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## E-volunteer placement report Treak Cambodia

Volunteer: Caro Lawrenson

Placement: e-volunteer programme, Treak Community Centre, Cambodia. 12th May - 4th August 2021



### My motivation :

In February 2020 I went to Treak Community Centre for a 5 week placement as a volunteer. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there and was most impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the whole team, from Michael ( CEO )and Dara ( head teacher ) to all the class teachers and office staff. I loved working with the children and having the opportunity to visit some of tourist areas.

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I had hoped to return in person but this was not possible due to the Pandemic. At the Zoom social held earlier this year, for past and potential volunteers, the suggestion was put forward to try e-volunteering and this seemed an idea worth pursuing.

### **E-Volunteering:**

I was nervous about e-volunteering as I am retired and my IT skills are basic. I live on my own and the thought of making videos and doing zoom presentations made me feel uncomfortable. However, Covid-19 has made many of us embrace the technology to stay in touch with family and friends and to attend on-line classes. So .... Nothing ventured, nothing gained !

### **Pre-placement preparation:**

After expressing my interest I exchanged several e-mails with Dianne and Michael and then we chatted on Zoom. They gave me the confidence to sign up to the e-volunteer program and Dianne gave me several very useful tips. I then spoke to Dara and Michael in order to sort out suitable topics for my 12 week placement.

We agreed a weekly meeting lasting approximately 1 hour to be held via Jitsi ( zoom equivalent ) at 09.00 hours UK time.

The pre placement preparation was excellent, in particular the meeting prior to commencement when I was able to make some amendments to the suggested topics.

### **My experience and work :**

I am a retired GP and I was asked to explore a number of health related topics with the teaching staff. Some sessions were with all the staff and some with individual teachers. We also scheduled 3 sessions where students were able to attend and were encouraged to ask questions. Topics ranged from all matters related to Covid-19 to First Aid and Child Development. I had a very interesting class with some of the older students discussing my work experience which evolved into some medical questions and what was on my ' bucket list '!

After each class I sent a written resume of the areas covered that day as I was very aware that there was a lot of information to absorb which is not easy when English is not your first language. These documents can then be referred to later if clarification is needed. I also sent U-tube links to appropriate videos demonstrating activities I could not do myself.

### **Advice to prospective volunteers:**

Despite my early apprehension I found the whole experience extremely rewarding. The technology worked surprisingly well with no major issues. I would encourage anyone who has a skill or experience they are happy to share to contact People and Places to discuss it.

### **Success, disappointments, challenges:**

I felt that the project was very successful and the whole process was managed well by Dianne and Dara. The challenge for me was to make sure that the information that I was giving was useful and understandable. The Teachers were all motivated to learn and that is the key to success.

### Highlights:

The highlight for me was to see and speak to the wonderful people, adults and children, that I had spent time with in 2020. Also to feel that I was helping them with health issues, particularly those relating to the current Pandemic. That has been a challenge to everyone.



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