



January 2013

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Nihao and welcome to the January 2013 edition of our China Newsletter!

It's awfully cold in Shanghai this time of year. For many volunteers joining us from Down Under, coming from a hot Australian summer straight into the bitter cold of the Shanghainese winter has made for quite a drastic change! But the welcome here is always warm.

In this edition, we welcome a new addition to our team at the Projects Abroad office - Suzie Li, our new Information Manager. We also introduce you to a new placement for teaching volunteers at Dynamic Kids, a private after-school Education Centre for primary school children. There are also two brand new volunteer stories this month; Gaurav Pahouja from the United States recounts his experience doing a Medical Placement at Ruijin Hospital and a Teaching placement at Ziluolan school and Jennifer Blackburn from France gives us the scoop from her Journalism placement at Shanghai's Time Out Magazine.

We hope their experiences will give you a taste of the variety of projects available here in Shanghai and hope that you will be inspired to join us here too! In the meantime, please check out our Facebook Group, "Projects Abroad China - The Official Group" and email any queries and comments to china@projects-abroad.org

You can also get in touch with me at zaynabhasan@projects-abroad.org

Hope you have a great month!

Zaynab Hasan

Assistant Country Manager

VOLUNTEERS' STORY

Gaurav Pahouja on his Medical Placement at Ruijin Hospital and Teaching Placement at Ziluolan School:

During my time in Shanghai I have participated in both a Medical and Teaching placement. I spent one month in each placement and started with my Medical placement at the Ruijin hospital. The Ruijin hospital is one of the nicest hospitals in Shanghai and I could definitely tell based on the resources at the hospital and the location near the French Concession district.

My average day would start with a one hour commute from my flat to the hospital using the metro. The metro in Shanghai is great. It is easy to get anywhere in the city and the trains are very clean and air conditioned. Of course, sometimes it can get a bit too crowded but I am in a city with a population of over 23 million people. After arriving early in the morning in the hospital, I would usually go on ward rounds and assist in any way that I could during procedures and treatments. I worked in the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Emergency Medicine, and Pediatrics departments. Sometimes, there would be a language barrier, but usually I would work closely with a couple of doctors that could speak fluent English who would explain everything and really allow me to understand each case. In the TCM department, I was even able to start assisting in giving treatment to the patients which was a very beneficial experience. I enjoyed being able to learn about a different medical system and seeing that even though there may be different customs in the hospital than at home in the United States, the standard of medicine is the same.

My next month consisted of teaching English and some science at the Ziluolan School. My commute was once again one hour, but this time I needed to use the public bus system rather than the metro. I definitely liked the metro much more. In the metro I did not need to hold on to the rails to avoid being thrown across the bus from the abrupt braking and accelerating of the drivers. However, I did enjoy being able to experience a more authentic version of



China through taking the bus. In addition, the school was not located in the nice downtown of Shanghai. The school was on the outskirts and the luxuries were much lower. The school had no heat or air conditioning and the supplies were extremely limited. After talking with some of the English teachers I found out that some of them have a background in a different subject, such as history or math, but have to teach English because of the demand. I was glad to be able to help and volunteer at a school that could use more resources. After arriving at the school, I would usually be an English teaching assistant in two to three classes of approximately 50 kids in the 3rd grade each morning. I was surprised to see how eager all of the children were to learn. They were very attentive during class and would complete all assignments.

In addition, I could not walk 10 feet in the school without one of the students saying “hello, how are you?” and wanting to practice their English with me. When assisting in the classroom, I was able to give one on one attention to kids that needed help or had questions. I even began teaching full English lessons to the kids. This was great because I would relate the lessons to

real life and show the students how important the content in the lessons were to being able to speak fluent English. After teaching English in the morning, I would help plan lessons in the afternoon. Additionally, upon the principal's request, I even had a class to myself on some afternoons where I would teach basic concepts in biology to a group of 30 4th and 5th graders. These students were interested in the topic and eager to learn more. My favorite lesson was my final lesson with the group. I taught them about different organs and we worked together to dissect frogs. The school had never done anything like this so it took a good amount of planning, but in the end the kids loved the lesson and learned a lot about basic biology. My time at the Ziluolan School was great. I saw a different side of Shanghai and I felt that my time assisting at the school was beneficial to both myself and the school.



My experience of living in Shanghai has been something I will never forget. In Shanghai, there is always something going on and new foods around corner. I have really enjoyed trying all of the different foods China has to offer and exploring the different street foods. It may not sound safe, but the risk is worth the different tastes and flavours. I think that even though the city has an enormous population, I have never really felt that Shanghai is overcrowded because the city is gigantic. There is so much to explore: anything from a live feeding to tigers to a nice peaceful park to a classy meal high in the sky on the bund. I enjoy going out to the different places

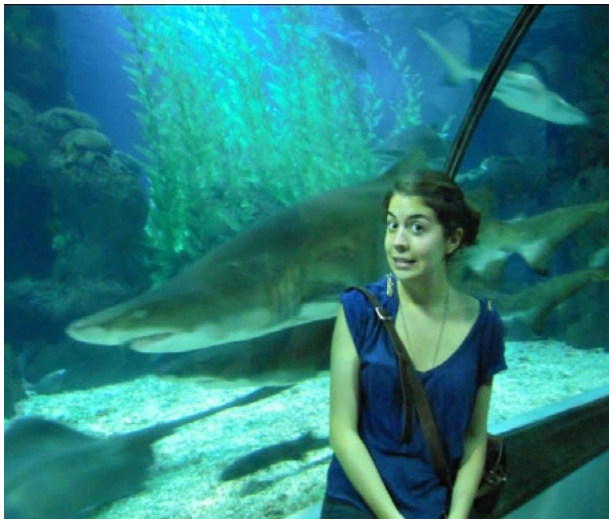
around Shanghai and attending the different social events organized by Projects Abroad. One of the things that can make Shanghai and China difficult is smoothly getting around without knowing fluent mandarin. Many people do not know English and I still have yet to meet a taxi driver that can speak English. However, this is all part of the experience and makes ordering at a restaurant with no English more like a lottery which can be pretty fun.



Throughout my time in China I have also been travelling to different parts of the country besides Shanghai on the weekends. I have had an interest in seeing different areas of China and the different cultures within the country. I always use the long distance train system which makes travelling easy and convenient. I think seeing places besides the bustling metropolis of Shanghai is interesting and important for a full experience of China. I have travelled to places both near and far including Hangzhou, Suzhou, the Huangshan Mountains and the Shaolin Temple. Through living in Shanghai and travelling to different parts of China, I have really been able to experience a new culture and have an experience that I will never forget.

VOLUNTEERS' STORY

Jennifer Blackburn on her Journalism Placement at Time Out Magazine:



Being able to discover Shanghai not only as a tourist, but as a journalist made a huge difference in my perception of the city. For three months, I was an intern at Time Out Shanghai, a high-quality English monthly magazine that covers lifestyle and culture. My first two weeks in the office were spent reading and posting events on their website and learning how to write concise titles and introductions. Although not the most exciting aspect of journalism, it was an excellent way for me to learn about the city's best restaurants, bars, and museums and have a clearer idea about the tone of the magazine. After getting some basic knowledge of the city's layout, I had the opportunity to review a play for the website and from then on I was given more work. By the end of my internship, five of my articles had been published in the magazine and ten on the website, with topics ranging from Chinese literature to sport-related interviews. Being in such close contact with people who have an in depth knowledge about food, drinks, art and culture, helped me improve my writing skills immensely, but beyond that, it inspired me to "learn more, do more" in and outside the office.

And of course, a big part of my job involved running around the city to take pictures and visit shops. Thanks to all these trips, I got to see more of the city than just The Bund or The French Concession. Shanghai is an exciting, throbbing place, where there is always something to do no matter the time or place. Some of my favourite spots include Longhua Temple - a calmer alternative to tourist-packed Jingan temple, and Yuyintang, a bar where many

independent Chinese bands play, which is a great way to catch up on some local-based artists. But perhaps the most interesting element about Shanghai lies in its blending of cultures. Cheap and tasty cuisine from Sichuan, Yunnan or Shaanxi provinces can be found everywhere, and makes for a good introduction to the rest of mainland China. Shanghai gives you a sample of what lies beyond its walls, while sparing you from any culture shocks with its Western influences. And of course, a big part of my job involved running around the city to take pictures and visit shops. Thanks to all these trips, I got to see more of the city than just The Bund or The French Concession. Shanghai is an exciting, throbbing place, where there is always something to do no matter the time or place. Some of my favourite spots include Longhua Temple - a calmer alternative to tourist-packed Jingan temple, and Yuyintang, a bar where many independent Chinese bands play, which is a great way to catch up on some local-based artists. But perhaps the most interesting element about Shanghai lies in its blending of cultures. Cheap and tasty cuisine from Sichuan, Yunnan or Shaanxi provinces can be found everywhere, and makes for a good introduction to the rest of mainland China. Shanghai gives you a sample of what lies beyond its walls, while sparing you from any culture shocks with its Western influences.

In the end though, my Projects-Abroad experience was about leaving my comfort zone and immersing myself in a foreign environment. After finding myself eating chicken feet at the top of Huang Shan Mountain with some fellow Chinese hikers, I'm glad to say I got more than just a taste of this fascinating country. In the end though, my Projects-Abroad experience was about leaving my comfort zone and immersing myself in a foreign environment. After finding myself eating chicken feet at the top of Huang Shan Mountain with some fellow Chinese hikers, I'm glad to say I got more than just a taste of this fascinating country.

NEW PROJECT UPDATE: DYNAMIC KIDS

Projects Abroad China has recently formed links with Dynamic Kids, a children's after-school education centre to offer placements to future Teaching volunteers.



Discuss with Rupinder(volunteer) about work schedule



Brain(Manager of Dynamic kids) show school to Rupinder



Children's works



Reading room

Primary school children aged seven to 12 years typically come to Dynamic Kids after school between 3 and 8pm to study English classes, get help with homework and to play games and activities.



Children's works

SELF-INTRODUCTION

SUZIE LI

Hello! This is Suzie Li, the new Information Manager at the Projects Abroad office in China. I was born and brought up in Changsha, central China and have studied abroad in the Netherlands majoring in International Communication and Media.



The initial idea of working for a volunteer organisation came to me during my third year at University after I took a course in International Aid and Development and spent three months working as a volunteer in the Philippines. I was working for a local NGO dedicated to sustainable development through the establishment of regional agriculture and regional renewable energy, which helped local people improve their quality of life through protecting the natural environment in rural areas. I thoroughly enjoyed working with local people and other volunteers and gained a great sense of satisfaction from helping others as well as learning from them.

During my time working on the farm, I realized that whilst volunteer efforts might seem like only a small contribution to the overall development project and even though these contributions are not likely to make an impact immediately; the effects from our combined efforts will be profound and beneficial.

In my spare time I enjoy listening to music, reading and cooking. I love traditional Chinese music and opera, especially the Kun Opera. It is such a delicate art, and helps me feel lost in time and forget all my troubles. I find reading is a great way to help inspire me and make me think. Every day before I go to bed, I pick up a book and read a few chapters. Cooking for me, is not only about appetite appeasement, but also a way to create a great time together with my friends and family. I really love to see people enjoy my food and have fun with each other. It gives me a great sense of satisfaction and achievement!

I am fascinated by different cultures and in my new role as Information Manager I will have the perfect opportunity to learn more about people from different cultures and backgrounds. I cannot wait to meet you all, to listen to and share your stories!

PHOTO PAGE



Would like to see more pictures? Go to [Facebook](#) or [Mytripblog](#)

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Date	Time	Place	
Thursday 10th January 2013	7:30pm	X Club	
Laser Tag!			
Date	Time	Place	
Tuesday 15th January 2013	7:30pm	Grape Garden	
Get together for dinner at popular Shanghainese restaurant, Grape Garden			
Date	Time	Place	
Tuesday 22nd January 2013	8:00pm	Haoledi	
KTV: Chinese Karaoke			
Date	Time	Place	
Sunday 3rd February 2013	2:00pm	Accent Mandarin	
Learn traditional Chinese paper-cutting to celebrate Chinese New Year			

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

Chinese New Year Holiday

Saturday 9th February – Friday 15th February