



ProjectsAbroad

The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad



Sri Lanka



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EXPERIENCE SRI LANKA

2013 July- Issue no 100

THE LAND LIKE NO OTHER

TWO WEEKS SPECIAL weekend trip to KANDY!

Last weekend I was lucky to get to take our lovely 2 week special group to Kandy! Kandy is placed in the beautiful hill country in the middle of Sri Lanka. We started off early Saturday and bussed all the way to Kandy... Let's just say the start could have been smoother by we made it there... eventually! And the spirit was great! There was lots of laughter and even singing.



First highlight was without doubt Lunch!



After Lunch we went to Temple of the Tooth:



Temple of the Tooth is a massive Buddhist Temple that as the name indicates houses Buddha's tooth! It was build in the 17th century.



Hiding behind the poles :)

Message from the Editor

It is with great pleasure I am writing to you in this issue mainly due to two reasons. The first reason is, today we issue our 100th newsletter from Projects Abroad|Sri Lanka. Second, we are at the end of a very successful summer with loads of volunteers – which went really well probably in our recently added placements.

Earlier we used to serve two two-weeks-special volunteer groups and in this summer we offered the opportunity for three groups. Further, there are already bookings for our December two-weeks-special groups which makes four groups in this year.

Apart from two-weeks-special groups, we had hype in arrivals of other type of projects as well which overall made all the staff very busy. However, having such big group of 50 – 70 volunteers in the country is wonderful experience to volunteers, staff and all our project partners.

Though it is the busy period, we also managed to conduct all regular extra activities, but this issue had allowed more volunteer stories inside as we cannot miss to let you know what many volunteers got to say about their experience.

Any of your friends who'd like to join our two-weeks-special programme, please inform that they have the chance in December in case they missed it in July.

I also would like to thank my colleague Anu (Anurangana Rajapakse) for the support extended towards designing the newsletter which is more time consuming. She had been a great help probably in making last 20 newsletters.

Gishan Perera

Desk Officer - Sri Lanka

The view over one of the lakes in Kandy!



Then it was dinner time and afterwards time to relax which was needed! Even though some thought it was a great idea to keep everyone up...most of the night...you little buggers.. Well wellgotta love you anyway! ;)

After visiting the temple we went to the local market and bazaar to do some curio shopping and then off to watch the traditional kandyan dancing!

On this picture locals are walking on fire after the



Sunday morning we went to Botanical gardens...



There was so many cute mokeys.. I think we saw like 30 or so..

The girls resting after walking lots in the garden!



We finished up the trip with a visit to a Tea Factory where we learned how tea is made and its different processes.

And then it was time to get back to Kalutara where the vollies have been placed to work for these two weeks.

Thanks a lot for a great trip! :) I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did!

Nicky :)

Nichole Antonia Mouritsen

Social Manager



Manon's experience in Sri Lanka!

My name is Manon Martens, I am 18-years-old, from the Netherlands and I am writing this story about my experiences while I am lying in my bed in Mallamulla (Panadura) in Sri Lanka. I've been here for almost three weeks now and it's quite an adventure!

My guest family is the sweetest family I've ever met and I really love my room and workmate (a French girl). Even though, the first two days were difficult and I really wanted to take the first flight back home, really. It's called a culture shock, I think.

But after those days you really get used to the house, the people, the food and I even enjoy the cold shower.. sometimes (yes, no hot water).

I am working at Mallamulla Preschool and I love it!

It's a small school with just 25 children from three to five-years-old. I feel really blessed to do this adventure when I see all those pretty faces with twinkling dark eyes and extremely long eyelashes.

I really fell in love with the children already when I saw them at my first day. I work there from 8.30 till 11.30 and we are just playing, drawing and having fun with the children.



On Monday, Wednesday and Thursday I am also teaching English at a community centre, it's lovely to do and I am really enjoying that too.



During the weekends we have time to travel and discover the country (which is absolutely wonderful). It's lovely to see and speak with the other volunteers, and everyone is so sweet. What I really like about this trip is that you can explore the country in the weekends as a tourist and from Monday till Friday you are kind of undercover in a local family. You get the chance to discover Sri Lanka in two different ways, which is great and a good experience.



I already learned a lot about myself now I'm alone, and I'm not going to lie about the fact that I miss my family and friends sometimes. But don't let that come between your dreams, because time will pass and life is just simply too short to not live it. So follow your dreams, take the big step, fly away and start living your own life.

Manon Martons

Netherlands



Date : 19th of July, 2013
 Location : Bosco Pura, Negombo
 Task : Painting the wall, Cleaning

July's Social Outreach at Bosco Pura!

On the 19th of July we had the biggest outreach (in my time in Sri Lanka)! We had 33 volunteers and four staff members participating. Great turn up! The Outreach took place at Bosco Pura Tsumani Housing in Negombo. We just instigated this placement about one month ago and we currently have two volunteers there. The little community was built after the Tsunami in 2004 and is now housing 200 families. Bosco Pura also has a Montessori (pre-school) for 25-30 children in the morning and a community centre where about 80 children gathers in the afternoon.

This place needs all the help it can get and therefore we decided to do this month's social outreach at this place. We started in the morning to paint the Community Centre and the outdoor benches and finished off fixing up the garden.

First big challenge of the day: "opening the paint bucket"! Thanks to Charley we succeeded!



And finally we got started!



Some of the vollies
worked really hard...

*Wauw lots of attention and admiration to the hard
working man!*





Some even collaborated with the kids...

And some paid more attention to cuddles...

After all it seems that all needs were attended and everyone

enjoyed the day! Some REALLY enjoyed it :)

Getting messy is unavoidable as you see!

Though even that seemed

to be enjoyed...



Well deserved lunch and time to finish up the work after!



Thanks to everyone who attended! You've done a great job! Amazing group of volunteers

we have here...

Nicky :)

Nichole Antonia Mouritsen

Social Manager

IT Sri Lanka!

Hala teaching

I am not sure I know where to start. I arrived here to Sri Lanka a month ago which only feels like yesterday. Upon my arrival, I got greeted by Richy from projects abroad. I admit it was nice to first meet with someone who's western. He introduced me to my host family and got me settled in. I was first in a shock. I was shocked that I am actually here and that I am finally making my dream come true to volunteer abroad.

Afterwards, Richy took me to the IT center where I will be working. I was amazed and in tears to see the amounts of kids who come to the center to learn computers. Learning computers is very important here in Sri Lanka because it helps people get jobs. So I could not believe that I will be taking part in helping these people learn, find jobs, and therefore have better lives. So despite feeling tired from the flight, I stayed few hours to teach. Students were bit shy first but after few days, they got used to me. Kaushalya is the main teacher there, she's very welcoming, flexible, and lovely.



I helped him create an email address and since then he has been emailing me every time he comes to the center and asks me questions to learn more.

He told me he's very proud of me :) and in my last day here, his mom came to thank me and also offered me a special gift. Dinusha had a letter in there for me. As I started reading it, I just bursted into tears. He told me how sad he felt that I am leaving and how happy he is that his knowledge has improved since I started teaching him. I was so touched by him and very lucky to have met him. Anyways, it feels great and very rewarding to know that you are making a difference in these students' lives, to know that you are improving their lives. I have to say it's the best feeling that I've ever had.

Teaching was a bit of challenge first because of language barrier, however, I was able to get some students to even help translate or even teach their friends about computers. I had amazing teaching experience. I got to meet some students who were coming to the center to learn Excel so that they get the job at a company. Others, I also helped prepare a résumé. I also had the chance to meet a special student, his name is Dinusha, who was very enthusiastic to learn. He told me he wanted to improve his knowledge about the world. I stayed with him some days over time to teach him more stuff. He asked me for a way to communicate and learn from me even after I'm gone so



On the other hand, weekends were the times I get to meet other volunteers. It's so amazing to have friends from all over the world.

I was lucky to meet people from USA, Denmark , Australia, UK, Scotland, Egypt, Germany etc. we were always together, caring for each other and having fun. Every weekend was unique and full of memories. On my first weekend, I got to watch a Sri Lankan festival " Vesak ". It was amazing.

It was hard for me unfortunately to meet them in weekdays because everywhere you go in Sri Lanka takes forever lol. However, I took the chance to go for a jog around my house in Waduwa. The area is amazing and full of greenery. It was very relaxing to go for a walk or jog there. The family I lived with was so nice. They make you feel at home right away. Once I felt a bit of sore throat and fever, so my host mother was preparing me tea all the time, while my host father gave the medicine and offered to take me to doctor. They kept asking me every day how I am feeling etc. It felt more so like home again where your parents care for you. They made me healthy food and offered delicious fruits, and kept asking if I am eating enough. In other words, just like home again. In my last day there, my host mother told me that I was like her daughter or sister and then she started crying while saying goodbye.

They asked me to come back with my family or friends and they will take care of us.

The staff of projects abroad are so great and helpful. I got to meet Aruni - the teacher supervisor - very lovely crazy woman . She will send us every few days some texts starting by " hello dear" to ask about us if everything is OK. She called me right before I was boarding the plane and spoke for 30 minutes. We couldn't stop talking and laughing. Then we hung up saying " see you later" rather than a goodbye.



Nichole- our social manager- was here for everything we as volunteers needed. Whenever I need anything, or if ever I was to be in trouble, she is the one to call at all times. It feels so safe to know that you can ask for anything at any time of day or night.

On a different note, Sri Lanka is a great place to visit. They have a lot of touristic sites and activities to do. The people are very friendly. I never worry how to get around in here. Every time I am lost, or don't know what to do, I just have to ask around and people will help and go out of their way to make sure they offer the maximum help.

I said I don't know where to start, but I guess I don't know where to end. To sum it up: beautiful country, friendly people, healthy food, delicious fruits, lovely volunteers, great staff, interesting students. All this to make up a life time unforgettable memories. I would encourage everyone to take part in such project as you may never know your potential and the effect you will have on others.

Hala

Ein kleiner Inselstaat im indischen Ozean.

Sri Lanka... ein kleiner Inselstaat im indischen Ozean, auf dem nach 26 Jahren Bürgerkrieg erfreulicher Weise Frieden eingekehrt ist und der Tourismus langsam wieder Fuß fassen kann. Zwischen Kokosnusspalmen und Mangobäumen erstrecken sich kilometerweite Strände, und im Inland sagenumwogende uralte Städte und Tempel. Hier soll mein diesjähriges zwei Monate andauerndes Abenteuer als Freiwilliger stattfinden.

Das Erste, das einem nach der Landung sofort auffällt, ist die unglaubliche Hitze, gepaart mit einer andauernd hohen Luftfeuchtigkeit, die einem den Schweiß aus den Poren laufen lässt. Man ist diese Temperaturen als Nordeuropäer eben überhaupt nicht gewohnt. Aber daran werde ich mich hoffentlich in den nächsten Tagen gewöhnen.

Angekommen in meiner Gastfamilie in Kapungoda (was sich ca. 20 km südlich von Negombo befindet), wurde ich gleich mit offenen Armen empfangen. Alle hier sind so offen und freundlich, dass man sich gleich von der ersten Sekunde an wohlfühlt. Das Haus ist sauber und recht modern eingerichtet, und besitzt eine für Sri Lanka typische Terrasse im vorderen Hausbereich, wo man sich gerne aufhält, wenn die Sonne mal wieder erbarmungslos auf einen niederscheint. Abkühlung verschafft einem dann auch „ein wenig“ Regen, der hier schon ganz beachtliche Ausmaße annehmen kann und teilweise die Straßen und einige Grundstücke unter Wasser setzt. Nachdem ich mich akklimatisiert und vom langen Flug erholt hatte, gab es das erste Mittagessen in Sri Lanka. Es war sehr lecker und gar nicht so scharf, wie ich zu erst vermutet hatte, aber zum Thema Essen komme ich später nochmal.

Im katholischen Waisenheim Bosco Sevena für Jungen wurde ich am ersten Tag gleich von allen Kindern (alle im Alter zwischen 12 und 15 Jahren) neugierig und noch etwas schüchtern betrachtet. Aber nach kurzer Zeit war das Eis gebrochen, und durch spielerischen Englischunterricht lernt man sich gegenseitig besser kennen. Besonders die halbe Stunde nach dem Englischunterricht finden die Kinder toll, da dann Sport - draußen im Sand unter Palmen - stattfindet und wir dann entweder Fußball, Volleyball oder Cricket spielen. Am Nachmittag findet Computerunterricht für Kinder im Alter von 9 bis 12 Jahren statt. An diesem nehmen Kinder der umliegenden Dörfer teil, die sonst keine Möglichkeit hätten, den Umgang mit dem Computer zu erlernen. Größtenteils wird Basiswissen für die Programme Paint und MS Office 2007 unterrichtet. Da sich einige Computer nicht mehr ganz auf dem aktuellen Stand befinden, nutze ich meist die Zeit dazwischen, um die Hard- und Softwareprobleme so gut es geht zu beseitigen. Ebenfalls am Nachmittag treffen die älteren Jugendlichen (zwischen 17 und 20 Jahren)



ein, die tagsüber auf eine reguläre Schule gehen. Alle waren sehr interessiert an uns Freiwilligen, und man kam schnell ins Gespräch und freundete sich an. Beim Sport fällt einem gleich auf, wie sportlich doch die meisten sind, was beim Volleyball (was hier übrigens der Nationalsport ist) nicht so ist.

Die Wochenenden sind natürlich immer ein Highlight, da dann ein Großteil der Freiwilligen zur großen Erkundungsfahrt aufbricht. Meist wird dann von jemanden als Rund-Info per SMS etwas vorgeschlagen, und man verabredet sich an einem für alle passenden Treffpunkt, um gemeinsam in den Süden zu den traumhaften Stränden fahren oder in einem der vielen Nationalparks Elefanten, Krokodile, Affen und diverse Vogelarten zu beobachten. An einem der ersten Wochenenden sind wir mit dem öffentlichen Bus nach Sigiriya in Richtung Norden gefahren. Die öffentlichen Busse sind so eine Sache für sich, da diese meist brechend voll sind und man der Meinung ist, dass der Busfahrer Micheal Schumacher Konkurrenz machen möchte. Es ist somit ein ständiges Vollgas geben, und kurz vor den Haltestellen wird ganz scharf abgebremst, sodass man ordentlich durchgeschüttelt wird. Wenn man Glück hat, hat man einen

Sitzplatz ergattert, ansonsten muss man gut und gerne zwei und mehr Stunden krampfhaft gegen die Fliehkräfte (durch die scharfen Bremsmanöver), das Gedrängel (Frauen drängeln interessanterweise am meisten), Krämpfe in den Armen (vom ständigen Umklammern der Haltestangen) und fast unerträgliche Hitze (bei sehr hoher Luftfeuchtigkeit) ankämpfen. Nachdem man dann sein Ziel nach gefühlten 15 Stunden, aber in Wirklichkeit „nur“ 7 Stunden (für 180km) erreicht hat, wird man dann aber für die Strapazen durch eine unglaublich schöne Naturlandschaft (Lion Rock und Lake) und diverse Tempel (Goldene Tempel und Höhlentempel) belohnt. An einem weiteren Wochenende sind wir in den Süden nach Merissa an einen sehr schönen Sandstrand gefahren und haben das Strandleben ein Wochenende lang ausgekostet. Denn bei uns in der Gegend um Negombo nicht schwimmen kann, da sich durch Gesteinserosionen gefährliche Riffe gebildet haben und teilweise auch die Strömung und die Wellen zu stark sind. Wenn man auf kilometerlange Strände, leckere Fruchtsäfte (besonders der frische Mangosaft und der Wassermelonensaft haben es mir angetan), leckere Fischgerichte und Faulenzen unter tropischen Palmen steht, dann ist man im Süden des Landes genau richtig aufgehoben, denn das gibt es dort im Überfluss.

Apropos Essen: Das Nationalgericht Sri Lankas ist Reis und Curry, und das in allen erdenklichen Varianten. Von Huhn, Lamm, Schwein und Fisch ist alles vertreten, aber auch ganz viel Gemüse, Früchte und natürlich die unterschiedlichsten Gewürze fließen in die Zubereitung von Currygerichten mit ein. Meist wird dazu eine Art Chilipaste oder ein Mix aus Kokosraspeln und frischem Chili gereicht, was eine gewisse Schärfe hervorbringt. Gegessen wird traditionell mit der Hand und zwar nur mit der rechten Hand! Alle Freiwilligen hier im Haus machen das so, und ich bin das auch schon von meinen Indien-Aufenthalten gewohnt und gut geübt. Es ist eine ganz interessante Art, sein Essen zu sich zu nehmen, da man das Essen nicht nur „schmeckt“, sondern auch „fühlt“. Aber so gut das Nationalgericht auch schmeckt, nach einiger Zeit überkommt einen (und ich bin definitiv nicht der Einzige) doch der Heißhunger auf „internationale Küche“ oder „Fast Food“, sodass dann schon mal KFC oder Pizza Hut mit allen Freiwilligen gestürmt wird. Und falls man Lust auf nationale Fischgerichte hat, dann muss man sich unbedingt an der Südküste durch die Speisekarte futtern. Dort gibt es Hummer, Krebse, Scampi und gegrillten Oktopus zum Spotpreis in richtig guter Qualität direkt aus dem Ozean, vor dem man unter einen klaren Sternenhimmel diniert.

Sri Lanka hat viele Facetten, die noch zu entdecken sind. Aber dazu reicht leider ein Aufenthalt von zwei Monaten nicht ganz aus, und daher weiß ich, dass dieser nicht der letzte Besuch in diesem faszinierenden Inselstaat unter Palmen sein wird. Auch habe ich hier Menschen kennen und lieben gelernt, welche immer wieder ein Besuch wert sind, und meinen Aufenthalt spannend und angenehm zu gleich gemacht haben, sodass dieser Aufenthalt mir immer im Gedächtnis bleiben wird.

