Welcome to World Youth International’s Overseas Action Program in Cambodia.

The Overseas Action Program is a group volunteer placement in Cambodia. This program will empower you to make a difference.

We trust that your queries will be covered in this document but if you have any further questions, please email us at admin@worldyouth.org.au or call us on 08 8340 1266.

For information on fees and program dates, please visit our website at www.worldyouth.org.au
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Cambodia Country Info

Though much less visited than neighboring Thailand or Vietnam, Cambodia is fast establishing itself on the Southeast Asian traveller’s trail. The stunning temples of Angkor attract most visitors, but the country has much more to offer: undeveloped golden beaches, unspoilt forests, a balmy climate, and a relaxed atmosphere that’s refreshingly low on hassle.

For a small country, Cambodia has a surprisingly diverse range of terrain and scenery. Rice fields are the quintessential feature of this predominantly flat and agricultural land, though there are also significant highland areas, as well as the massive Tonle Sap, Southeast Asia’s largest freshwater lake, which dominates the heart of the country. In the east the mighty Mekong River forms a natural divide, beyond which rise the mountainous, heavily forested hills of the far northeast. The southwest is likewise hilly and remains covered in jungle, while parts of the southeast are regularly flooded, as the Mekong and Bassac rivers overflow their banks.

For all its natural beauty and rich heritage, Cambodia has suffered a tragic recent past at the hands of the fanatical Khmer Rouge. The population first endured mass killings when the Khmer Rouge came to power in the 1970s, followed by a protracted guerrilla war which only ended in 1998. The whole country is now at peace, though the lack of infrastructure and skills is evident in the potholed streets and damaged buildings. Much is still to be done before the population sees an improvement in their standard of living. There are positive signs, however: thriving markets testify to renewed private enterprise, and in Phnom Penh, a modest middle class is re-emerging.

Cambodians themselves are eternally optimistic, tenacious and, to visitors, very welcoming.
Program Inclusions and Exclusions

Your program fee includes:

- All accommodation
- All meals
- In-country transport
- Airport transfers
- A three-day orientation and sightseeing program in Siem Reap
- All costs relating to materials and local labour hire for community development projects
- Sightseeing activities throughout program
- Khmer language lessons
- Traditional cooking classes
- A three-day Rest and Relaxation package halfway through your program
- Welcome party and farewell celebration
- 24 hour guidance and support provided by an experienced Team Leader and local staff
- Entry to the Personal Empowerment Program (a four-day program held annually in Adelaide)
- WYI polo shirt and ‘You Are Amazing’ book
- WYI Step Out membership
- Contribution towards the sustainable growth of WYI which supports our work in developing countries

Your program fee does not include:

(all costs listed are a guideline only)

Air Travel, Taxes and Travel Insurance
You are required to organise your own airfares to the nominated destination point. Travel insurance is compulsory for all programs. Contact WYI for our recommended travel agent and insurance company.

Vaccinations
As WYI is not a registered medical organisation, we can only direct you to www.tmvc.com.au (Travel Doctor) or www.drsref.com.au/travel.html for country-specific advice and general travel health tips.

Visas
You are required to enter Cambodia on a tourist visa or business visa, depending on the length of your program. WYI will provide you with the necessary forms and guide you through the process.

Police Check
You are required to provide a current National Police Clearance Certificate. Please visit your local police station and request the appropriate forms.

Medical Examination
With the assistance of your regular doctor, you are required to complete and submit our medical examination form prior to your departure.

Personal Items
You must supply your own clothing, travel equipment, toiletries and personal entertainment (eg. books, iPod, magazines, etc.)

Spending Money
You will require personal spending money for souvenirs, phones and SIM cards, toiletries you may require, and any snacks or drinks outside of what WYI provides (eg. chocolate bars, energy/alcoholic drinks, junk food, etc.)

First Aid Kit
A First Aid Kit will be supplied to your team throughout the program, however antibiotics and other medications will not be provided. We encourage you to visit a Travel Doctor or GP to fill your own First Aid Kit with personal medications to suit you.

Transport
Transport to Adelaide for the four-day Personal Empowerment Program.
WYI offers five week and ten week programs in Cambodia. The following itinerary is an example of a five week program. A ten week program will be almost the same but doubled to involve two projects running for five weeks each.

We require all volunteers to arrive in Siem Reap one day prior to the advertised commencement date. You will be collected from the airport by the Team Leader and transferred to our local accommodation. If you are travelling overland, you can arrange a central meeting point with the Team Leader. Your accommodation and food expenses will be covered by WYI for the day prior to the program start date. Should you arrive any earlier, the Team Leader will still collect you from the airport and arrange your accommodation, but you will be required to pay for your food and accommodation during this time.

Although subject to change, below is the standard format for a five week Overseas Action Program in Cambodia:

**Day 1**
Morning welcome, program introduction and sightseeing activities around Siem Reap.

**Day 2 - 3**
Program overview, including cultural discussions, health and safety briefings, team building activities, introduction to local staff and familiarisation activities around Siem Reap.

**Day 4 - 21**
You will commence your rural village placement. Community locations may vary but will be close to Siem Reap.

As a team, you will work alongside local community members on sustainable, community-driven development projects as approved by WYI’s partner organisation, This Life Cambodia (TLC). Individually, you may choose to take on a short placement in a field which interests you. The Team Leader will collaborate with you and TLC to find an individual placement opportunity that suits you and benefits the community.

The structure of your work days will be determined by the Team Leader according to a roster system. You will either work on the major team project or participate on a pre-arranged individual placement, and you will generally have one or two days off from work per week.

You will partner with a family in the village community for lunch every work day. You will live in a guesthouse on the outskirts of Siem Reap throughout this period.

**Day 22 - 24**
After spending around two weeks working on the project, you will take a few days off to rest up and recharge your batteries. The Team Leader will take you on a Rest and Relaxation Package, where you will visit a stunning location in Cambodia, enjoy the local food and participate in fun activities. This is the perfect way to re-energise and prepare yourself for the rest of your program.

**Day 24 - 34**
You will return to the community rejuvenated and ready to complete your major group project. At the end of your placement, there will be a community celebration to acknowledge your efforts and achievements. You will continue to partner with a local family for lunch every work day, and reside in a guesthouse in Siem Reap throughout this period.

**Day 35 - 36**
Your final days of the program will be devoted to debriefing and celebrating. This is a chance for you to reflect on your group and individual achievements and prepare yourself for your return to Australia.

Once your program has completed, you might like to participate on the Optional Adventure Package as a way to celebrate and unwind with the rest of your OA group. The Optional Adventure Package in Cambodia is a six-day overland journey from Siem Reap to Phnom Penh organised by our partner organisation, This Life Cambodia. You will visit breathtaking temples, sail through a floating village, climb a picturesque mountain and wander through lush jungles. You will also spend time at the Landmine Museum and the Killing Fields, where you will learn about Cambodia’s recent history with the Khmer Rouge. Prices and itineraries are available from TLC upon request.

If you choose to participate in the Optional Adventure Package, you must organise to depart Cambodia from Phnom Penh at the end of the Package. If you do not intend to take part, you can arrange to depart Cambodia from Siem Reap before the Optional Adventure Package commences.

**Is there an option to stay on in Cambodia after my program has completed?**
Unfortunately, WYI does not offer extended placements in Cambodia.
Previous OAP Story

Step Out!

In November 2010, I led a team of 12 participants on the Cambodia OA, together with my assistant, JP. This energetic team (whose motto was aptly titled “Step Out!”) immersed themselves in the local culture and aspired to make as much of a positive sustainable impact upon poor rural communities as possible during their stay.

Our projects were selected with the assistance of WYI’s partner organisation in Cambodia, This Life Cambodia (TLC). TLC is based in Siem Reap and has successfully run numerous community development programs, including the Lower Secondary School Program which our team worked on. We worked at Krabei Riel Lower Secondary School, about a 40 minute bike ride from Siem Reap town.

Currently, Cambodia’s education system suffers from various problems, including lack of infrastructure, poor teacher training, lack of teachers and low levels of teacher motivation. For these reasons, many children are unable to access a solid primary and secondary education. Less than 30% of Cambodian youth make it to year 7, the beginning of secondary school. In the long-term, this adds to the cycle of poverty that many of these children are born into.

During the five-week program, we helped implement the following sustainable projects which will help to lift people out of the poverty cycle:

Built 50 desks for the local school (Krabei Riel Lower Secondary School): Building 50 desks means that an extra 200 children can potentially go to school i.e. 2 children per desk, with 2 school ‘shifts’ a day. Over a 10 year period, that equates to an extra 2000 children with potential access to education.

Tiled 4 classrooms: Currently, the school lacks electricity. Therefore, the learning environment in the classrooms is not optimal, as lack of light makes it difficult for students to study. By tiling the classrooms, lighting conditions are improved.

Built a pathway to the toilet block: A previous WYI team had built the toilet block for the school, however recently, the area has been subject to flooding. With the help of the builders on the team, who helped design the project, we constructed a pathway to the toilet block that improved the sanitary conditions of this area.

Supply of 15 sewing machines: Girls often drop out of school early to help earn income for the family, and therefore they face a huge disadvantage in the future in finding formal employment because they are illiterate. Our group used personal fundraised monies to donate 15 sewing machines to the school, to increase the motivation for girls to stay at school, and at the same time, learn tailoring skills which helps increase work opportunities.

Team members also participated in different learning activities, depending on whether they were studying building/surveying, nursing or teaching at Central. The teaching and nursing students gave various educational workshops to the children at the school, and building students were able to explore different types of construction sites around town. This allowed students to observe how institutions/systems work in a developing country context, and exchange ideas with local teachers, nurses and builders.

As a team, we were taught invaluable construction skills of chiselling, rendering, grouting and painting by dedicated contractors whom we worked with. We were also privileged to have spent time with local families who welcomed us into their homes, and kept us well-fed and rested during our lunch breaks (one of the highlights of the trip for all of us)!

We will always remember the loud and warm greetings from the children in Krabei Riel, each time we rode through the village, and the lessons of gratitude and simplicity that we learned from all our Cambodian friends that we met along the way.

Sarah Ghan, OAP Team Leader Cambodia Nov 2010.
Frequently Asked Questions

How old do I need to be?
You must be between 18 and 30 years of age to participate on an Overseas Action Program.

Do I need any qualifications?
Formal qualifications are not required. All training will be provided at the commencement of your program.

What is the selection criteria?
WYI looks for flexible and resilient participants to take part on these programs. They must have good communications skills and be able to live and work in a team environment.

What will my living arrangements be?
You will live in a guesthouse on the outskirts of Siem Reap for the duration of your program.

What kind of food will I be eating?
Breakfast and dinner will be eaten at your accommodation or at restaurants in Siem Reap throughout the program. During work days, lunch will be prepared for you by a host family within the local community. They will cook you traditional meals consisting of rice, beans, fish, noodles and fresh vegetables.

When should I apply for a position on the OAP?
As programs fill quickly, WYI recommends that you apply at least six to nine months prior to the scheduled commencement date. Your program fee might take some time to pay off in monthly instalments, so advanced planning is strongly advised. WYI accepts applications until 60 days prior to program commencement, providing places are available on the program. If the program is full, you can be placed on a waiting list or choose to travel at a later date.

Is my program tax deductible?
All donations to WYI and most donations towards your program fee are also tax deductible.

ATO tax legislation stipulates that DGR status does not extend to our participants. Any contributions that come from you, your immediate family members, or money raised through general fundraising activities where donors receive goods or services in return for their contributions (such as trivia nights, chocolate drives, raffles or movie nights) are not tax deductible. All other contributions are tax deductible.

How many other volunteers will be in my team?
The minimum number of volunteers required to run an Overseas Action Program is six. We will accept a maximum of twelve participants in one group.

How does WYI select its OAP projects and what kind of projects will I be working on?
WYI partners with This Life Cambodia (TLC) to source community driven and sustainable projects. TLC conducts Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) with the target communities to determine their needs and wants. A list of tasks and projects is devised, from which WYI establishes the major project our next OAP will work on. For more information on TLC’s project selection process and PRAs, visit www.thislifecambodia.org.

How safe am I in Cambodia? Are there risks I should be aware of?
The personal security risk to you in Cambodia is extremely low. Cambodia is a safe and friendly country, with the usual exception of large cities late at night. Although you will spend time in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, we generally avoid late night activities for safety and security reasons. The main threat to you will be theft and pick-pocketing in Siem Reap, though reports of these crimes are few and far between.

Why choose World Youth International?
WYI has been offering volunteer placements since 1988 and is proudly a not-for-profit, non-religious and non-political Australian-based organisation. We have sent thousands of volunteers across the globe and have had no major injuries, accidents or deaths on any of our programs. WYI is an approved charity, a signatory to ACFID (Australian Council for International Development) and AusAID approved. We have flourished as an organisation through word of mouth and we rely on our volunteers to share their experiences and outcomes with their peers.

Why do you offer only a limited amount of countries to volunteer in?
At World Youth International, we focus on quality and not quantity. We ensure that our destinations provide our participants with the greatest possible volunteering experience. We have worked in countries like Nepal and Kenya since 1992 and have a large network of strategic local and international partners. This allows WYI to offer a range of placements options to you and focus more of our efforts into making your experience a success.
Application Procedure

You can reserve a position on our Overseas Action Program in Cambodia by applying online now at www.worldyouth.org.au, or by downloading an application form and submitting it to our office at:

World Youth International
PO Box 25
Hindmarsh SA 5007

Our staff will process your application and contact you by phone within three days. You will be required to complete a short Online Interview Form before receiving a personalised, 45 minute information session from the Overseas Action Program Coordinator. This will be conducted by phone unless you live in Adelaide and are able to visit us in the office. The intention of the call will be to assess your suitability, establish a relationship with you, provide you with information about the program and address any of your immediate questions. Applicants will be notified of their suitability for the program at the conclusion of this call.

If you have any questions before submitting your application, please do not hesitate to contact us at the office on 08 8340 1266 or email admin@worldyouth.org.au.

Fundraising

Do you want to participate on one of our overseas volunteer programs but are restricted financially? Perhaps you should consider fundraising!

Rally your colleagues and corporate groups and encourage them to make a donation. Get a group of friends together and organise a quiz night, movie night or garage sale. Hold a sausage sizzle or host an informal tea party with a Cambodian theme. Encourage your Facebook friends to donate to your campaign via donation websites. You might be surprised by how successful your fundraising efforts could be. Some participants have managed to fundraise their entire program fee and have extra remaining to use on projects within the country!

Should you choose to fundraise, WYI will provide you with a Fundraising Kit which includes a tax deductible receipt book, fundraising ideas, terms and conditions, an authorisation card, plus handy hints and tips. The donations you receive are fully tax deductible* and can be directed towards your program fee or the sustainable development projects you and your group will work on in Cambodia.

Please contact the office on (08) 8340 1266 for more information on how you could fundraise your program fee!

*‘A ‘donation’ requires the donor to receive nothing in return (eg. chocolate bars and raffle tickets are not tax deductible.)