

# ‘The day I became a celebrity’



Hello everyone! My name is Ben and I will be writing an update as a member from the Student Outreach to the World (SOW) short term mission team! For some context, SOW is a Sydney based Christian university ministry which commits to discipling university students to love Jesus, serve His church and reach His world and this year we have sent two short teams from our cohort of members, leaders and staff to Cambodia and Taiwan.

My team comprised of 6 young and bright members: Jess (27), Josh (23), Justin (22), Will (24), Louise (20) and myself (19) and for the first three members it was their second short term trip to the Angk'jeay Village.

L - R: Josh, Justin, Will, Jess, Louise, Ben

In preparation for this trip, our team had met up on Friday nights from July and were tasked with fundraising, learning Khmer, gathering resources and materials for English lessons and above all, praying for one another and this trip. For many of us, the task of fundraising was a challenge that we appreciated to understand how the Lord provides in His own way, keeping us prayerful and being bold in all our major fundraising events with SOW. We were truly grateful in this pre-field process in order for us to experience a glimpse of the hard-work missionaries must do to come on-field and we are very thankful to our supporters who have prayerfully and financially supported us.





For myself, the concept of missions was near but distant. At my local church we pray and send money to overseas missionaries, yet we have not sent a short or long term mission team for a good 10-15 years. I suppose missions was something that I understood but was not of any particular of interest or importance to me. However, coming to SOW as a first year and then slowly developing a heart for missions, I was truly excited and enthusiastic about the opportunity to spend days with Luke, Sokha and John here in the village. But before I came on-field at the village I had the following questions in mind:

1. Why should we bother serving overseas when there are still so many people and loved ones at home to evangelise to?
2. Could a week in a village in Cambodia be able to change my heart for the gospel being reached to the ends of this world?
3. How could I best pray and give my support to the missionaries here in Cambodia?







The time we spent at the village was short (1 week) but nothing short of the blessings we've received from the community at Angk'jeay. For the half that were coming here for the first time, I believe it was quite the challenge getting used to the hot climate, the toilet without toilet paper and the energy/grit to run this show for the children. Everyday there were new relationships to make with the children or missionaries and unfamiliar tasks to complete and it had only pushed my team and I to be as flexible as possible.

One of the most memorable moments for myself was Sunday service. Service back at home starts at 11am and the 4-hour time difference did not help as we were preparing a 6:30am children's service. I was honestly very encouraged by the congregation at the Angk'jeay village. I had rarely seen people, let alone children, come so eagerly and early to hear the gospel being preached and show lots of love, laughter and energy on Sunday morning.. Although I couldn't participate completely in the services due to language barriers, observing the congregation was still so impactful. Hearing the church come into prayer, singing to the Lord, serving one another during lunch assured in me that Luke, Sokha and John had really cultivated a beautiful church which honours and believes in the name above all names, Jesus Christ.







Alrighty, so you're probably wondering why the title of this update is called 'The day I became a celebrity'. Well, it was nothing particularly special, but it turned out there had been a little fan club for myself and the team and as we were taking photos it had become so clear which girls formed that club. The squealing of young girls, the pushing to get their friend closer in frame with me and the giggling as their friend turns red in the face was the atmosphere for a good 30 minutes. This too was a memorable moment for our team as we said our good-byes to the children and missionaries in the village.





I would like to conclude this update with a few key takeaways from myself and the team and our gratitude to our hosts Luke and Sokha.

- Ministry heavily relies upon relationships. Being present, understanding, loving, sharing, caring and uplifting one another only sets the basis of the journey we have with our friends and family in Christ.
- Partnership. Whilst we may not all have the callings to be a missionary, there is a true need for 'senders' who prayerfully and financially supports this ministry. We pray that after this trip that we may be good 'senders' who use their time and resources to work in partnership with the missionaries all for the glory of His kingdom.
- As the team returns to their respective student or full-time working lives, we are mindful that the work is not complete and that we actively work in reaching the unreached and being bold with our identities in Christ.

A mere paragraph would not suffice for the gratitude and love we have for Luke and Sokha at the Angk'jeay village. It's not every day that we get to see a missionary at work, allowing us to see a glimpse of the very work that they do for the Lord and knowing that they are faithful and loving to the people in the village. We pray that the fruit may continue to bear as this ministry progresses and that they may stay steadfast in the Lord's providence and promises. We also send our prayers to John and Kakrona who are busily working for the Lord besides Luke and Sokha and that they may be blessed in their future endeavours.

Thank you and God bless!







Visit to Pastor Pheakdey and his wife  
Gunthea



Children from the village

and just a few extra pictures from  
the trip



Sokha sharing her testimony

Events planning seminar







trip to village ladies with way too many coconuts



arrival at the airport



pre-field missions supporter event



lunch prep



lunch with the MTW Cambodia team



first ride on a motorbike with Rathana