

- VOLUNTEER GUIDE -

*If you are reading this document, you probably are considering going on a voluntary mission. The purpose of this guide is to **support the reflection and preparation for the departure** of future volunteers in Taramana, Cambodia*

1. Before departure - time for thought

In order to prepare yourself in the best way possible before leaving for the big adventure, you should **ask yourself what your real motivations** to get involved in a project abroad are. It is also important to get some information beforehand in order to have a better understanding of:

- The Geography
- The Climate
- The History
- The Social and economic context
- The sociocultural context (expect a culture clash)

With this guide, we want to help you to ask yourself the right questions.

1.1 Why going abroad?

If you are motivated by your new adventure, you probably already know

Where - When - How you want to go... **But do you know WHY you're leaving?**

Helping others, discovering a new culture, improving your English, taking action for a meaningful project, improving your resume... There are many reasons why you may want to go abroad.

Sure, there is always a personal interest. Make sure that the latter is not too important, and that the desire to help others is stronger.

Taking action to help others without being in an optimal psychological state won't solve any of your problems, they will still be waiting for you back in your home country. But **if your goal is to grow and improve yourself, then you are on the right path.**

You can find many resources online to help you prepare for your departure.

1.2 Get information

Wherever you go, you will experience change and culture clash.

Getting information about your destination will help to avoid unpleasant surprises and misunderstandings.

- Geography and climate

Cambodia is located in South East Asia. It is surrounded by Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. Its surface is 181,035 km², which corresponds to a third of the size of France. Phnom Penh, where the Taramana center is located, is the capital. The French colonial traces of the early 20th century are still highly present.

Cambodia's climate is divided between **the dry season**... "cool" (25° to 30°) from November to February and "hot" from March to May when temperatures can rise to 40°..., and **the rainy season** from May to October, when the temperature is more often around 27°-30°.

Cambodia is sunny almost all year round.

- History and religion

Cambodia has been a **parliamentary monarchy** since the 1993 constitution. The current king is Norodom Sihamoni, in power since 2004. According to the constitution, the latter "reigns, but does not govern". Power is in the hands of Prime Minister HUN Sen (Cambodian People's Party), since 1998.

Cambodia has a very troubled past which includes the terrible Cambodian genocide - which you should know about before coming to Cambodia.

We strongly recommend you to watch, for example, the film "First, they killed my father"

The Buddhist religion is omnipresent (more than 90%), and Islam only represents less than 5% of the population.

- The Economy

La **devise cambodgienne est le riel (KHR)**, cependant, il **cohabite avec le dollar américain (USD)**. Tout le monde l'accepte. On vous rend souvent la petite monnaie en riels, ce qui permet d'avoir toujours des coupures des deux devises sur soi. Le change riels/dollars est à peu près stable : 1\$ = 4000 riels.

L'économie cambodgienne est en pleine croissance (+7% en 2016), et repose sur quatre piliers : la construction, l'agriculture, le tourisme et l'industrie textile.

The **Cambodian currency is the Riel (KHR)**, however, it **coexists with the US dollar (USD)**. Everyone accepts it. You are often given the small change in riels, which allows you to always have banknotes of both currencies on you. The exchange rate between riel and dollars is more or less stable: \$1 = 4000 riels.

The Cambodian economy is growing rapidly (+7% in 2018), and is based on four pillars: construction, agriculture, tourism and the textile industry.

1.3 Intercultural shock: going and coming back

Cultural background...

Each country has its own cultural, morals and habits. When you arrive in Cambodia, you will come with your own cultural background.

Being exposed to a whole new culture will likely lead to questioning and even sometimes misunderstanding. Keep in mind that what is "normal" in one culture might not be "normal" in another.

For example:

- The importance of intimacy and the place of the individual in the society: in Cambodia, people are used to live together, and the group will always come first.
- Modesty: Cambodians are very modest. Often fully clothed despite the heat, they also bath with their clothes on. It would then be very frowned upon to walk around naked (men with their shirts off) in public places (even on the beach, bikinis catch the eye).
- Say no - I don't know - contradict: as in many Asian countries, you won't be told no directly or if people don't know the answer to your question, they will tend to invent rather than tell you that they don't know. It is also very frowned upon to contradict someone. If you're wrong, they won't let you know.

Discovering and getting used to another country's culture is part of the journey and the intercultural exchange.

To help you understand better, you can:

- **Watch the people around you.** You'll see that people here don't kiss to say hello and everyone keep some physical distance
- **Ask around you** what the proper salutations are, what to do and what not to do
- **Try to understand why** before you judge: in Cambodia, for example, the local people have almost no knowledge and automatism in terms of ecology. It's normal for them to throw everything on the ground. Nevertheless, without judging them, try to awaken certain consciences on your scale about this.

The intercultural shock...

When your own value system – considered as normal because that is what you've always knew - **clashes with another value system**, it can be a difficult experience. That is the culture clash.

Here is a list of feelings you might experience:

- A feeling of unsettlement.
- A desire to be alone
- Unwillingness to fit in the community.
- A feeling of injustice and non-recognition
- Frustration, anger, boredom

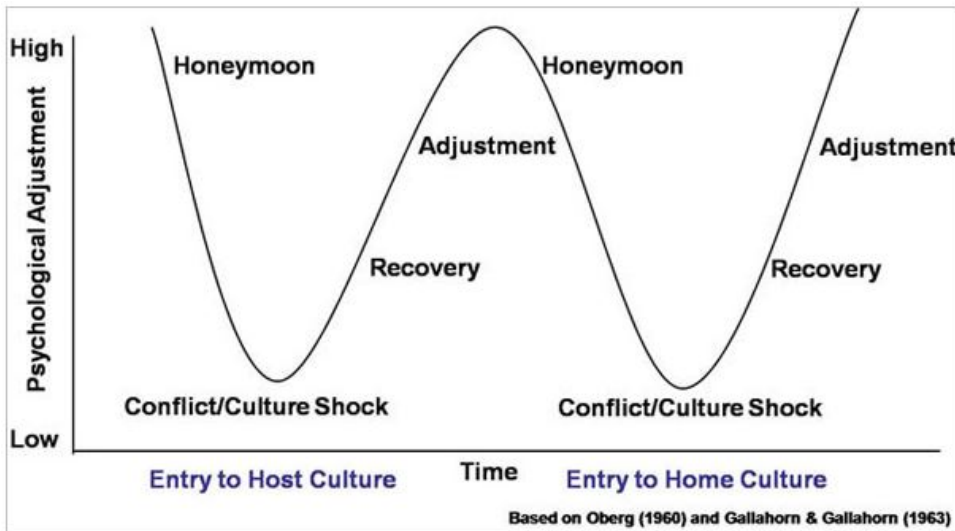
Don't worry, **it is absolutely normal**. Everybody experiences the culture clash. But it never lasts!

Being exposed to new cultures enables us to learn important lessons and be more open-minded.

To make the culture clash easier, just accept it. **It has nothing to do with some personal failure**, but it is a very normal reaction.

Don't be afraid to talk about it to a member of the team: there will always be someone to listen to you, and these people would probably have experienced the same thing as you.

Finally, keep your mind open and stay positive, and just take things as they go.



Note that a **culture clash can also happen when you come back** to your home country!

It's called readjustment or reversed culture clash.

Such an experience abroad makes you grow and changes you, and the culture clash can be even stronger than the one you experienced abroad.

Here is a list of feelings you might experience:

- A feeling of disconnect with family and friends,
- The need to stay in touch with the people you met during your adventure,
- A new perception of your home country,
- It is time for a feedback: once you're back home, it is time to reflect on your experience, your objectives, the good things and the bad things that you experienced.

This reflection will help you have closure.

A good way to pursue your commitment is to take action for Taramana in your home country!

We always need motivated people to organize fundraising actions (concerts, charity events...) or communication actions

Think about it...

2. Before departure - logistics

2.1 Passports and visa

To travel to Cambodia, your passport must be valid at least 6 months after leaving the Cambodian territory, so 6 months after your return flight.

To work at the Taramana center you will need an ordinary visa, also called visa E (not to be mixed up with the touristic visa, visa T). You can get it in two ways:

- At the Cambodian Embassy of your home country. Cost
- At Phnom Penh airport, just when you arrive. Cost 35\$. Don't forget to take a photo with you.

From the issue date, you have three months to your use your visa. But once you entered Cambodian territory, your visa will only be valid for a month. The end date will appear on your visa.

It is easy to renew you visa E. You can renew it for different periods of time:

- 1-month, single entry: 46\$
- 3 months, single entry (you'll have to pay for a new visa if you leave the country and come back to Cambodia): 77\$
- 6 months, multiple entries (you can leave the country and come back without having to pay for a new visa): 160\$

Renewing you visa takes about two weeks. You can renew your visa in travel agencies, guesthouses or directly to the immigration services in Phnom Penh...

2.2 Vaccines et medication

Every volunteer must be up to date with their vaccines (DT Polio,).

The Hepatitis B and A vaccines are not mandatory but highly recommended.
Malaria treatment is also not mandatory, as it is not very common in urban areas.

It is strongly advised to bring some medicine with you (you might have to check with your GP to get some of the medicine):

Although pharmacies are nowadays very well supplied in Phnom Penh (even with european prescription drugs), it is advisable to **bring a small "kit" to prevent minor problems:** (*see your doctor for more information on how to obtain these drugs*)

For example:

- painkillers (paracetamol, dolipran type)

Avoid aspirin, contraindicated with the risk of contracting dengue fever

- anti-inflammatory, intestinal antispasmodic, anti-diarrheal, anti-vomitives
- antiseptic and bandages,
- mosquito repellent and soothing cream

If you get bitten/scratched by a dog or a cat, don't forget there's a high risk of getting rage. You should go as quickly as possible the Pasteur Institute, which is located 15 minutes away from the Taramana center. There are also many private clinics that give very good care: Royal Phnom Penh Hospital, Hopital Calmette, Naga Clinic ...

2.3 Administrative - documents to provide

Before arriving at the Taramana centre, a number of documents are sent to the future volunteer:

- Mission commitment ... *to be returned signed*
- Taramana's Code of Ethics and Behaviour, ... *to be returned initialled and signed*
- Taramana's regulation for visits

And administrative documents are requested:

- a copy of a valid passport valid for more than 6 months
- proof of return flight ticket
- a copy of the updated vaccination booklet
- a recent medical certificate of non-contagiousness and community living
- a copy of the international health repatriation / hospitalization / illness insurance
- a copy of the personal liability insurance

Once in Cambodia, the volunteer will also have to complete/supply:

- a copy of the visa valid for the duration of the internship
- a document of contacts to be notified in case of emergency (family + organizations in the case of an internship)

and if the volunteer travels by motorcycle/scooter (rented or purchased):

- his international driving licence (for motorcycles over 125)
- third party insurance

2.4 Phone and Internet

Phone contracts in Cambodia are very cheap and can be found everywhere.

A sim card costs about 1\$, and a month contract will cost you 5\$. The most common operators are Cellcard, Smart and Metfone.

When you buy a sim card, you will be asked to provide a copy of your passport.

2.5 Bank

Remember to **inform your bank of your departure abroad**, to avoid a possible credit card blockage.

Check the limits allowed on your credit card for withdrawals AND payments. Almost all transactions in Cambodia are made in cash, so you may need to increase these limits before you arrive.

There are many ATMs in the city. In Cambodia, distributors charge an average of \$4 to \$5 for each withdrawal, a kind of "usage tax" on the machine. It is therefore more interesting to withdraw a large amount of money than to make several small withdrawals.

It is possible to open a bank account in Cambodia. All you need to do is present your passport and leave a first deposit of \$50 (\$15 of this \$50 will be kept by the bank for account opening fees).

2.6 Insurance

You are free to choose the insurance of your choice. Note that Taramana has a partnership with CHAPKA insurance.

If you subscribe an insurance with Chapka, you will get 5% off and Taramana will get a commission of 7%. So, if you make a contract with Chapka you will benefit from a reduction and a donation will be directly made to Taramana.

To benefit from this reduction, you need to use the link below. Don't hesitate to contact your insurance to make sure which kind of contract you should get. The choice of contract must be done according to you visa too. Below are the links to subscribe to an insurance with Chapka.

Cap Vital Expat: https://www.chapkadirect.fr/index.php?action=produit&id=732&app=cd_taramana

Cap Volontariat: https://www.chapkadirect.fr/index.php?action=produit&id=751&app=cd_taramana

3. Working at the Taramana Center

The Taramana Magdalena center is located in the Boeng Salang slums, north of Phnom Penh.

The address is:
456 Phlaur Lum, Group 2, Boeng Salang Village, Russey Keo District, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

3.1 General organization

The centre is open from Monday to Friday, from 7:20 am (meeting time) to 4:30 pm.

The students have lunch in the canteen from 11 am to 12 pm, then it is the team's turn from 12pm to 1pm

Here is the weekly timetable of Taramana centre:

	Monday			Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday			Friday			
7:00 AM	Khmer Siem	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong	Khmer Siem	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong	Khmer Siem	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong	Khmer Siem	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong	Khmer Siem	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong	
8:00 AM	Reap	Librery / activity Siem	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong	Librery / activity Siem	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong	Librery / activity Siem	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong	Librery / activity Siem	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong	Librery / activity Siem	Khmer Stung Treng	
9:00 AM	BREAK			BREAK			BREAK			BREAK			BREAK			
10:00 AM	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong	Rugby	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong
11:00 AM	LUNCHBREAK			LUNCHBREAK			LUNCHBREAK			LUNCHBREAK			LUNCHBREAK			
12:00 AM				French									French			
1:00 PM	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong	English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong		English Siem Reap	Librery / activity Stung Treng	Khmer koh Kong
2:00 PM	Khmer Siem Reap	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong	Khmer Siem Reap	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong	Khmer Siem Reap	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong	Khmer Siem Reap	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong		Khmer Siem Reap	English Stung Treng	Librery / activity koh Kong
3:00 PM	BREAK			BREAK			BREAK			BREAK			BREAK			
4:00 PM	Librery / activity Siem Reap	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong	Librery / activity Siem Reap	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong	Librery / activity Siem Reap	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong	Librery / activity Siem Reap	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong	Rugby	Librery / activity Siem Reap	Khmer Stung Treng	English koh Kong
5:00-6:00 PM				Computer Kandal						Soccer			Computer Kandal			
6:00-7:00 PM				Computer Tako									Dancing			
7:00-8:00 PM				Computer Ratanaki									Computer Ratanaki			

Evenings and weekends are free. However, volunteers may be asked to participate, as an accompanying person, in the various activities or outings that Taramana offers to children.

In the case of "worked" weekends, the volunteer will have the opportunity to make up for it by taking a half-day off, notifying his or her manager in advance and at least 3 days in advance.

In addition to weekends, volunteers are entitled to two days off per month, which they can accumulate. Due to the many public holidays (22!) and Cambodian holiday periods, some days off will be taxed. The volunteer must agree on his days off with his manager and make the request at least 3 days in advance.

3.2 Your work at Taramana

The volunteer's missions are agreed upon at the time of recruitment and can be reviewed according to the needs at the centre but also according to the volunteer's skills and desires.

The volunteer may be involved in the following areas:

- Lead activities and supervise the various extracurricular activities
... he accompanies children on minivan trips for rugby training or workshops at the IFC and the Bophana Centre.
- Help with communication missions
... by participating in the writing of the newsletter, facebook posts, web articles or by regularly taking photos and videos of children and events that punctuate the daily life at the centre
- Provide English language courses in support of teachers
- Monitor students during library hours
- Assist in the preparation of letters between godparents and godchildren or in the transcription of social surveys

Each time a volunteer arrives, a meeting is held with the director and the other trainees and volunteers to establish the division of tasks.

Each volunteer comes with his or her skills and ideas. Thus, taking initiatives is strongly encouraged to put one's skills to good use in one's field of training or interest. This can involve a variety of areas: fundraising, project management, activities with children, etc. The validation of any initiative by the Management remains mandatory.

It is important to keep in mind that, on the spot, the need is great. The actions are therefore many and varied. The workload is high, but the reward, directly obtained by the children's smiles, is proportional.

« The more you give, the more you get... that's the secret. »

Unknown author

« Be the change you want to see in the world. »

Gandhi

Resources:

Projects Abroad has produced a large part of the content of this guide. Projects Abroad is an international volunteer organization. The headquarters was established in England in 1992 and the French office opened in 2006.