

# **Riverkids Foundation**

## **Monthly Report** **From 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

Volunteer Coordinator  
PANG Sina

## **SUMMARY**

### **Highlight:**

This month, the volunteer coordinator coordinated:

#### **Advocacy Walk**

- Three advocacy walks – two nine-hour walks and a twelve-hour walk.

#### **Mural Painting**

- A mural painting by ANZA Group

#### **Volunteers**

- A training by David – a short term volunteer from The United States
- A long term volunteer from Project Abroad
- Two leave volunteers from Project Abroad

#### **Visitors**

- Nareth, a volunteer placement officer from Project Abroad in Cambodia
- A group of Project Abroad staff from Japan, Germany and Italy
- Kate and her families' visit
- Kristen, a former volunteer at nurse community

### **Challenges:**

- Miscommunication between the volunteer coordinator in PP and the volunteers/visitors
- Some of our advocacy walk participants found it difficult to participate in the rest of the walk
- Some of community women who were interviewed during the advocacy walk complained about the gratuity our guides provided
- The guidelines on recruiting and managing local volunteers are not clear yet
- There are not enough materials for local volunteers to perform their jobs
- Some of the advocacy walk documents need to be updated

### **Activities Planned for Next Month**

- 9-hour walk on 10-Nov-2011
- 9-hour walk on 28-Nov-2011
- RI Group
- Recruiting advocacy walk guide
- Budget Plan
- Meet with AISEC to discuss MoU
- Meet with PUC to talk about volunteer from Hawaii

Staff in Charge of the Report: **PANG SINA, Volunteer Coordinator**

## **I. DETAILS OF EACH ACTIVITY**

### **1. ADVOCACY WALKS**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2011, a group of five people named ANZA participated in a nine-hour advocacy walk, which was led by our social worker named Sokhim. As usual, the group started the walk at around 6 am and our guide took them according to the scheduled activities. (Activities of advocacy walk can be found in advocacy walk guidebook).

In addition to ANZA group, on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011, there was another 12-hour walk participated by David Payne, who is from the United States. This walk was led by two advocacy walk guides. From 6 to 2 pm, our female social worker named Davan led the walk, and from 2 pm to 11 pm, our executive director volunteered to lead the tour. (Activities of advocacy walk can be found in advocacy walk guidebook).

Finally, on 27 October 2011 there was a 9-hour walk joined by Melvyn C. Nonis and a partner. The two were led by our old hand social worker named Chun Chea. Unexpectedly, the two only walked in the morning because they were busy with their friend, according to Mr. Chun Chea. Thus, this walk ended at 2 pm.

### **BUDGET FOR THE THREE WALKS**

*[finance report]*

### **2. MURAL PAINTING**

ANZA group

This month there was only one mural painting. It was conducted with the help of our social worker and a dozen kids from the community at K6 by ANZA group, which consisted of five members (information of whom are not available). Since the volunteer coordinator was on leave, the whole process was coordinated by our social worker Chin Chea.

### **3. VOLUNTEERS**

#### **3.1. Short term volunteers**

This month, the volunteer coordinator coordinated a training-workshop by our short term volunteer named David Payne, who is from the United States. He spent three days at Riverkids, from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2011. He spent his first day participating in our Advocacy walk, and the rest

with the Riverkids key staff in Phnom Penh. In addition to training our staff, D also donated some used clothes, cash and a laptop (more information about his donation can be found in finance report).

### **3.1.1. Training on Strategic Planning**

#### **Objectives:**

Due to the increasing number of its clients, Riverkids always pays close attention in building its staff capacity through training or workshops conducted by highly experienced employers or managers from various sectors. This training aims to build up its key staff capacity on strategic planning and management and how to write an effective report.

#### **Participants:**

Since the training focuses on one of the most important management tool – strategic planning, the staff in the following units were invited:

- Mr. Phy Sophon, executive director
- Mr. Net Virak, a director of department of social work
- Mr. Chun Srun, a director of department of education
- Ms. Khek Sinoy, a coordinator of micro-business
- Ms. Khek Pheakdey, a finance officer and senior assistant
- Mr. Cheang Phea, a senior assistant
- Mr. Ouk Ann, a casefile coordinator

#### **Contents:**

During the two-day training-workshop, our staffs were trained on two most important areas – strategic planning and reporting writing.

#### **Comments:**

There should be more similar trainings, since what David had shown was too much to present in only two days. In addition, most of our staff seemed enthusiastic in learning strategic thinking, strategic management, planning and other skills intending to improve their work.

However, our trainer was not well prepared. He came without any materials. He did not bring any materials except a pen to talk with the staff a day before the training, although his plan was to teach report writing. Therefore, the training was not really effective even though its contents were meaningful and useful for our staff.

Thus, if possible, the trainers who have planned to train our staff should have a well-planned lesson and well-organized materials so that our staff can fully develop their skills.

### **3.2. Long term volunteers**

#### **3.2.1. Foreign volunteers**

In October, there were two long term foreign volunteers who left Riverkids – Ms. Karas Dowdy and Erin. They both came from Project Abroad. The former came to help in micro-business and in the management team. The latter volunteered at Family House as a caring volunteer.

After the two left, there was another volunteer from Project Abroad who came to work as teaching volunteer at Riverkids. Her name is L [D]. She comes from Denmark, and she is currently studying collage preparation course. She was first assigned to work with a kindergarten teacher at compassion house in the morning, and she taught English at central office in the afternoon. However, as she was very good with children, we decided to assign her to teach kindergarten class in compassion for both shifts.

#### **3.2.2. Local volunteers**

Currently, we have eight local volunteers working at Department of Education, Social Work and Nurse Community. There are six teaching volunteers, who are all working in the English program. There is a nurse volunteer and a full time volunteer at social work department (more information about them can be found in the local volunteer schedule).

## **4. VISITORS**

### **4.1. Project Abroad Oversea staff**

A group of abroad project officers from Japan, Italy and Germany came to Riverkids to talk about and assess the volunteer placements at Riverkids. During the visits, they asked to visit some of our projects in the central office, family house and compassion house, where one of their volunteers was working.

### **4.2. Kate and Her Families**

Kate and her families briefly visit our project. They spent around one hour and a half visiting Family House, Phsa Touch community and the central office. During their visit, they donated some used clothes and met with Bunhou who is in the mentor program and those she is supporting. In addition, she helped bring some toys used to decorate during Christmas back to Singapore.

#### **4.3. Kristen**

On 13 October 2011, a volunteer named Kristen who used to be our volunteer in nurse community requested to meet with volunteer coordinator about the possibility of volunteering at Riverkids again. (More information about the discussion between her and our PP volunteer coordinator can be found in Appendix)

#### **4.4. Nareth**

On 14 October 2011, Chhoy Nareth, a volunteer placement officer of Project Abroad in Cambodia, met with the volunteer coordinator. The purpose of her meeting was to assess the volunteer placement, visit some of our projects and discuss about the sectors that Riverkids needs volunteers in the most.

## **II. ACTIVITIES NEXT MONTH**

### **1. ADVOCACY WALK**

9-hour walk on 10-Nov-2011: Chesnut Secondary School

- Prepare the schedule
- Confirm all the staff and volunteer who can work on holidays

9-hour walk on 28-Nov-2011: Northlight School

- Prepare the schedule
- Confirm all the staff and volunteer

Recruiting advocacy walk guide

- Shortlist 5 candidates
- Recruit three
- Train the recruited candidates

(More information about the walk can be found in Cambodia visitor schedule 2011)

### **2. SHORT TERM VOLUNTEER**

RI Group

Community survey

- Recruit and train interpreting volunteers (12 volunteers)
- Contact the local authorities to inform them about our annual survey
- Prepared all the assigned documents
  - Translate 30 lesson plans

- Translate the questionnaires

### **3. VISITORS**

#### **3.1. The Meeting With AISEC**

AISEC, one of youth organizations whose activities involve sending volunteers to work in Cambodia, wants to work with Riverkids so that it can send volunteers from other countries to help Riverkids. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss about what AISEC should do so that it can work with Riverkids.

Since our policy is to be very strict on foreign volunteer, during the meeting, we will suggest for AISEC to draft a MoU with us. This MoU will be discussed in detail in the second meeting so that Riverkids can ensure its clients' safety.

#### **3.2. The Meeting With PUC**

PUC is an academic institution that used to send volunteer to Riverkids. It is also one of our local donors. In December, Riverkids will meet with Dr. J, associate professor of Political Science at University of Hawaii, and the founder of an organization working to help homeless children in Phnom Penh (the information about this organization is not available). The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the possibility of allowing a group of five university students to work for Riverkids.

### **4. BUDGET PLAN**

Riverkids now requires all units to plan the monthly budget and submit it to the finance officer by the 25<sup>th</sup> every month. So the volunteer coordinator, like the other directors of each unit, is required to plan the budget every month.

### **III. Challenges**

#### **1. Miscommunication**

Some visitors rarely contacted the volunteer coordinator in Phnom Penh, thus causing some difficulties. Firstly, we found it hard to contact them when they changed their hotel. Secondly, in the schedule, some volunteers asked the volunteer coordinator to arrange the transportation. However, since we could not contact them, we did not know where and when to pick them up. As a result, they waited for long and were unhappy with the long wait. In addition, when such problems arose, instead of contacting our office in Phnom Penh, they contacted the Singapore Office staff.

#### **2. Is our Walk too tired?**

As usual, our walk would start from 6.00 am to 5.00pm – for the 9-hour walk. Some of our visitors found it quite hard to walk in the hot sun and dirty communities. They asked us to end the walk earlier so that they could have time to have a break. This might have happened because the visitors themselves have never experienced as much walking as they did in the Advocacy Walk. However, so far, we have not had any solution for such a matter yet.

### **3. Community Women Complaint about Support during the Walk**

We usually give \$2.5 for the women we interview during the survey or research. We previously gave \$5 for women who were interviewed during the advocacy walk. However, a few months, we wanted to give them – the community women – only \$2.5 since they did not go to work.

However, some guides gave different amounts of money to different people they interviewed. When asked why they did so, they said it was because those women were so miserable. Later on, our executive director decided to give \$5 to all the women we interviewed during the advocacy walk in Rail Way II community (compassion house), and keep the \$2.5 for women in other communities. In addition, Ms. Soklee, our freelance guide, always gives \$5 to any women she interviewed. This practice is different from the amount I asked the other guides to give. Such difference led to unhappiness in some women who were provided different amounts of money even though they were interviewed in the same situation. They therefore kept complaining among their neighbors.

So far, the volunteer unit has not had any solution yet (the solution will be suggested to volunteer coordinator in Singapore in a separate piece of paper).

## **4. We Need to Update Some Documents**

### **4.1. Guidelines on Advocacy Walk and Volunteers**

Since most of our policies are quite out of date, and most of our activities are now evolving, some of policies related to visitors and volunteers should be updated.

First of all, our Advocacy Walk Guidebook should be taken into consideration. Most of information in the book is still very useful. However, the schedule and contact information of relevant people should be modified. The schedules in the book are now no longer in use. Most of the activities mentioned in it are not undertaken any more. Thus, we need to have a new one.

Regarding the contact information of the staff, I would like to change the information of Soklee, who in the book was mentioned as a volunteer coordinator. She is not our volunteer coordinator. She is our freelance guide, which means that she is not involved as much as she used to be anymore. In addition, I would like to add another person, the volunteer coordinator in Singapore (more details about the suggestion will be sent in a separated paper to volunteer coordinator in Singapore).

#### **4.2. Internal Policy for Advocacy Walk Staff**

Besides the Advocacy Walk Guidebook, the internal policy of advocacy staff should also be updated. There are a few reasons for this. First of all, our policy is not detailed enough, so our staff cannot make a clear-cut decision easily on some points such as how much support a guide should be provided. For example, according to Soklee, she is given \$2 for her phone card. However, there is no point mentioning about that. Also, the policy should change from what the guide should and should not do, to what their job descriptions and roles in the advocacy walk are (more details about the suggestion will be send in a separate paper to volunteer coordinator in Singapore).

#### **4.3. Visitor and Volunteer Policy**

Finally, visitor and volunteer policy is another policy that should be updated. The point which we should focus on is the local volunteer. For foreign volunteers, the Singapore office will take care of them and of course, the volunteer coordinator in Singapore has her own guidelines on how to work with volunteers. However, there are very little points mentioned about local volunteers. The imprecision includes how much support should be given to the volunteer.

In addition, we sometimes get some confusion when we define what is the difference between intern and long term volunteers. Thus, we should have something prescribed in a policy about the intern (more details about the suggestion will be sent in a separate paper to volunteer coordinator in Singapore).

### **IV. Appendix**