

# THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Cambodia 



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## Editorial Note

The 5<sup>th</sup> of December is a special day for us, it is the International Volunteer Day as proclaimed by the UN. We would like to express thanks to our 541 volunteers in 2014 and all volunteers from 2005 to 2013 for making a difference in other people's lives. Truly, we have seen the positive changes. We provided education to local community children, plus care support for children with disabilities, we raised conservation awareness via our Conservation project, provided technical help to partner NGOs in the fields of Human Rights and Journalism. It would not fit in a page of what our volunteers have done. So, thank you for all and we look forward for the upcoming year.



Thank you, Zoe and Sophie, for sharing your stories in this issue. Zoe shared her great time at VDTO and Sophie describes her two weeks volunteering in Cambodia. Thanks for sharing your thoughts and experience to inspire others to volunteer in a developing country.

Also expect in this newsletter: An update of our new Journalism placement, new colleagues and social activities. We hope you enjoy it.

## Volunteer Update

We would like to congratulate our five previous volunteers who used to work in Cambodia in occasion of their graduation ceremony. All five are now qualified Physiotherapists, graduated from Monash University, Big congratulations to Micaela Elise, Luckshica De Silvia, Amanda Loeuy, Jemma Emmer and Samantha Beder.



**Samantha, Jemma and  
Amanda (volunteer in 2013)**



**Luckshica (volunteer in 2014)**



**Micaela (volunteer in 2010)**



# Cambodia – the experience of a lifetime

By Zoe Clark – 19 from Australia – Teaching project



The five weeks I spent in Cambodia were truly amazing. It is an experience I will never forget and one that opened my eyes to different ways of life. It was also a trip that allowed me to meet new people and make lifelong friends. It will always be an experience I will never forget and rate very highly.

When I finished high school and decided I was going to travel during my Gap year, volunteering in Cambodia was not my first choice. However, after some thinking and a few discussions with my parents and close friends I decided: why not? Remembering an old conversation with my high school Head of College further reaffirmed my decision. I had always wanted to volunteer and now seemed as perfect time as ever to fulfill that dream. Then came the next hard part – choosing a project and length of placement. After considering for some time I decided on a five week Teaching Project. Once I had enough money saved, I applied with Projects Abroad and in August it became a reality that I would be flying out to Cambodia in November.

I always found myself explaining and answering people's questions regarding why I am going to volunteer and why Cambodia? Apart from the answer of "why not" living a privileged life has always left me wanting to help and give back to others who aren't as fortunate. And this was my main reason for choosing to volunteer. The choice of Cambodia came partly due to its unfortunate history and also because during my research the need for help and assistance became very evident. Also, everyone I know who has ever visited Cambodia could not speak highly enough of how amazing of a country it is.

Please [click here](#) to continue reading Zoe's story!

# The Precious 2 Weeks in Cambodia

By Sophie Hollins – 28 from Australia – Teaching project

It has been a few weeks since I arrived home from Cambodia: Back to my family, friends and life here in Melbourne, Australia. Back to my bed, the comforts of my home, the foods I enjoy, and the activities I enjoy doing. However, nothing is the same. I feel like a different person. A better one. The appreciation I have for my life is greater than ever, and I have Cambodia to thank for that.

Although my Volunteering project was only two weeks long, the connections you build with the people of Cambodia and your fellow volunteers make you feel like you have been there for months. I was placed in a school where I was to be the main teacher in the classroom for 4 hours a day, teaching basic English to children between the ages of 4 - 6 years old. I am not a teacher in my everyday life, and therefore found it to be extremely challenging. However, I can honestly say without hesitation that it was the best thing I have ever done. It's all about the simple things in life for these children. A hug, a smile, a high-five, having flowers in my hair, wearing a necklace... Things that seem so simple and normal are fascinating to those who don't have much. It shows how much we take for granted. On my final day at the school, I could not even bring myself to say goodbye. I left as if I would be returning again on Monday.

I feel these children helped me. They enriched my life in many ways that I cannot put into words. Their spirit, smiles and laughter will stay with me forever. If I contributed to their happiness in any way during my two weeks, I can go on living my life with a full and happy heart.

As we approach Christmas, my favourite time of year, I cannot help but think of those who don't get to experience it like I do. Perhaps some don't even know what Christmas is? I can only hope that more people reach out and volunteer themselves to help those who are less fortunate than us. I look forward to the day I am able to do it all over again.



## Cooking Class

7 volunteers happily joined the Cooking Class this December. We started at 9am. The class leader brought us to a local market and bought the ingredients. Then, we headed back to the cooking place where we finally made two main dishes: Fish Amok and Spring rolls. It was so nice and yummy. To see pictures please [click here](#).





## New Journalism Placement

CCIM Cambodian Centre for Independent Media (CCIM) is a new partner for Journalism of Projects Abroad in Cambodia. This partnership starts at the end of 2014. CCIM's mission aims at promoting democratic governance and human rights enforcement in Cambodia through the development of a pluralistic and independent media environment.

## Staff Update

OL Sokethya joined the Projects Abroad team in December 2014 as Khmer project coordinator. Since 2006, Kethya worked for the United Peace Corps Cambodia and Australia Volunteer International. He has completed a B.A in English and became a teacher with higher degree and now he's taking MBA class at the weekend. In his free time, he enjoys traveling around Cambodia and overseas in order to experience and promote cultural exchange. Kethya also likes playing sports with his colleagues and friends.



## Dirty Weekend



22 volunteers helped in the Dirty Weekend aka Community Day on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> of November. We went to the slum in the area of Orn Lung Ka Ngan district. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness among the local community about the importance of hygiene and the advantage of education. More than one hundred community members participated in the activities. We showed them posters with our explanations, asked them to answer some questions so as to make sure they understood the lessons. Finally, we played role games to show transfer what we had learned in theory into practice, and we gave a pack of donations to each of the villages, consisting of a blanket, pen, pencil, text book and story book. It was a productive and rewarding day. We would like to thank our volunteers for their help.

**Thank you for reading.**