

# **OCIP Cambodia Reflections**

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*“24 Leaders, 14 Days, 2 Lecturers, 1 Country, 1 Goal - To Serve as Leaders”*

Truth be told, this service learning trip was not the first journey that I've embarked into, but it was the longest journey that I've experienced. It was also one of the most memorable trips that I've had thus far. It has impacted us for the good, be it big or small, & the journey we took on together was definitely one that we will always remember. And I believe this was also a journey of self-discovery, of who we really are individually - Finding Myself Within.

At first, 14 days seemed to be a long duration but as we served, the days flew and it came to an end sooner than we have ever thought. Honestly, I did not have much expectation of the village beforehand as I have been involved in a few overseas community services. Thus, my goal was to continue serving the community, to make a difference in the people's lives from different corners of the world. I truly believe that even 'A Smile Can Make a Difference' as it provides a sense of love & belonging. It has also been my dream to explore the world and experience the different lifestyles. Like what Mr Chak Mun said, "Travel as a traveller, not a tourist".

Every morning, we were greeted by the beautiful voices & the pretty smiles of the kids. It was really heart-warming to see their happy faces & how much they really look forward to attend our classes. They greeted us as teachers & the fact that they were really determined to study hard to chase for their dreams made my heart grow a little fonder to serve. They gave me the strength to continue believing & to aspire for my own dreams.

Infrastructure was pretty tough in the beginning especially when the sun totally showed no mercy for us. However, no matter how tough it was, we did not give up & continue to stand as one. Teamwork & determination - I believe these were the formula & the keys that kept us going, never losing poignant to our yearning hearts. We may not be able to witness the results of our hard work, but at the very least, we know in our hearts that we have somehow played our parts to help the community. This feeling itself is definitely meaningful when we recall & cherish in the future.

The relationships forged with the kids, the teachers, the villagers & not forgetting the animals will never be gone. During our stay at BBLC, I managed to strike some conversation with the locals and exchanged some stories and knowledge. The best part of it all was to actually learn the meaning of my name in Khmer language as well as some other translations. I feel that being able to learn other languages from the locals was much more fruitful than learning from the internet or books as it felt more surreal.

As a form of gratitude, my team & I prepared a mass dance performance as well as a song for them during the Carnival Day. On that day, I felt that I've met my goal when I observed the kids enjoying themselves. It truly touches my heart at how much a simple carnival & performances could bring joy to them at that moment. This moment may not last for a lifetime but at one point of time, they were really happy.

This trip would not have been possible without all the efforts made by Ms Grace, Ms Fayth, Mr Chak Mun & all the leaders. I am thankful to be given this opportunity. All the special moments together will remain etched in my heart. This may not be the ending, but the beginning of something new that awaits us in the near future.