



Volunteer Handbook

Updated: April 2018

Introduction

Education in Cambodia comes at a cost, perhaps small by Western standards, but often unattainable to the impoverished in the region. ABCs and Rice recognises education as a right that every child should have, as well as the key to breaking the cycle of poverty. We offer various food programmes and free education in English and Khmer to the impoverished children in the Sala Consigne and Kralanh Village area.

Due to extreme poverty, families struggle to send their children to school, often leaving one or more children home to work. ABCs works closely with the village chiefs and key community members to target those most in need and offer them a hand up. We aim to provide a safe, healthy, fun and loving environment where education and the realisation of self-worth are of the utmost priority. For more detailed information please go to our website www.abcrice.org

History of ABCs & Rice

In January 2010 ABCs & Rice built a bamboo hut with the intention of teaching some English lessons to local children. The children came flooding in from all directions and within a year there was a fully-fledged facility with five classrooms. This was all achieved by people such as you donating time and/or money to make it happen. Thanks to the kindness and generosity of many people around the world, ABCs and Rice runs a range of programs offering free education and free food to highly disadvantaged children. The collaborative effort of hundreds of people has made this possible, and we thank each and every one of you for contributing towards the project.

In 2018 our school has six classrooms, including a kindergarten. We built Full Belly Farm to provide food, eggs, meat and fish for the Breakfast Club. In July 2017 control of the farm was given to three disabled families, supported by Genevieve's Fair Trade Village, who would otherwise be homeless and starving.

Working with Children

ABCs and Rice is committed to protecting children. We understand the nature and risks of child abuse and have an open and aware culture. We have developed our policies and procedures to protect both children and staff. Establishing and maintaining a child safe environment is a guiding principle in all our activities and management practices. For everyone's protection, there must be two adults present with any one child at all times.

As a volunteer who will be spending time with children at ABCs & Rice, we ask you to remember where the children come from. Many are still facing tough times at home. Sometimes they will be sad or angry, and we have to be patient with them. If a child's

behaviour concerns you, let one of the staff know. Please be sensitive to these issues in planning your lessons and other activities as well, and never play games that are violent or single children out and make them feel isolated. Most of the children will be really happy, welcoming and affectionate most of the time. They love coming to ABCs and Rice and they love being around volunteers and practicing their English. They'll hug you and jump on you and involve you in their games. We just ask that you be mindful of the impact that you can have on these children, and that you use your judgment wisely when you are around them. Show them respect, try to learn their names and be encouraging in class and other activities.

If you have any concerns or question related to the safety of any child please speak directly to Houk, our Project Manager, Tammy, our Director or Jess, our volunteer co-ordinator. Please remember that you are the adult and every student is a child – it is every adult's responsibility to ensure the safety and the security of all children.

Photography and Social Media

We are happy for you to take photographs but ask that you adhere to our child protection policy. We need to respect the children's right to confidentiality, so **never associate names or other identifying factors in photos**. This includes social media – **NAMES ARE NEVER TO BE USED** under any circumstances. Location tags must also never be used on social media, to protect the safe space of the children. Additionally, please do not 'friend' or connect with any of the students on social media as this blurs the boundaries between staff and students. This is a blanket rule and must continue even after you have left ABCs.

Gifts to students and teachers

We are happy for you to buy all the children and teachers fruit or equipment they can share but please do not single out individual children, teachers or classes for gifts. Please ask for advice from the Director before spending your money. We have had problems in the past with volunteers giving gifts or money to individual teachers and this has caused jealousies and friction from the other teachers. We understand that you may form a friendship with your teacher but under no circumstances are you to give them something you are not giving to all the teachers. The teachers are aware that it is a dismissible offence to accept gifts from volunteers, so please don't put them in a difficult position.

Dress code and representation

We ask you to respect Cambodian culture and dress appropriately according to their standards. In school we ask you to wear t-shirt that covers your shoulders and pants, skirt, dress or shorts that cover down to your mid-thighs. No see-through clothing is allowed, no bra straps to be visible, nor cleavage or bare tummies. We are not as strict as most NGOs but we do ask you to respect the culture, a copy of the dress code is on the wall of the office should you wish to see it.

We ask you to bear in mind that while you are volunteering at ABCs and Rice you are associated with the organisation. We encourage you, by all means to go out at night to have fun and socialise, but please remember that vulnerable, drunk foreigners may be a target for theft, sexual assault, rape and worse. At the very least, your behaviour may reflect badly on ABCs. Siem Reap is a small town when it comes to rumours, gossip and reputations.

As a volunteer, it would be appreciated if you could provide a background check. These checks help to protect children aged less than 18 years from harm by preventing those

who pose a risk to their safety from working with them. In your country, they may be called “Working with Children” check, CRB check, criminal records check, criminal background check criminal history search or basic disclosure”. If you do not have a relevant check, please ask for assistance from the Director or Volunteer Coordinator.

Additionally, we request all volunteers who are here for 1 month or more to attend the ConCert Cambodia (www.concertcambodia.org) child protection course at your expense of \$15 USD. This is a refresher course on the importance of child safety and some very helpful information on the social climate within Cambodia. Please ask the Volunteer Co-ordinator for details of dates of the training.

Volunteer Duties

ABCs and Rice appreciates your time and effort to volunteer with us. Volunteers at ABCs & Rice are a big part of our team and we give them significant responsibilities. We value the contribution of each volunteer who comes to ABCs & Rice and we are grateful that each volunteer brings with them a different set of skills and personality. The children benefit from this diversity. We ask the volunteers to work as a team and support each other with the different activities so that the workload is spread evenly between volunteers. We have a facebook group dedicated to volunteers that we would love you to join to connect with previous, current and future volunteers. For your support and to cover the administration a Volunteer Coordinator is on site. You will co-operate closely with them and they can offer any support needed in most situations.

Timetable

Morning

Assembly	1 st Period	Break	2 nd Period
7.45	8:00	9:20	9:50

Afternoon

1 st Period	Break	2 nd Period	Assembly
2:00	3:20	3:50	5:00

The timetables are located in the library/office for you to see which lesson is being run at which time.

In order of English ability, the classrooms are: Ducklings, Monkeys, Badgers, Eagles and Dragons. We also run an evening Owls class.

We ask if you could please be present at ABCs and Rice at 7:45am – 11am and 1:45pm – 5.10pm Monday – Friday. Of course, you are welcome to come anytime the school is open and we ask that if you have committed to certain hours that you **stick to them**. Also please bear in mind that the school is closed from 11am – 1:45pm.

As you are arriving with plenty of time before each days program begins, we ask that you use this time to discuss with our teachers what they have planned for the day and what they are expecting of you for that day and over the course of the week. It is also useful to speak to each other after each period to discuss the class just held and the next one.

Please remember that the teacher runs the classroom and the volunteers are there to help them.

On the first day you will be given an induction and tour. Feel free to ask any questions, so that you gain a good understanding of what we are trying to achieve.

You are expected to inform the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as you realise you can't come to ABCs (e.g. when you are sick or for other serious reasons). It's absolutely mandatory to inform the Volunteer Coordinator at least one hour before school starts. To make this easier we highly recommend you purchase a local SIM card for your phone. A cheap Nokia can be purchased for less than \$20. You can also add Josh Manheimer, our volunteer coordinator, on the Facebook messenger app and contact in advance this way.

At times you will be asked to accompany another volunteer or teacher to the Dentist or Doctor ensuring two adults are always present as per our Child Protection Policy.

Expectations of Volunteers

It would be greatly appreciated if all volunteers were mostly self-motivated and used their initiative. The more you put into your role, the more you will get from it. We have lots of resources and materials, which are there to use and these are to be found in the office/library.

While there should always be at least one full time volunteer on site. Sometimes they have duties best performed from home and off-site. Please don't rely on them to be there from the start to the end of the day every day. Additionally, please understand that the library can also be very busy office space so please don't be intimidated if you walk in and everyone is focused and working quietly. It's not that we don't want to talk – it's just that there is a rare moment of quiet and we are making the most of it. Do not hesitate to engage, we are there to help and advise whenever needed.

There is much more required of volunteers than just being in the classroom and if you can assist in any areas set out below, we would be grateful:

Rice Day

The children receive 6 to 8 kg of rice up to twice a month and if possible an additional small food supplement. Help from the volunteers with weighing and bagging on these days will be most appreciated. It is a hot and busy day but truly worth it to see the smiles of the children as they receive their rice backpacks to take home. Houk, the project director, will advise what day and help you set up.

Office/Library Area

There are many tasks to be completed such as cataloguing books, restocking the 1st Aid kit, tidying the library books, toys, clothes and the office in general. If you are not needed in class, there are always things that could be done to help out. Please check with a long-term volunteer – your help will be gratefully appreciated.

General School Clean up

The teachers and children are very involved in keeping the school area tidy but often time does not allow for the following:

- Sweeping outside the classrooms, assembly area or toilet block.
- Cleaning the sinks outside the toilet block.
- Checking the water plants in the grounds and topping up if necessary.

The children learn from all these activities and it teaches them pride in their own school.

Handyman Help

We always have a range of projects around either building or maintenance. If you're that way inclined, your knowledge and skill would be greatly utilised.

Helping Teachers with their Lesson Plans

The teachers would appreciate some help in filling out their lesson plans. It is good to work closely with your teacher to see what they want to do in the near future, and help them plan their lessons accordingly. If you are a qualified teacher, our staff will readily listen to any advise you an offer for their development.

Sports

There are sometimes regular sports programs (soccer, volleyball etc.) that the kids participate in, usually on the weekends. Whilst we understand it can be difficult to get out of bed early on a Sunday morning, we would really appreciate volunteers to help supervise the children. It's also a great way to connect with some of the children by hanging out with them and cheering madly from the sidelines. Please ask for more details when you have arrived.

Teaching Assistance at ABCs and Rice

The classroom is a fun and rewarding place. The students are eager to learn and are very warm hearted. Like all kids though, their attention span is limited. We have structured our curriculum to maximise learning through limiting time in the classroom to a point we believe best uses the available attention span. Through ongoing teacher training we aim to have our teachers assist all volunteers to the best of their abilities, without throwing you in the deep-end! Having said that, it may still happen, we are well aware that many of you have little to no teaching or training experience. This is not a problem for us, as everyone learns something new every day! Teaching is one of those vocations that takes a little while to find your feet, particularly if you've had only a small exposure to public speaking and dealing with rug rats to mid teens, especially when they are a foreign culture and do not speak very much English. While you may have read much material on the subject, standing in front of all the wonderful faces is another matter. It can be scary! It's very easy to forget what you had planned to say, also the ability to switch activities when you are getting blank or bored faces and it will happen! It is a skill that takes time to learn and master. Also, it is quite normal to feel like you're floundering and not sure what to do for the first few days. This will pass, and we encourage you to seek feedback from your teacher about ways to improve your teaching skills. **Always remember the teacher is in charge.**

Here are some ways you can help in the student's education:

- Talk to the teacher you are working with before and after each class, ask them what they have planned for each session for the students and you, also what they intend to do for the next day. This is a great time to give them tips on how better to deliver any given topic, as they are thirsty for your ideas.
- Walk around the classroom while the teacher is presenting a topic, look at the student's notebooks to see how their writing and spelling is, politely point out their mistakes and help them to correct any errors. The students don't like to get anything wrong, so they love it when you show them how to improve. This is also a great way to gauge what level the students are actually at, which in turn will help you to develop useful games and assist your planning when it's your turn to teach.
- Try to spend a couple of minutes with each student throughout the day and the week as remedial help is where they can benefit greatly,
- They love to have a laugh and conversation at the same time. It's OK to be a little silly with them while you are working with them, as long as you're not overly distracting the whole class.

Being in the classroom with the students will be one of the highlights of your volunteering experience at ABCs. The students are very welcoming and will be eager to learn from you. You will be working with a teacher at all times while you are in the classroom. Occasionally our teachers are off sick and in this case we have to double up classes. In the past we have had some confident volunteers who opt to cover the class alone for a few days, but this will not be expected of you.

Something that's very important to remember is that the Khmer teacher is the boss of the classroom and you are there to assist them. Whilst it might seem easier to take over and get the job done, in the end our teachers don't learn as much and it devalues their teacher's authority. Please be mindful that the teachers are as much a part of the project as the kids, and we aim to enhance their skills and abilities as well. They will welcome your advice and suggestions, but please encourage them to come up with solutions to problems, not just jump in and solve it by yourself.

During classes such as story telling and listening comprehension you will be taking the class and the teacher will be assisting you with your activities and any translations that are necessary. During other classes you are expected to be in the classroom and assist the teacher with their lessons in any way you can. This way you can be talking English with the students right throughout the day. This alone delivers progress in the student's English ability.

If you have any particular skills or interests, you are more than welcome to ask teachers to take an extra class (for example, playing guitar and music or taking an arts or crafts class). Please ask the teacher first and make sure it is cleared with one of the long-term volunteers. We understand that teaching might be a new experience for you. The teachers are there to help you, and the students will love any enthusiasm you bring to the class.

Helpful hints for when you are taking a class

Having resources ready the day before means you will be prepared to start straight away in the morning. It is helpful to work with the teacher in regards to what the students are learning about. They might be focusing on colours, shapes, words in the past tense etc. You might use this to drive your teaching by picking out aspects of the book that are relevant to the students learning. This might also give teachers further ideas for their lesson plans on this topic.

Some basic tips on being in front of a class

1. Wait for all students to stop and listen before you start talking to them
2. If there are students talking to each other, ask them to separate (the teacher can help you with names and instructions)
3. When giving instructions, use lots of actions to help the students understand what you want them to do
4. Model any activities you want them to complete in front of the class so they can get the visual idea of what is expected of them
5. Be enthusiastic about a topic and the students will be more interested in what you are teaching them

While you may not be teaching the class, you can still be a very useful asset to the overall running of the class. Ask the teacher if there is anything specific you can be doing during the lesson. Art, Fun Movement and Music classes can be hectic. Having an extra adult in the class can be very helpful, even if you are just joining in the activity with the students.

Some basic tips for assisting a class

1. Help to direct student attention back to the teacher if they are talking to each other
2. Show enthusiasm to any activities the teacher is explaining (Gee, that sounds like fun!)
3. While students are doing work, you can walk around and help them individually. Students are always very proud of their work. Showing enthusiasm towards what they are accomplishing is priceless feedback for them

Finding Resources

In the library you will find folders of resources for different subjects including Music, Art, Games etc. They are in the teacher's area and you are encouraged to look through them when you have some spare time. The best way of finding out which games and activities students enjoy, is to ask the teachers. They will be able to tell you which games they already know and give you ideas about what level you should be teaching.

The most important part of being part of a class at ABCs is to bring your enthusiasm to the students. They are very lucky to have so many wonderful people help them with their learning and we are very lucky to be part of their lives, even if it is for a relatively short amount of time.

There is also a supply of clothes so if any children have worn the same clothes for a whole week, or have great big holes or rips, please don't feel as though you have to ask to give them something new to wear but speak with our volunteer coordinator if you are unsure. Although having said that, sometimes they wear the same clothes over and over again, just because they love them.

Story time

Story times are important for the children so they can hear English spoken on a regular basis. This is where volunteers can have the most affect, and is their biggest responsibility. This is where you can really help develop the children's knowledge and understanding of English through reading and comprehension.

Ask your teacher which book they are currently reading. The time you spend in front of the students should be focused on phonics and pronunciation. This can be achieved through games, songs, word associations (subjects/topics/sounds), and vocabulary, also through repetition. It is important that you always speak slowly and clearly as the children pick up a lot from hearing you speak.

Try to keep all of your subjects to a short period of time. Fast introduction and follow-up repetition over the next few days is the best way to the students understanding. They will associate certain words and phrases naturally as long as your delivery technique is consistent. More than 5-10 mins on any subject is more than enough when initially introducing vocabulary, phonics games and songs. More time than this and you will notice boredom in the ranks. Understanding does not happen immediately – it takes time for them to process and order the information you are giving them.

Phonics can be simply the phonetic alphabet and word games. For example:

- Pat the cat sat on the mat to catch the bat in the silly hat
- Kip the fit kid picked Pippy's fiddle and in skipped Tim

- Scott hopped on Pop, Pop put on his sock and got his clock
- The age old “Dr. Seuss” can help you with ideas here
- On the farm, in the home at school e.g. cow, pig, horse, sheep, goat, farmer, etc.

Keep in mind that a lot of technology we take for granted is often completely foreign for our students, most of their homes are one room shacks with communal bathroom facilities.

Games

Many traditional Cambodian games are very similar to ours, although try altering them slightly to include more dialogue. Keep the games simple, and short demonstrations are all that is required, (more detail for the teacher is useful for translation purposes). The students are fast learners.

Songs

Songs can take longer than expected to teach and repetition is required, as the students need to learn the mouth movements and the melody. Start by giving them the full version so that they know what they are aiming to achieve, and then break it down line-by-line introducing basic beats and melodies. As they get their tongue around the song you can increase the speed and complication of the beat and melody. Keep each new song short, in terms of lines and the time you spend on delivering it. It gives the students a thrill to repeat the song at the end of each lesson until they get it right. Introducing new songs can take up to a week or more. Take some time too to explain what they are singing about.

You may be surprised with the amount of songs and games the students already know, it is important to keep using them while they are still enjoying them, as they are all learning processes, if only subtle ones. You will notice quickly if the students are not enjoying a game or song, it is important to notice when this is happening so that you can change games or songs or even start something new. It will also avoid those awkward moments when you’re standing in front of the class panicking about how you can improve the situation. Rely on the Khmer teachers and don’t be afraid to pass the class back to them when you run short of ideas and energy.

Art

Art is a great way to introduce creative thinking and also helps to reinforce a lot of the subjects that you are teaching around colours, animals, plants and actions. They love to draw and play around with different things, including, origami. Art lessons are relaxing and exciting for everyone. Trades in Cambodia are of a low skill level. They are certainly capable of many trades but lack the education opportunities to be qualified trades people. Using art as a medium of introducing different trades is a massive leg up for the students. It helps them work out what they are best at and where their passions lay. Many students have never been exposed to art disciplines – this includes not knowing primary colours and how to mix them.

We can’t leave out music as an art form either as they love to sing and dance. Create silly songs for them and encourage them to make up their own songs, where they are capable. Bring music for them to listen and dance to. If you play an instrument, play for them and teach the ones that are interested. It is amazing the accomplishments you can make in this area. Please speak to our volunteer coordinator for access to instruments you can’t find in the office, sometimes we may be able to provide them for you.

Above all have fun, be as creative and silly as you can be, the students and teachers will love you for it, and they learn so much faster when they are having fun. Most language

understanding comes from listening to people talk and constant exposure to the language. And don't forget that the Khmer teacher is available and able to translate any instructions or directions to the children.

Student resources

At the project there are copies of the student's course book (one for each child). Students are not allowed, under any circumstances, to write or draw in their copy of the course book or to cut out parts of the pages. The student's course books are handed out to the students at the beginning of a lesson and collected by the teacher at the end of the lesson. Students are not allowed, under any circumstances, to take the materials provided home.

Project resources

At the project each classroom has a white board. Depending on donations and previous activities, you will find arts and craft materials, watercolours, crayons, coloured pencils, various coloured papers in many sizes and many other materials in the library. Please use them carefully. While not wishing to deprive the children, some materials, such as large sheets of art paper, are difficult or even impossible to source in Cambodia. We have a growing library of books and education resources but suggestions or gifts are most welcome. ABCs and Rice also has some sports equipment and teachers resources. It is important that you return all the unused resources to their correct location in the library and keep the arts and craft boxes tidy or the next person has to deal with the mess.

Health and Safety Volunteer

A new volunteer position at ABCs is our health and safety volunteer, it is a position that does not require any training and there will always be someone around to help should you need it.

The school bus: Our students spend half the day with us and the other half at government school and the ABCs and Rice school bus takes them to and from government school and to and from swimming lessons with Safe Waters Cambodia. Sometimes the bus can be a crazy place to be and your job will be to calm the crazy! You will sit on the bus before school, before afternoon class, 2pm on swimming days and returning to ABCs at 3pm. Your main job will be to sit with kids, sing songs, chat and make sure they are all sat nicely.

Toothbrushing: Ducklings, Monkeys and Badgers are now brushing their teeth every day and Eagles, Lions and Dragons have the option of brushing theirs. Teachers will be responsible for lining students up, giving the toothbrushes and paste out and making sure they walk the set 2 minute long route, but you can help check they are walking the full circuit and not lingering at the sinks. You should also check no names have rubbed off the toothbrushes and filling them back in (volunteer coordinator Jess has a secret supply of permanent markers if you ask really nicely!) You will also be responsible for washing the toothbrush case while the kids are brushing their teeth. Place the toothbrushes not being used in an upside basket and the holder rinsed with soap and water. This should be done a minimum of once a week.

Handwashing: An ABCs student is expected to wash their hands after every use of the bathroom and before lunch. There should be a student from Dragons class monitoring the younger students making sure they wash their hands before lunch, your job will be to assist them and make sure the soap is fully-stocked outside and in the office.

First Aid: This will only be something you should do if you are comfortable. Our students are constantly getting bumps and scratches. Consult the first aid manual for help on how to treat the kids and ensure all incidents are recorded in the report book. You should also check there are enough pages in the report book, the medications are kept tidy and all expired ones are thrown out and that supplies are fully stocked.

Water: Your job will involve checking that there is water running at the main filter so children have something to drink three times a day. Please speak to Project Manager Houk, Teacher DK or Teacher Makara how to do this.

Swimming Lesson Assistant: You may have to attend swimming lessons and act as an extra pair of eyes around the pool. The swimming coach is a trained lifeguard and so you are there to help him by making sure the kids are listening and sitting carefully at the side of the pool.

Thriving in Siem Reap after arrival

Health

The key element is hydration. Not just drinking a lot of water (although that's essential), but also making sure your electrolytes and glucose are maintained. If this is not done, you will quickly become very lethargic. A product called Royal D is a powder that can be added to water to assist with hydration. It can be purchased at the Angkor Supermarket (on Sivatha near Prince d'Angkor Hotel) or U-Care Pharmacy (top end of Pub St). Note that the nicer tasting Orange flavour contains only vitamins, not electrolytes so opt for the fruit flavour if you don't have your own electrolyte supplements.

If you deal with any children who are bleeding, make sure you ALWAYS wear gloves. Some of our children are HIV positive so protect yourself as though they all have HIV.

Here are some tips on how to keep your energy and health levels at a comfortable level:

- Drink plenty of water. We recommend at least 2 litres every day at the minimum. Fruit and juices also help considerably.
- Eat well! Drinking so much water reduces the sugar and salt balance in your body. A good balanced diet of slow release energy foods is essential. Eat breakfast, as you will need it to get through the day. Multi-vitamins will also help you.
- We are well aware that while you are here you are also on holiday and would love to party! However try to limit your substance intake during the week, as a fabulous night out can turn into a very long couple of days recovering simply because of the climate. Also it is not advisable to show up to school hungover and reeking of last night's consumption. You will be asked to go home. If repeated you may be asked to leave.
- Overall you know your body and limits best. Please be mindful of them, and speak to your travel clinic and G.P. for advice on tropical climates, particularly if you've rarely been to them, let alone worked in these sorts of temperatures. The tropics can be demanding for newcomers (and old timers alike). Don't hesitate to take time off if you start feeling exhausted. Just let someone at ABCs know what is happening.

If you become ill, let the Volunteer Coordinator know as soon as possible. If you require medical treatment:

- Dr Ian Ferguson is a doctor from the UK who has trained new doctors at New Hope and now has his own UK – Khmer clinic. He has had a lot of experience working

with illness in Asia. He will quite often do home visits or see you at your guesthouse or hotel. Clinic 069 630 344 : Personal 097 420 4217.

- The International Hospital on Road 6 063 761 888, info@royalangkorhospital.com
www.royalangkorhospital.com (expensive, but best if you have travel insurance)
- Srey Vyna II on Road 6 063 965 088 or 012 774888 lysreyvyna@gmail.com

Accommodation

We do not book accommodation for volunteers, but previous volunteers have tried and recommended the following guesthouses. They cover a spectrum of affordability and services. A good website is canbypublications.com/siemreap/srhotels.htm. Please make sure you mention you are a volunteer at ABCs and Rice, as we have negotiated special rates with some of them.

- Motherhome Inn Tapul Village, Sangkat Svay Dangcum, 012 963 438 or 063 764 248, info@motherhomeinn.com; kemleang@yahoo.com, www.motherhomeinn.com
- Bou Savy Guesthouse www.bousavyguesthouse.com
- Victory Guesthouse www.victoryguesthouse.com, victoryguesthouse@yahoo.com, Taphul Village, just off Road 6
- The Villa Siem Reap, Taphul Rd, www.thevillasiemreap.com, info@thevillasiemreap.com
- Apsara Centrepole - book on Agoda or booking.com
- Sidewalk Hotel – **DONATION TO ABCs and Rice for every night a volunteer stays there.** www.sidewalkhotel.com

Communication

Local and international telephone costs are very inexpensive in Cambodia, and we highly recommend getting a local Sim card for your mobile on arrival. This will facilitate contact with ABCs staff and other volunteers, particularly if you become ill. It is also useful for calling a regular tuk tuk driver. Ask our Volunteer Coordinator for details of phone companies or where to get a Sim.

Transport

Tuk tuks and bicycles are two easy ways of getting around Siem Reap. Moto-taxi's are also available. The standard tuk tuk price from Pub Street to ABCs is \$3, motodops (motorbike taxi's) are \$1. Your guesthouse may provide bicycles, but check that they are in good working order, especially the brakes. Alternatively, it is possible to rent bicycles from many places around the town for \$1 per day. Some volunteers have brought their own bikes or moto's when completing a long volunteering stint. Please remember it is an ABCs policy that all bike and moto riders wear a helmet when travelling to and from school.

Banking

There are multiple ATMs around Siem Reap. Most banks charge fees for taking cash out.

How can I stay in touch after I have finished volunteering?

Many volunteers find their experience life changing, and ABCs welcomes your ongoing support. Some volunteers become amazing fundraisers and others assist by volunteering in online administration roles. Don't forget the website www.abcrice.org and we also have

a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ABCsandRice> so you can keep up with what's happening and a special group dedicated just to volunteers that you should join pre-arrival to ask other volunteers any questions and find out who else is in Siem Reap at the same time as you: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1277977988999357/>. Also make sure you leave your email address with the Volunteer Coordinator, so they can add you to the newsletter mail shot.

Please remember that we have a strict policy against volunteers being friends with students. It is fine to become friends with the staff, but most definitely not with a student.

Also, it would be great if you could raise awareness about ABCs when you return home – tell all your friends and family about us. There are t-shirts for sale in the office with a range of designs to choose from. And it would be awesome if you could do some fund-raising as well – as you know, money goes a long way here and every little bit helps. We have some ideas on what to do for fund-raisers so don't hesitate to ask.

Problems or issues

We want your volunteering experience to be the best it could be, so if you have any queries, ideas, issues or problems, please do not hesitate to speak with the Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Project Director or any of the long-term volunteers.

Contacts

Tammy Durand (Director) 077 707 514

Josh Manheimer (Volunteer Coordinator) FB: Josh Manheimer

Houk Thoeurn (Project Director) 061 626 634

FAQs for New Volunteers

Is there a minimum and maximum time period in which to volunteer?

We prefer 4 weeks as a minimum to provide consistency for the students however shorter and longer placements will be considered. Up to 3 months maximum can be offered to volunteers with specialist skills. Any extension over 1 month is to be approved by Tammy and the Volunteer Coordinator.

What is it like in the village/Siem Reap?

The school's village is typically Khmer and gives anyone living there a great feel for what life is like for the average Cambodian. There are many shops, places to eat and a good local market as well as some outdoor bars. Siem Reap is just 10 minutes away by moto and has many great bars, shops and eateries and a very laid back feel. And of course Angkor Wat, Tonle Sap Lake and other sights are only a short distance away.

Is it safe to come to Cambodia?

Generally it is quite safe in Siem Reap so long as you use your common sense and keep your bags close to your body and don't wave money or expensive items around in plain view. For up to date information about safety in Cambodia, review the travel advice from your embassy. Any travellers should register their travel details with their embassy. For example, Australians should register at www.smartraveler.gov.au. The registration information provided by you will help the government to find you in an emergency –

whether it is a natural disaster, civil disturbance or a family emergency. Other nations may have similar programs so please do some research.

How can I get around the town?

There are moto and tuk-tuk drivers ready in most areas of town to take you where you need to go, usually costing \$1 to \$2. There is also the option of renting a bike for the average cost of \$1 per day.

What will my living costs be?

It is very inexpensive to live in Siem Reap. You can comfortably live off \$15-\$25 per day for food and transport. Meals range from \$1-\$10 while a beer ranges from 50 cents to \$2. Transportation on motorbikes and tuk-tuks ranges from \$1-\$3. From ABCs to Pub Street (the middle of town) will cost you \$2. There are also some good supermarkets in Siem Reap where you can buy many of the things you would find at home at reasonable prices.

When can I start?

It is preferable if you can give us as much notice of when you would like to start as our volunteer calendar is filled up fairly quickly. We have capacity for a range of volunteers.

Is there a charge to volunteer at ABCs?

After many years of no fees, we recently introduced a cost to volunteer at ABCs, mainly as we have ambitious plans to at least double the number of students. We also were forced to move to a larger plot and costs are rising in every area of running the school. In return however we have introduced additional benefits as below. Costs at August 2017 subject to change but will be confirmed on application.

1 week	\$227 USD	7 weeks	\$667 USD
2 weeks	\$352 USD	8 weeks	\$732 USD
3 weeks	\$407 USD	9 weeks	\$797 USD
4 weeks	\$492 USD	10 weeks	\$862 USD
5 weeks	\$537 USD	11 weeks	\$927 USD
6 weeks	\$602 USD	12 weeks	\$992 USD

Placement fee includes;

- 2 ABCs and Rice t-shirts
- 10 meals with the children per week
- Airport pick up and drop off
- A tour of our locally sponsored village
- A souvenir gift, of your choice from the village sustainability project
- A town familiarization tour
- Support of our volunteer coordinator
- A much appreciated donation to both ABCs and Rice, and our sister project, Pack the Essentials, who provide lunches 5 days a week.

We also welcome any donations of money or goods. Please contact us for our latest wish list. If you are running specialist activities or classes and need extra resources please bring them with you or give us plenty of advance notice. Even then, our budget is extremely tight and not everything you request may be available.

Will there be other volunteers?

There are times when we are busy and times when we are quiet. Siem Reap is only 3 km away and with a visitation of 3-4 million tourists a year you can expect to find new friends easily.

What should I bring?

Cambodia is very humid, so bring lightweight clothing that you don't mind getting dirty. Although Khmer women don't show their shoulders it is acceptable for foreigners, but no cleavage, midriff or short shorts please as this is disrespectful. Bare shoulders in front of a monk, at the temples or in a pagoda are considered offensive. While at school the dress code is less severe it is still a primarily Buddhist society and short t-shirts, low-cut/hipster trousers or skirts that show your belly button or even worse, your bra or underwear are NOT appropriate. Bring a waterproof jacket for the tropical rain. Basic toiletries and clothing are readily available in local markets and you can buy a Sim card to make cheap local calls. If you take prescription medications ensure you bring enough for your stay.

If you would like to bring donations of goods to ABCs, we can supply you with a letter to present to your airline requesting extra luggage allowance. This may or may not work as it depends on the airline. The rest of this process is your responsibility. The things we always need are good Band-Aids, Betadine, antiseptic cream or liquid, and clothes (particularly bottoms) for kids aged 3-18. Please don't bring candy.

Which vaccinations should I have?

We strongly recommend you visit your doctor at least a few months before leaving your country - some vaccinations require multiple injections. Please, please, please get vaccinated – this protects not only yourself but the children as well. There are no reports of malaria in Siem Reap but you may need tablets if you are travelling to other places.

What about visas?

In order to visit Cambodia, a visa is required for most nationalities. A passport with at least six month validity is required. Philippine and Malaysian nationals do not require tourist visas for a stay up to 21 and 30 days respectively. Singaporean nationals are also exempt from the usual visa requirement. Cambodian visas are available to most nationalities on arrival at all international airports in Cambodia (Phnom Penh and Siem Reap), at overseas Cambodian embassies, at most international border crossing checkpoints in Cambodia, through your travel agent and through the online E- Visa procedure.

Issuance of a visa on arrival at the airports and international border crossings is relatively quick and easy, taking about 20-30 minutes. One 4x6 photo is required. A 30 day business visa costs approx. \$35. This is what is required for volunteering as well. If you are travelling into Cambodia overland from Thailand, Vietnam or Laos, please check guidebooks, internet forums (such as Lonely Planet) and talk to other travellers about visa availability and potential scams, including fake borders.

Currently laws are changing almost daily with regards to visa extensions and it is your responsibility to find out what you need to do. Extensions often now require a volunteer confirmation letter so please speak to volunteer coordinator Jess who can provide this. We recommend visiting the travel agent at least 2 weeks before your visa expires to be on the safe side.

You can get an E-Visa online but this is just a tourist visa, and not the one preferred for volunteering.

What insurance do I need?

ABCs prefers you have comprehensive travel insurance. We also require the insurance details so that we can contact the insurer if you are injured and unable to do so. ABCs and Rice can not be held responsible for any medical costs incurred at any point in your placement.

What is the food like?

The local food is delicious and if you are craving something western there are many options available in Siem Reap.

How do I stop myself from burning out or getting sick?

You will be responsible for determining how much you can throw yourself into your role. Be sensible and make sure you include downtime and rest time. Make sure you keep up your intake of water and purchase “Royal D” for rehydration. Eating from street stalls is done at your own risk, as they may not use clean water. The same goes for the more Khmer-style cafes. However, most places around the tourist areas around Pub Street are quite safe. Use bottled water to brush your teeth or clean any cuts or scrapes you may receive. Bring strong antibiotics and Imodium with you. Chances are high that you will get sick anyway – its part of the Cambodian experience – but if you accept that it’s going to happen, it won’t come as a surprise. Just make sure always have plenty of toilet paper.

Cultural Do’s and Don’ts

Whilst we expect that you will not ever deliberately set out to offend someone, there are differences between Khmer and other cultures and sometimes you can be offensive without even realising it. These are a range of tips and hints that will stop you from making any serious blunders. Whilst the list is not exclusive, it still provides a starting point from which to learn.

- The head is considered the highest part of the body, and the feet are the lowest. Therefore it is a sign of disrespect to touch someone else’s head – especially if they are older. Likewise it is quite rude to have the soles of your feet facing someone else, and highly offensive to have them face a religious symbol such as an image of Buddha.
- When entering pagodas or temples it is respectful to wear shorts that cover your knees and a top that covers your shoulders. Some places will allow a karma or shawl thrown over the shoulders but this is not always the case so be prepared.
- Photos are never allowed within a pagoda or temple. It is always best to ask if you can photograph the outside. To be on the safe side, always ask people if you can take photos of them too, especially children.

- Monks are not allowed to touch women ever. They can sometimes talk to them, but not always. Take your lead from the monk.
- Cambodians are big on keeping face, not losing it. Never get angry or shout. Dignity must be maintained at all times. It is probably better to walk away and not argue.
- Even though a Khmer person is nodding at you and saying yes, they may only be doing so in the event that you not lose face by being told no. What that smile may really mean is “I have no idea of what you are saying”, or “I have no intention of doing what you ask”.
- Khmer people do not show affection publicly – in fact physical contact in general is avoided.
- Cambodians may make less eye contact than Westerners.
- Take your shoes off to enter most buildings. (As a guide, if there are shoes at the door than you will be required to remove yours).
- To greet someone, bring your hands together in front of your chest. To gesture for someone to come towards you point your fingers down and scoop towards yourself rather than having your fingers pointed up (this is the way the Khmer people call their animals).
- A smile always goes a long way.
- There is a campaign running in Cambodia at the moment called “Adults Earn, Children Learn”. What this means is that it is more beneficial to buy trinkets and souvenirs from adults, or to give them money if they are begging. If you give money to children it is perpetuating the myth that it is profitable for the child to be out on the streets making an income rather than being in school learning.

Key Khmer Phrases

Hello (to an elder)	Chum reap sua
Hello (to an equal or younger)	Sua sa dai
How are you?	Sok sa bai?
Thank you	Ahkun
Yes (if male)	Baht
Yes (if female)	Jah
No	Attay
Sorry	Som toh
No thank you	Attay ahkun
Goodbye	Lee hai
Good luck	Somnang la or
Good	La or

Bad

Ot la or

How much?

Bon maan?