliced for garnish)
- 100 g icing sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon pistachios

Instructions:

1. Mix icing sugar and cinnamon powder with the yogurt.
2. Beat with a balloon whisk and incorporate one chopped banana.
3. Slice the other banana and use as a garnish, arranged in a layer. Garnish with pistachio slivers.



## World News

### **Myanmar signs ceasefire**

Since last year, Myanmar has slowly taken steps towards reform and ending the violence that has rocked the country for 62 years. Pro-democracy campaigner (and international symbol of the country's struggles) Ang San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest, censorship was eased, and a nominally more civilian government instated. This year the progress has continued with the signing of a peace treaty with the Karen rebels, an ethnic group from the country's east. It is a sign the country is making steps towards healing their historical roots. As Ang San Suu Kyi said, "Unless there is ethnic harmony it will be very difficult ... to build up a strong democracy".

# Wish Lists

Projects Abroad Nepal's volunteers often want to bring items out here for their placements but find it hard to know what the different placements need. We've put together some 'wish lists' for some of the centres and schools to give new volunteers an idea of what is most needed...

## **DMD Centre (8 boys aged 10-18)**

*Games  
Bubbles/straws  
Clothes  
Toothbrushes  
THEY LOVE SPIDERMAN!*

## **Physio Placements**

*Therabands  
Gym Balls  
Exercise Sheets  
'Tuffie' wipes*

## **Snowland Ranag School (160 kids aged 5-19)**

*Notebooks/Crayons  
Clothes  
Shoes  
Balls*

## **Surya Vinayak English Secondary School**

*Reading books*

## **Anal Jyoti Boarding School**

*Notebooks  
Pencils/Sharpeners  
Eraser  
Materials for creative  
activities*

## **Life Development Centre**

**(38 people aged 7-40)**

*Clothes  
Underwear  
Socks  
Pens, Crayons, Paints  
Pillows  
Toothbrushes  
Soap*

## **Patan & Bhaktapur CBR**

*Wedge Mats  
Floor Mats  
Bubble wrap  
Blankets  
**Children's clothes**  
Games/toys/blocks  
Folders/Filing  
Medicine Balls  
Nappies*

## **Medical Placements**

*If you are  
coming to Nepal  
to do a medical  
placement then  
please  
remember your  
lab coat!!!*

## **Friendship/Happy or J & K Houses**

*Reading books  
Creative materials  
Clothes  
Shoes*

## **NRH/MSPN**

*Creative Books  
Reading material  
Clothing  
Shoes  
Towels*

OR...if you would like to fundraise before you leave for Nepal then we can help you to buy things for your placement whilst you are out here!

# What to do in Kathmandu??.

More information on these trips will be given nearer the time so remember to check emails and phones for updates!



February 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>  
Nagarkot trek



February 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>  
Weekend in  
Pokhara



February 17<sup>th</sup>  
Social dinner



February 25<sup>th</sup> &  
26<sup>th</sup>  
The Last Resort

If you have a special interest in an activity then get in contact with the team and we can try to organise a group trip to take the pressure off you! And also Hotel excelsior is very happy to arrange trips or transport if you don't fancy what Projects Abroad have organised.