



Summer 2013 - Summer of Discoveries

Having followed and supported Sreyka Smile since its foundation, I was thrilled to leave to Cambodia and help out for three months in the role of English teacher. Initially, I felt quite nervous about my activities and how the kids would perceive me.

I separated the children according to their English skills and taught four different levels. The smallest kids studied English primarily by listening exercises and learned step-by-step vocabulary and writing skills throughout an English studbook. The more advanced kids between 12 and 15 years old studied on the hand of printouts and later on the hand of an English study book. We primarily focused on grammar, vocabulary and writing. It was amazing to see some of the kids motivation and enthusiasm in learning. The last group, mostly teenager boys, were taught by handouts, newspaper articles and also a study book. I primarily focused with them on increasing the knowledge that they already had and enhancing their vocabulary. All kids of this group are able to hold a proper conversation in English.

Though I saw progress everyday, things also went very slowly and I learned that kids need repetition, repetition, and repetition. However, when Stella-Desiree (founder of Sreyka Smile) came by and shared her thoughts on their advancement, I really felt proud for having spent my time annoying them with my grammar exercises.

I am confident that not only the kids learned a great deal during these three months, I also enjoyed some great learning moments. I am by nature not very patient and I learned how to control my impatience, as the kids are too fragile to deal with outbursts caused by impatience or frustration. Some kids are more fragile than others, though they are all very sensitive. It was an eye-opening experience to me as in today's western society we often overlook each other's sensitivities and focus on going forward. Also, I learned that in order to make things work; one must also be flexible as things often change within the orphanage. For example, I would give the kids writing exercises on the blackboard when it would rain so loudly that they could not hear me.

Last but not least, this experience brought out a side of me that I had not discovered previously, maternal sentiment. I took so much joy in playing and teaching the kids and telling them to brush their teeth, wash their hands, looking out for them, making them understand that you need to play gently with each other. I feel a different woman today, a better woman and cannot imagine my life without being involved in voluntary work as giving is so much more rewarding than taking.



I feel very grateful for the time I had together with the kids and I am looking forward to come back and see how they developed. I am confident that many of them will come to be great people and very successful in life which is thanks to the opportunities and continuous support that Sreyka Smile provides them with.

Charlotte