

## Cambodia Trip

Dear Ravynn,

I can't thank you enough for my trip to Cambodia. It was with great enthusiasm and pride that I saw for myself the excellent work of the NKFC.

To visit the 13 villages of Angkor that you sponsor and see the faces of the children and their families particularly filled me with joy.

When you first told me about your interest in creating a foundation to help the children and families of Angkor project some years ago I wondered if it was a task that could be fulfilled. When I saw the school with each hall dedicated to the fund raising events held in London and New York I felt proud to have been a part of the endeavors.

Your passion is the special gift that inspires all those around you. Because you, as a Cambodian yourself, understand with your heart the plight of your own people. Their suffering under the Khmer Rouge is still felt within the older generations but I saw the young people full of hope and joy. They are eager to learn and with your team of professionals are teaching them to have a higher standard of life.

You instill with them a sense of pride for their ancient culture and traditions. I particularly enjoyed the outing that you gave the children during the New Year festival. As each truckload appeared with the faces of smiling children bringing them to their temple, the tourists were more interested in the education you were bringing to each child than sightseeing. To bring them to the temple to bow 3 times to the great Buddha, light incense and circle the temple 3 times was a joy to watch. Never have I seen such disciplined and courteous children. Each child stayed in the line one behind the other until it was its turn to bow and offer incense to the Buddha. Most children in the West at that age would have caused mayhem. 90 children smiling and thoroughly enjoying themselves in a sacred living temple should set an example to children throughout the world.

The mission of the Pol Pot was to eradicate all knowledge of culture and history so it is a long process to re-educate and instill a sense of personal cultural pride. It takes a lot of patience and understanding and I think that many major charities and foundations totally miss the point. It is not about people throwing money at these people. It is a quiet approach that restores dignity and honor. The new program of art and music will train them for a higher purpose as well as connect their soul to the divine state as they learn the art of Temple dancers or Apsara that graces the temples of Angkor Wat.

That is why I think your program works. It is your attitude and your ability to communicate with them on their level. All your volunteers, being Cambodian, can relate to the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of these people. The well program aids each village in being self-sufficient. The importance of clean water is paramount and the education needed in hygiene drastically changes their health and well being. You can see how it works when each child washed their hands before accepting the biscuits we handed over to them. They showed us great respect by accepting and bowing.

I noticed that politics are extremely difficult in Cambodia but with your perseverance you can cut the red tape and will see your programs accepted.

I noticed that you gained respect from the villagers and the authorities at all levels. It was very interesting for me to accompany you to the villages to meet with the villagers and your team. The villagers gave us a warm welcome offering us fruits and flowers. What was very interesting for me was to see the interaction of you having an open discussion with the villagers as they spoke about their current issues and needs. With great pride and enthusiasm they showed me their compost and the fruits and vegetables they were growing. They seemed to understand the importance of receiving nutrition and energy from food. Also, their latrines were clean and well taken care of. Each village had a veterinarian that explained the importance of taking care of their animals. They were being trained to report all cases of illness of any animals and to watch for any symptoms of bird flu. What was most noticeable for me was the bonding and interaction between you, the villagers and their children and your staff. It was happy, warm, and truly heartfelt from all sides. I do wish you every success and it is wonderful to see a dream-slowing turning into a reality. Again, thank you for sharing your wonderful work and I would be very happy to answer any questions regarding the programs as I have now seen them for myself.

Warm Regards,  
Vimla