



**CAMBODIAN  
CHILDREN'S FUND**

# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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# WELCOME

Congratulations on being accepted on to your CCF volunteer placement.

Your support goes a long way over here. Thank you for choosing to give your time to the community we support in Steung Meanchey. Volunteers are the lifeblood of CCF.

Volunteers are a key component of our organization and we are so thankful for your hard work and dedication. You provide skills, experience, and advice to our fantastic staff team here in Phnom Penh. CCF has come a long way since we opened the doors of our first school in 2004, and we can thank our volunteers for supporting our vision and mission to get here. 2,000 students and 12,000 community members are now supported by our programs. This would not be possible without the generous support of our dedicated staff, volunteers and donors.

Your time, dedication and skills you bring with you play a pivotal role in our success. We work together to ensure that CCF students will develop the skills to be Cambodia's future leaders. You'll find dedicated volunteers in all of our teams; from Teaching Assistants in our Satellite Schools, medical professionals providing development opportunities for our healthcare team, and skilled professionals providing advice to our staff team. Our staff, our students, and their families, are looking forward to meeting you when you arrive on the ground.

You can find all the information you will need to prepare for your placement in this handbook. Our volunteer team are here to support you before you arrive, during your time in Phnom Penh, and will support ways for you to stay connected with us when you leave. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact them at

[volunteer@cambodianchildrensfund.org](mailto:volunteer@cambodianchildrensfund.org)

Thank you for your support



**Scott Neeson**

Founder and Executive Director

## WHAT DO I NEED TO PACK?

### CLOTHES & SHOES

There are plenty of markets in Phnom Penh, but it is best to arrive prepared. Although many tourists wear shorts and vest tops to deal with the heat, the locals tend to cover as much skin as possible. CCF is not a formal office, but conservative dress (knees and shoulders covered) is advised in all facilities and around Steung Meanchey. Please note that larger European/US/UK sizes are harder to come by in Cambodia if you're looking to buy things here.

Must haves are:

- Lightweight, loose-fitting cotton clothing
- Knee-length or full-length trousers/ jeans/ skirts
- T-Shirts or long-sleeved shirts or dresses for protection against sun and mosquitoes
- A scarf or shawl to cover shoulders

Sandals and flip flops are good for everyday use around the office, but we also recommend enclosed shoes for those rainy days when dirt turns to mud. The streets are prone to flooding so shoes that you won't mind getting wet and dirty are recommended.

Tattoos have different, and often negative connotations in Cambodia compared to back home. This is particularly true in Steung Meanchey where they symbolize gang membership. We ask that all volunteers in classrooms cover their tattoos with clothing, and refrain from showing them off to students

You may find the following items useful when packing:

- Umbrella or raincoat
- Toiletries, if you have a particular preference as products are very limited in Cambodia
- Hat and high factor sunblock (SPF 30 or above)
- Insect repellent (with DEET)
- Laptop (wifi is everywhere)
- Daypack or handbag that can be securely worn across your body



### OTHER ITEMS

You can purchase household items easily at markets and stores around town. Most sockets are universal but it is good to be prepared and bring an international adapter for electrical items.

## MEDICAL

### VACCINATIONS/ MEDICATION

Prior to arrival, we recommend you to check with your doctor about the pre-travel vaccinations that are required for Cambodia. Opinions vary from country to country, doctor to doctor, so we have included a few general notes for you here.

#### HEPATITIS A+B

**HEPATITIS A** is spread through contaminated water and food. The vaccine requires a booster at 6 to 12 months, but you can get that in Cambodia if you have not finished the course before you leave your home country.

**HEPATITIS B** is very common in Cambodia. The vaccine is a must before coming, especially if you plan to have any medical procedures or tattoos. It requires three injections over a 6-month period.

#### TYPHOID

is spread through contaminated food and water, and is common in Cambodia. Though a serious illness, it is treatable. Nevertheless, vaccination is strongly recommended before your trip to Cambodia.

#### JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS

is caused by a mosquito-borne virus. Cases do occur in rural Cambodia, and the vaccine is recommended for those who will be spending extended periods of time in rural areas. CCF is in the city, so it is not usually required for volunteers.

#### RABIES

is spread by bites from rabid animals, and is fatal if untreated. If you plan to be anywhere where you will be more than 24 hours from a

decent hospital, you should consider getting a rabies shot. Even if you get the vaccination though, you'll still need to seek medical care. **If you do get bitten while in Phnom Penh, you must seek medical attention immediately.**

#### DENGUE

is a mosquito-borne illness that causes a severe flu-like fever, and can cause serious complications. There is no vaccine. It is common in Phnom Penh so you must protect yourself from mosquito bites. If you have dengue symptoms (headache, nausea, and fever), you should consult a clinic immediately.

#### ANTI-MALARIA MEDICATION

You do not need to take anti-malarial medication in Cambodian cities. However, if you are travelling near forested areas, it is best to take them as a precaution and they can be purchased in Phnom Penh. Always practice good mosquito protection- long clothing and insect repellent- especially during the night.

#### OTHER MEDICATIONS

It is also probably a good idea for you to bring all essential medications with you. If you will be working in a school, lice can be a problem so do bring a comb and special shampoo. There are pharmacies in Phnom Penh selling medicines, such as headache tablets, some contraceptives, skin creams and diarrhea medications. U-Care is one of the more popular pharmacy chains in Phnom Penh with imported medicines and English-speaking pharmacists. Most foreigners living in Cambodia take de-worming medication every six months as a precaution.

## GETTING A VISA

### GETTING A VISA

CCF volunteers are required to arrange and pay for their own visas. Visas can easily be purchased on arrival at Cambodian airports or at border crossings. You'll need:

- A passport valid for at least 6 months from the arrival date
- A completed application form, provided to you on the plane before you touch down
- If staying 2 months or less, at least 2 free pages in your passport (visas take up a whole page)
- One recent passport photograph (4 x 6)\*

\* At the Phnom Penh International Airport it is possible to have your passport photo scanned for use on your visa. There is a USD\$2 charge for this service.

If you're coming to visit for less than 2 months in total you should get a TOURIST VISA (Visa Type T). It is 30\$USD.

If you are coming for longer than 2 months in total you will need to get an ORDINARY VISA (Visa Type E). It is 35\$USD.

Provide the desk at the arrival gate with your form, passport, photo and exact payment in USD. Always check you get the right visa type. If there is a problem, respectfully & calmly discuss the mistake with the immigration officials. There is usually a way to fix it.

For all visa types, you will always get an initial 1 month visa on arrival. You will then need to extend it when the initial month is coming to an end. These visas are single entry only. If you leave Cambodia you will need to gain another visa on re-entry.

### EXTENDING YOUR VISA

Visas can easily be extended at many of the travel agents around town. You will need to provide your passport, a passport photo (4x6), the required fee, and an official letter from CCF detailing your volunteering position – please request this in advance from the volunteering team. It usually takes from 2 to 5 days to be processed and must be done before your visa expires otherwise it may cost you \$5 per day if you have overstayed.


Tourist Visas can be extended for 1 additional month. Ordinary Visas can be extended for 3, 6 or 12 months.

Fees:

- 1 month visa (TOURIST / ORDINARY) - not valid for re-entry once you exit Cambodia - \$45 - \$50
- 3 month visa (ORDINARY ONLY) - not valid for re-entry once you exit Cambodia - \$80
- 6 month visa (ORDINARY ONLY) - multiple entries - \$160
- 1 year visa (ORDINARY ONLY) - multiple entries - \$290

### NOTE

It may seem strange giving your passport to a stranger but it is the only way to be processed. We have never had any issues with passports not coming back or being misused. The volunteer team will be able to recommend trusted travel agents if you want them.

A young boy wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, khaki pants, and a blue baseball cap sits amidst a vast sea of discarded plastic waste. The ground is completely covered with a dense layer of colorful plastic bags, crumpled paper, and other debris, stretching far into the background. The boy is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daylight.

**Steung Meanchey** was once home to one of the largest landfill sites in SouthEast Asia. It was a dangerous and toxic environment for the communities that lived around it. Since 2004, CCF has been working with those communities. We began with 45 children under our care and today, 13 years later, we have almost 2,000 students working towards a brighter future for themselves and their families. In 2009 the landfill site was closed, however the need for CCF's services remains strong as Steung Meanchey continues to be the entry point for destitute families moving to Phnom Penh from rural provinces.



## DOCUMENTATION

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Before you arrive, CCF provides you with this Volunteer Handbook as well as your defined position description, and requires the following documents to be signed and scanned to us before your arrival in country:

- Volunteer Agreement, outlining your position term
- Child Protection Policy
- Child Protection Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Teaching Code of Conduct (for teaching or teaching-adjacent positions)

CCF has a strict child protection policy and restricts only those with recent (processed in the past 6 months) police checks to come into contact with our children. All volunteers must provide this to CCF before arrival.

USA, UK and Australian approved procedures have been outlined below. If you are a citizen of another country and need advice on where to seek your police check from please contact the volunteer team.

### POLICE CHECKS IN THE USA

CCF requires a federal level check via the FBI – not just from your local state or county authority. Please follow the process outlined on the FBI website:

<https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/identity-history-summary-checks>

### NOTE

CCF will only accept background checks from the FBI or from one of the FBI-approved agents listed on the website.

### POLICE CHECKS IN AUSTRALIA

Gaining a federal level police check in Australia can be easily done online. You do not need to do a fingerprint check, just a name check to enable you to work with children. Visit the Australian Federal Level (AFP) website:

<https://www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/services/criminal-records>

It may also be recommended you obtain a Working with Children check: <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>

### POLICE CHECKS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

CCF only accepts an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) via the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). This is similar to a CRB/DBS Enhanced Disclosure check but for use for international volunteering roles. CRB/DBS checks are not sufficient for volunteering purposes.

Visit the ICPC website: [www.acro.police.uk/ICPC](http://www.acro.police.uk/ICPC)



## STARTING AT CCF

### ON ARRIVAL

Arriving in a new country can be scary and overwhelming. To make things easier, CCF will collect all volunteers from the airport on arrival. Please send us your flight details and accommodation as soon as possible so we can arrange your transport. Our driver will be waiting at arrivals with a sign with your name on it. If we are unable to collect you, we will coordinate with your guesthouse to arrange transport on your behalf.

The Phnom Penh airport is very small and there is only one way to get out- so it is hard to miss us!

Before you arrive, the volunteer team will send you a package by email recommending our favourite restaurants, cafés, grocery stores, and anything else you might need for your time here. We would also recommend reading the popular Move to Cambodia blog to help you prepare for your time here: [www.movetocambodia.com](http://www.movetocambodia.com)

We suggest taking a few days between arriving and starting your volunteer position so that you can acclimatize, get over jet lag, and orientate yourself around Phnom Penh. If you know you'll be in town for a few days before starting at CCF, you are welcome to contact the volunteering team to meet for a coffee and to talk about CCF, Phnom Penh, and your time here.

### FIRST DAY

On the first day of your placement, CCF will pick you up at an agreed time at your accommodation. CCF provides transport for all volunteers to and from CCF facilities according to their schedule and, at times, for other CCF activities (e.g. weekend leadership activities). Transport is via our CCF volunteer van or tuk tuks. Most volunteers will be scheduled to come in Monday – Friday, beginning at 8am and finishing at 5pm, but your specific timetable will be finalised with you before you arrive.

When there are lots of volunteers, your van pick up time may get delayed and your commute extended. We ask for you to be patient with our drivers, they are doing the best they can. Traffic is an issue in Cambodia and just seems to be getting worse and worse. Best just to sit back, relax and get there when you get there (we all suffer traffic woes so we will understand if you are late).

CCF provides a comprehensive orientation for all volunteers on their first day to ensure you are ready to hit the ground running. On your first day, you'll meet with the volunteering team for an overview of CCF and your position, as well as

- Tour of CCF facilities
- Presentation on CCF history, volunteer and cultural advice, Khmer language introduction
- Child Protection training
- A local mobile phone\*

## LIFE AT CCF



- Meeting with volunteer department, line manager and key CCF staff

\*This is CCF property and must be returned at the end of your placement. To top up, please either arrange this yourself and CCF will reimburse you, or contact the volunteer team. If you lose it, please report to volunteer team. If you would like your own 3G SIM, please go to Smart or Cellcard shops in town.

During your time volunteering at CCF, you will also receive the following:

- Cross Cultural Communication training
- Ongoing support from your line manager and the Volunteer Department
- Monthly volunteer social events (typically lunch)
- Invitations to CCF student events

The volunteering team is here throughout your assignment to provide dedicated support to all volunteers. If you encounter any issues during your time in Phnom Penh, or have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to them.

### LIFE AT CCF

Every volunteer and volunteer placement is different. However, every volunteer will be provided with a position description outlining your responsibilities, your activities, and the desired outcome of your role. You will also be connected with your team by email before arrival, and any relevant resources you might need to familiarise yourself with your role will be sent to you in advance. On your first day, you will be introduced to where



## LIFE AT CCF

you will be based, and introduced to the staff located there, your team, and your line manager.

### STEUNG MEANCHEY

You will be volunteering at one of our facilities in the Steung Meanchey area in Phnom Penh; the former site of the city's municipal dump. We serve the most under-privileged members of this community.

You might be shocked when you first visit Steung Meanchey as it is very different to downtown Phnom Penh. Whilst the dumpsite is now closed and the area has seen development, many members of the community still make their living from collecting the city's recyclables. Around CCF facilities you will still see large quantities of rubbish. Rubbish is often disposed of by fire or in the local river. Children are often unaccompanied on the street and in various states of undress. Families often live in small one room homes made of corrugated iron with no plumbing or electricity.

CCF understands if you find what you see in Steung Meanchey to be distressing – it is distressing. If you ever feel the need to talk about how you feel, please don't hesitate to reach out to the volunteer team.

### NAME

In Cambodia, names run as [Last Name] [First Name]. You might have to clarify what your name is to staff and students as they might call you by your last name!

In the classroom, teachers are called 'Teacher [First Name]', not Mr/ Mrs [Last Name]. Introduce yourself to students this way.

### STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

CCF employs around 500 staff members all in all. These include front line staff members such as cleaners, cooks, childcare providers, to teachers, HR staff, and social workers. There are around 10 international members of staff that fill roles facing international stakeholders, or specialised roles.

There are around 10-15 local and international volunteers at any one time at CCF. You might not meet everyone at once as many are part-time. Volunteers are recruited to support or advise and upskill our local staff team. Our staff and volunteers are both trained professionals, and we see staff and volunteers as a singular team at CCF.

### DRESS

You are expected to dress appropriately at all times when you're at CCF Facilities. We recommend loose fitting, cool clothing; no one at CCF is expected to wear a suit and tie! However, shorts and skirts/ dresses above the knees are inappropriate, as are strappy or midriff revealing tops – for everyone. Please refrain from wearing clothing that advertises alcohol brands whilst on premises, especially if you are at a school. Most volunteers wear long, loose fitting trousers or a maxi skirt, and a t-shirt or long sleeved shirt. Volunteers at schools are asked to cover any visible tattoos due to local customs.

Staff and volunteers at CCF tend to wear short sleeved T-shirts that cover the shoulders, longer skirts, shorts, or dresses, or full length jeans









## LIFE AT CCF

or trousers. If you are unsure as to whether or not an item of clothing is appropriate, don't hesitate to ask the volunteering team and we'll help you out!

### LUNCH

Different teams do different things at lunch time, and we will clarify what that might be on your first day. Some teams will lunch together – perhaps bringing in a dish for everyone to share, or you might be free to do your own thing. Depending on where you're based, your lunch time will be between 11am-2pm, or 12pm-2pm.

If you have any dietary requirements, it is recommended that you bring your own lunch as your options in Steung Meanchey might be limited. There are microwaves throughout the facilities.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE

You are likely to be volunteering in a team where you are the only native-level English speaker. Our staff speak, read, and write English to differing degrees, and we will advise you on what to expect before you arrive. Do know that, despite communication problems, everyone is trying their best. If you're ever unsure of what someone means, don't hesitate to clarify with them until you are sure.

Students will also have differing levels of English. While they are taught English in our programs they might not have the most developed level of English. Be patient with them; they're not unmotivated to learn, they have had different exposure to English, and are often shy speaking in

English if it's your first language.

### CHILDREN

You might be volunteering around children. It is important to put the Child Protection Policy into practice, and act in the best interest of the child. You should never be left responsible for a child in CCF's care.

Do be aware that, as you would expect working in an impoverished community, there are often outbreaks of head lice. Do protect yourself by tying any long hair into a bun. Anti-lice shampoo is available in pharmacies in Phnom Penh, but fine tooth combs can be hard to come by so bring one with you from home.

Western visitors are often surprised by how friendly Cambodian children are with strangers. Your CCF ID tag does signal a level of security to our students, so they will often want to play with or hug you. It's important not to reject children, but please think about how you respond as it's not appropriate or healthy for them to see westerners as their source of affection. When you start in a classroom, explain that you will be leaving in x months, so they are not surprised when you leave.

### Gifts

Volunteers often want to bring gifts to students in their classes. If you want to gift your class something, please speak to the CCF volunteer team beforehand. The gifts must be small and inexpensive so as not to cause jealousy, and all students must receive one. Please think about

gifting something useful to the school or community over sweets and food, as it can be treasured for a longer time and bring a greater benefit to their lives.

### RESOURCES

You will be provided with everything you need to succeed in your placement. For some volunteers, this will involve a desk space. If you have a laptop, you might want to bring this with you so you have flexibility on where you do your work. We have laptops that CCF volunteers are able to loan, but they might not have the software you're familiar with. If there is anything needed specific to your placement, discuss this with your line manager pre-arrival.

#### v

Cambodia has a sensitive political situation, and politics are not discussed as openly as they might be in your home country. Please do not ask people about their political beliefs as it can be a difficult conversation that people aren't sure how to answer. Avoid speaking about politics in cafes or on the streets with friends as people might overhear and get upset or aggressive.

### QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Steung Meanchey and CCF might be very different to what you are used to back home, or what you expected. For example, teaching in Cambodia might be different to what you have experienced. Attitudes towards workplace hierarchies might be different to what you are used to. Local solutions to local problems might not be what you would have immediately chosen yourself.

It's important to embrace having an open mind. It's easy to identify what is different to back home, and what you would want to change. However, this is not always feasible due to budgets, local customs, or something else entirely. Also remember that your concerns might not have a quick fix – it might be a goal we have steadily been working towards over several years.

We recommend taking the position of curiosity before judgment. Take the first weeks in your position to observe, rather than interject, so that you have the opportunity to learn how things are done here. Instead of asking why things aren't done the way that you are used to, ask for the reasons why they are being done the way they are.

If you see anything that concerns you, or that you have questions about, don't hesitate to talk to the volunteering team. They will advise on whether this should be escalated to the relevant team or they will explain the background to it and what CCF is doing to tackle the problem.



# RULES AND REGULATIONS

## VOLUNTEER RULES & REGULATIONS

Before you volunteer you will have to sign some documents, including: the Child Protection Policy, the Child Protection Code of Conduct and the Confidentiality Agreement.

### CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The CCF Child Protection Policy is your guide on how we approach working with vulnerable children.

This document outlines our policy and we require you to read, understand and sign the contract. This is a commitment from you to comply with our policy and act accordingly. This includes your actions within CCF and your response to concerns you may have about children in our care and in the community. We will also provide Child Protection Training as part of your orientation.

### INTERNAL REGULATION CODE OF CONDUCT

The CCF code of conduct is an outline of the standard of behaviour we expect from all CCF employees and volunteers.

Among many things, it covers punctuality, dress code and disciplinary actions for any misconduct. By signing this document you are agreeing to comply and act as a role model for other staff, students and volunteers.

### CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

This policy is signed by all staff and volunteers to ensure that classified information from CCF remains private. This is particularly important for our organisation as we work with vulnerable children and their

families and we need to ensure that their dignity is protected and that their safety is our number one priority. As an NGO we are as transparent as we can be regarding our programs and expenses. However the information of our beneficiaries must remain confidential.

### FACILITIES

When visiting a facility (either as a volunteer or sponsor), a CCF staff member must always be present. Volunteers MUST ask staff permission before visiting any facilities outside your assigned placement schedule. We also request volunteers, sponsors and visitors not to visit CCF's facilities, or to contact children or their families without our agreement. If you have any questions, please ask the volunteer department.

We understand that your friends and families would like to see where you are working and visit the CCF programs. Unfortunately, we do not allow informal visits to CCF facilities; the key reason being that, at CCF, we try to create and maintain a safe and consistent environment for all of the children in our care. Visitors, although always with the best of intentions, can be very disruptive and actually have a negative impact on a child's ability to focus on the activities and programs they are participating in.

The 'voluntourism' industry has led to negative press about some local NGOs turning the children in their care into a 'tourist attraction', with little regard for their welfare. This is something we are very keen to distance ourselves from.

## **RULES & REGULATIONS**

If you have family or friends coming during your volunteer placement, who want to learn more about CCF, please speak directly with the volunteer team. If a visit is approved by the Volunteer or Sponsorship Department, the visitors are subject to the conditions set out in the Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy and Confidentiality Agreement.

### **SHARING YOUR TIME AT CCF**

The best advertising for CCF is word of mouth from our sponsors, donors, and volunteers who have had the opportunity to see CCF on the ground and be involved in the everyday activities of our many programs. We encourage you to share our work and your experiences with the world!

That said, there are restrictions to ensure that the children and families we work with are cared for and appropriately respected and protected. We simply ask that you fully comply with the Child Protection Policy protocol for taking photos and presenting CCF. We would recommend taking time to contemplate how you want your photos to be viewed and what message you want them to convey before sharing them. Be aware that Steung Meanchey is a very different community to what you might be used to, and your initial impressions of what you see when you arrive might change with the time you spend here.

### **SOME MAIN POINTS:**

- No photos displaying nudity, or showing inside anyone's home, are allowed to be taken
- Ensure everyone's dignity is maintained; think about how you would feel if you or your child were the subject of your photograph, especially if you are sharing it publicly on social media
- Make sure you don't reveal any identifying information with your photo, such as names or addresses
- Be culturally respectful; ask before taking photos and thank those who have allowed their photo
- Ensure situations are represented realistically, and try to avoid upsetting or sad images of children (a child may be crying because they have lost their toys, not because they haven't been fed)
- Try and focus on the GOOD times! We deal with some tragic and disturbing situations but we always prefer to look at all the positive work we are doing that is delivering hope and change to so many.

### FUNDRAISING

When you leave CCF, you will have a lot of stories you will want to share with friends and families about your time here. Many people will want to find out how they can support the work CCF does in Steung Meanchey. As a volunteer who has stayed with us in Phnom Penh, and worked closely with our team, you are a fantastic advocate for our mission. Before you go back home, the volunteer team can link you with the international office in your territory if you would like to begin fundraising for CCF.

### WHERE TO BEGIN

- One of the simplest and most effective ways to fundraise is to talk about it! Tell people you know about CCF and the work that is happening in Cambodia. Tell them about how you got involved and the needs of the organization.
- Point as many people as possible to the CCF website so they'll know where their money will be going, and what it will achieve.
- Speak with your local office about their work, and the support they can offer you.

### IDEAS FOR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

There have been a number of unique ideas from our supporters, ranging from huge undertakings to much simpler methods. No matter the size or scope of the project, every little bit helps and is appreciated.

- Websites such as Everyday Hero or Just Giving allows users to create a supporter page for CCF in order to generate donations from friends and

family. The donation goals can be big or small.

- Organize a team or group hike, bike race, or a run – and collect pledges for each mile or hour completed.
- Arrange a sale by gathering any goods that you, friends and family don't want. Price each item, and possibly sell larger items in an auction format.
- Hold a bake sale, lemonade stand, or even a car wash.
- Make handmade items – like jewellery, knitted scarves or note cards – and sell them. Some of our talented supporters have had great success with this. Some crafted items for a living and donating a portion of the earnings, while others made items specifically to raise funds for CCF.
- Host a dinner for a group of friends and colleagues, with each guest making a pledge to donate to CCF.



## FAQ

**Q:** I'd like to travel during my time in Cambodia. Can I book leave during my volunteer placement?

**A:** Yes, to an extent. We expect you to be volunteering consistently in your placement, and it would be difficult for you to achieve the aims and outcomes of your placement if you were to travel for a longer period. If you do need to book a day or two off, contact the volunteering team as soon as you can so that it can be confirmed with your team.

**Q:** What do I do if I am ill during my time at CCF?

**A:** If you are ill, please contact the volunteer team who will notify your team and the drivers. Do make sure you rest and recover until you're at your full strength before returning, as you can make your illness worse by exerting yourself too much before you're ready. We have a list of recommended doctors and hospitals in this handbook if you need them – don't be concerned that in Cambodia you might have to visit a hospital in order to get what might be a routine checkup. If you are concerned about your health at any point, do feel free to contact the volunteer team who can support you as you need.

**Q:** Who should I contact if I have a question or concern about something I've seen at CCF?

**A:** Life is very different in Steung Meanchey, and it's common to have a lot of questions if you see things being done differently to how you're used to. Approach from a position of curiosity, and ask your colleagues for more information as there will be a reason. If there's anything you do find concerning, ask the volunteer team first to get more clarity and they can advise on how to proceed.

**Q:** What should I do if I have any problems with my role during my placement?

**A:** You will be provided with a position description for your role, and introduced to your workplace and line manager on your first day. If you're having any trouble getting to grips with your role, do reach out to the volunteering team and your line manager by email. You will have regular meetings with the volunteer team.

**Q:** Can I extend my placement at CCF?

**A:** In some circumstances, yes, you can! If you would like to extend your placement, please inform the volunteering team of the date you'd like to extend to and they will double check with your team. Extensions will be dependent upon the project you're working on, your progress, as well as the CCF calendar and resources.

**Q:** Who can I contact in an emergency?

**A:** In an emergency you can contact the volunteering team on their mobile numbers, which will be shared with you on arrival. You should make sure you also know how to contact your embassy if necessary.

**Q:** Who are the other volunteers who I'll be working with?

**A:** We tend to have between 10-15 local and international volunteers with us at any one time. You might be the only volunteer in your team, but you will meet others in the tuk tuk rides to CCF and at the language classes. The volunteer team hosts a monthly event for all volunteers to socialise with staff. This might be a lunch, dinner, drinks, or a small outing.



## ACCOMODATION

### ACCOMODATION

Finding somewhere to live in Phnom Penh is significantly easier than it is in western cities. There are studios, apartments, serviced apartments, houses, house shares, and long-term guest houses available on all budgets - and, because of the large amounts of volunteers, contract workers, and interns in the city, landlords are used to renting to western tenants on shorter term contracts.

We would recommend that you do not arrange long-term housing until you arrive in the city, and can view the accommodation yourself.

After arrival, you can get a sense of the city's neighbourhoods and start viewing properties. Properties that you view are likely to be vacant and furnished so you are able to move in the next day. Please don't be worried about arriving and not being able to find anything!

We have detailed information on finding somewhere to live. The volunteer team can discuss this with you when you arrive, or send it beforehand if you would like more information.

We recommend researching prices before you arrive. You might be surprised by the cost in comparison to your home city. While prices are significantly cheaper like for like than in other capital cities such as London and Sydney, apartments with all the bells and whistles are likely to be more expensive than you might think. However, it is definitely possible to find somewhere on a budget, particularly if you are open to local-style apartments, and house shares will always be the cheaper option.

We do not recommend that volunteers stay in the Steung Meanchey area. It is isolated from the rest of the city, making it difficult to travel to and from at night. It does not have the facilities that you would need, and there is a higher risk of crime. We would recommend the following hostels, hotels, and guest houses that are close to CCF for your first week; after that you can see what else is available in town in person. Other options can be found on booking sites such as Agoda, Booking.com, and TripAdvisor:

#### **The Mad Monkey Hostel**

A popular hostel in BKK1. Popular with a younger crowd, and hosts a lot of events in the rooftop bar space. Priced at around \$6 for a dorm bed, with privates from \$16+ per night.

#### **The Double Leaf Boutique Hotel**

A boutique hotel in the Russian Market area, with a restaurant, swimming pool, and spa. Prices are around \$50 per night.

#### **The Plantation Urban Resort and Spa**

A luxury urban design hotel located near the Royal Palace. Prices start from \$50 per night using CCF's corporate rates.

#### **TeaHouse Asian Urban Hotel**

A boutique hotel located in BKK1. Book via Booking.com or Agoda for the best deals of around \$35 per night.

#### **The Flora Boutique Hotel**

A quiet boutique hotel in BKK2, near Tuol Sleng. Book via Booking.com or Agoda for the best deals around \$25 per night.

## CURRENCY AND FOOD

### CURRENCY

The Cambodian currency is the Riel. However, US dollars are used more than Riel. Depending on exchange rates, US\$1 generally equals 4,000 Riel. It is rare to find businesses who can take debit or credit cards, so make sure you're carrying cash.

A few pointers on using US dollars in Cambodia:

- Bring smaller denominations when possible. Small shops, local transportation, tuk tuks or restaurants might not have sufficient change for large notes (\$20+)
- Check that your bills are in good condition, as bills with any rips, drawings, or tears are not accepted. Generally any bills produced before 1999 are not accepted
- For change under US\$1 you will get Riel, so it is not necessary to get any Riel in advance
- We suggest you contact your bank or post office to get a Visa Cash Card, or similar product. These prepaid cards can be topped up online and used all over the world like a credit card to withdraw money from ATMs with limited fees. Because it is a prepaid card, spending is limited to the amount of money you load on the card. Each time you use your card, the purchase amount is automatically deducted from your card balance.
- Be careful using \$100 notes. A common scam is to take the \$100 away to find change, and return with a fake bill they say cannot be used. They have taken your \$100 and replaced it with the fake. Always break a \$100 at a reputable shop you trust, such as a chain

supermarket or coffee shop.

Banks generally open between 8.30am-5:00pm on weekdays and some from 8.30am-11.30am on Saturdays. There are an increasing number of ATMs around Phnom Penh, with varying levels of ATM fees if using an international card. Please note that, if cards are used, VISA is accepted at a much wider rate than Mastercard, American Express, or anything else. We always recommend using an ATM inside a bank branch for safety – they are less likely to be tampered with.

### FOOD

Phnom Penh has a huge variety of food and cuisines available, at a range of budgets. If you don't have access to a kitchen at your accommodation, don't worry as eating out at street stalls or restaurants doesn't have to break the bank. If you want recommendations on dishes, stalls, or restaurants, the volunteering team will happily share their favourites. Local restaurant prices run at \$1.5-2.5, with main meals in international restaurants running at \$5-10.

Minimarts, grocery shops, and supermarkets are located around town offering everything from organic vegetables, imported cheeses, and western products. Markets are good value sources of vegetables and fruits, but be prepared to barter. Do be aware that some goods – especially western brand names – will be more expensive than back home as it has had to be imported into Cambodia.

Vegetarian and vegan food can be found widely around Phnom Penh. Most restaurants in the city will have options for both, and some restaurants cater to vegetarian and vegan diets specifically. You might have

## EXPAT LIFE

some difficulty finding more exciting dishes than stir fried vegetables in Steung Meanchey and the provinces, however:

Halal and kosher food can be found in Phnom Penh, although it can be difficult. If you have severe allergies and intolerances it is recommended to bring business cards outlining these in Khmer with pictures to help you explain what you can and can't eat. You can find these at [allergytranslation.com](http://allergytranslation.com)

### EXPAT LIFE

Phnom Penh has a busy expat scene, with a lot of events and activities for expats and locals to get to know each other. Local bars and restaurants often host language exchanges, pub quizzes, comedy nights, and more – keep an eye out for flyers, and Facebook events. Facebook is the dominant social media platform in Cambodia; it's easy to find Facebook groups for everything in Phnom Penh from regular hikes around the countryside to board game tournaments.

If you'd like a longer list of some active groups CCF staff would recommend, please ask the volunteering team.

The following Facebook groups have been useful to volunteers and staff alike for most general things related to moving to Phnom Penh:

- Expats and Locals Living in Phnom Penh is very popular for all manner of things!
- Phnom Penh Housing group – the 'go to' for solo apartments and house shares
- Taxi Share Cambodia – great for finding rideshares on the week

end if you're travelling

- Buy and Sell Cambodia - particularly useful if you are moving in to an unfurnished apartment

Other useful sites:

- Expat Advisory ([www.expataadvisory.com](http://www.expataadvisory.com)) is another useful expat forum in Cambodia
- InterNations has regular events for members in Phnom Penh
- Meetup.com has several active groups and events in Phnom Penh
- Bong Thom is a website specialising in classified ads; housing, jobs, items for sale and some events
- [whatsonphnompenh.com](http://whatsonphnompenh.com) regularly rounds up the week's upcoming events, as well as reviewing local businesses

## COST OF LIVING AND GETTING AROUND

While Phnom Penh has a lower cost of living than major western cities, we would discourage volunteers from assuming that everything will cost pennies. Yes, you can live in Phnom Penh on under \$600 per month, but you will have to make significant sacrifices when it comes to eating non-street food, events and nightlife, and travelling on the weekends. Due to the need to import consumer goods from other countries, some day-to-day purchases can be significantly more expensive than back home.

All costs will vary by your standards and expectations; every volunteer comes to Cambodia with a different budget to suit their own tastes and priorities, and there is not one correct way to live in Phnom Penh! When planning your move it is better to over-budget in case of emergencies, or in case you end up craving your home comforts.

If you would like to discuss the cost of living further, please contact [volunteer@cambodianchildrensfund.org](mailto:volunteer@cambodianchildrensfund.org) We can give up to date ideas on prices, but do be aware that you might have different needs and preferences for certain expenditures.

### GETTING AROUND

Tuk tuks are little carriages towed by motorbikes. They are a popular mode of transport and you'll see them on most street corners. We would recommend tuk tuks as the best way to travel around Phnom Penh; they are much safer than motorbikes and scooters.

You can also use several local ride-hailing apps. PassApp allows you to hail tuk tuks and taxis and has a fixed price that is often lower than a traditional tuk tuk. South East Asia's answer to Uber, Grab, is also available in town.

Here's our advice on how to best negotiate and direct tuk tuk drivers if you are not using an app with set prices and destinations:

### LEARN THE PAGODAS AND MARKETS

Most tuk tuk drivers have only a loose grasp of geography and are not familiar with the sort of landmarks that Westerners generally use. For example, telling a tuk tuk driver a street name or popular restaurant will often result in a blank stare. Tuk tuk drivers will almost always know the names of the local markets and pagodas (wats), so it is good to know which one you live closest to and give directions from there.

### NEGOTIATE THE PRICE IN ADVANCE

It is best to negotiate a price, before you get in the tuk tuk, rather than risk having an argument at the end of your ride. Negotiating a price in advance gives you the leverage to walk away if you don't think you are being offered a fair deal (and walking away usually drops the price substantially).

## COST OF LIVING AND GETTING AROUND

### UP-TO-DATE PRICES (FOR PHNOM PENH)

Everyone pays different rates (some people seem to be able to negotiate lower rates and others seem to always pay more) but here are some tips to get you started:

- Prices never go below \$1
- A trip from Russian Market to BKKI is around \$2-3
- Across town (from Russian Market to Riverside) costs \$4-5
- From almost anywhere in Phnom Penh to the airport \$7-9
- Expect to pay a little more if you have more people, or if it's at night, or if your driver has to wait for you.

### NEGOTIATE IN KHMER

This will almost always get you a better price. Remember, there are three levels of pricing in Cambodia: tourist, expat, and local. At least, knowing some basic Khmer will move you into the second category. When you are new in town you will almost always get the tourist price until you learn what a fair price is and how to bargain in Khmer. If you are offered a price that is too high, whine and say "T'laina!" ("so expensive!"). Usually you will be offered a better deal.



## MEDICAL AND DENTAL

### STAYING HEALTHY

Because of Cambodia's hot climate, it is extremely easy to become dehydrated. Bottled water is inexpensive and available everywhere. Drink as much as you need. There are bottles of water and water fountains around CCF facilities; don't be afraid to help yourself. Restaurants in the city will serve safe drinking water; using sealed bottles is recommended. It is advisable NOT to drink directly from the tap water.

You should also ensure that you clean your hands more often than you would at home. A suggestion is to keep a small bottle of antibacterial hand sanitiser in your bag or in your pocket; they are sold in all pharmacies in Phnom Penh or you can purchase one before leaving your country.

Malaria is not present in Phnom Penh, however Dengue Fever, a common and extremely unpleasant mosquito borne illness, is. Protect yourself from mosquitoes with spray, long sleeves, and burners in your home.

If you get sick during your placement, PLEASE take the time to rest and recover properly. Phnom Penh is a harsh environment and pushing yourself too hard will only lead to an extended illness or open you up to additional ailments, not to mention the risk of infecting those around you.

### INTERNATIONAL SOS MEDICAL & DENTAL CLINIC

# 161, Street 51,

Tel: 023 216 911

### INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CLINIC

House # 63, street 456, Village 4 ,

Sangkat Toul Tom Pong I,

Khan Chamkamorn

Tel: 012 69 77 47, Dr. Meng Song (Khmer) Tel: 012 59 10 41, Dr. Reid (American) can also come as requested to this clinic.

### ROYAL PHNOM PENH HOSPITAL

888 Russian Blvd, Phnom Penh 12000.

Tel: 023 991 000

### ROOMCHANG DENTAL CLINIC

4 KeoChea (St. 184), Sangkat PhsarThmey III,

Khan Daun Penh,

Phnom Penh.

Tel: 023 211 338

## STAYING SAFE

The safety of our volunteers is paramount to CCF.

While Phnom Penh is not a violent city, you should be aware that petty crime such as theft can be common. Snatch and grab crimes, usually from a motorcyclist, are common in tourist areas such as the Riverside. Be careful about your belongings when on the street or in a tuk tuk, and make sure your hotel room or apartment is always secure. Here are some safety tips that can help you avoid being an easy target:

- Avoid using handbags or tote bags that can be easily grabbed.
- Use a backpack (worn on both shoulders), or a bag that goes across your body
- Avoid using your phone in the street – if you need to make a call, step inside a cafe
- When you're travelling in a tuk tuk, secure your bags around your body
- When you're using an ATM, be careful of your surroundings
- If you're travelling by bus, carry all your valuables with you, and not in the bag you put below deck
- Secure your valuables in your apartment or hotel. Be aware that apartment break-ins are common, so make sure all doors and windows are closed and locked. Make sure keys and valuables are kept away from and out of sight of windows
- Be aware that crime increases around major holidays such as Khmer New Year

If you are a victim of theft during your time in Phnom Penh, the

volunteering team are able to support you in reporting the crime to the local police. You will need a police report in order to make a claim to your insurance. Before you arrive, we would recommend making sure you understand what your insurance will cover you for, how you can claim it, and how you are able to cancel your debit and credit cards from abroad.

You should also be aware that the roads on Cambodia can be dangerous. There are few traffic laws (and even fewer are followed), and drink driving is common. Always be vigilant, and follow our advice:

- Avoid travelling between cities at night. Most accidents happen at night, due to poor visibility and hazards on the roads
- Don't travel in a tuk tuk if the driver appears drunk. Don't be afraid of finding a different way home
- If you are walking, be aware of traffic around you
- Do not travel by moto-taxi (moto dop), as accidents are more likely with this form of transport
- Do not ride a motorcycle unless you are licensed and insured to do so. Always wear a helmet!
- If you ride a bicycle, make sure it's properly serviced and that you're wearing a helmet

Violent crime and assault is rare, but not unheard of in Phnom Penh. We would recommend you have the same vigilance as you would back home. If you are a victim of a serious crime, CCF will support you in whatever way you choose to proceed.



## CULTURAL TIPS

Culture and tradition are very important to the Cambodian people and can be seen in everyday life and activities. By showing your respect to the local people you meet, you are also a great ambassador for your home country. Visitors to Cambodia should take care to observe local customs and practices by following common tips, as listed below. We will discuss this in-depth during your orientation and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.

### CAMBODIAN “DON'Ts”

- Lose your cool in public. To shout or criticise someone in front of others is completely unacceptable. Take a breath, keep calm and try to keep your sense of humour in frustrating situations.
- Point with your index finger.
- Kiss or hug someone for greeting or engage in provocative or over the top displays of affection. You will make those around you very embarrassed and it looks poorly on you.
- Go too far when bargaining. Settle on a price that is reasonable for everyone. Think of bargaining as a dialogue to find a fair price for all. Simply make a price that is lower than the initial suggestion and go from there.
- Be afraid to ask if you are unclear on something or if you need further information. Cambodians are proud people and happy to share their culture.
- Discussing the Khmer Rouge era is often emotional and difficult. Please be sensitive if it's a topic of conversation.

### CAMBODIAN “DO's”

- Tuck your feet beneath you when you sit on the ground (try not to point your feet at anyone or show them the soles of your feet).
- Remove your hat and shoes before entering someone's home; especially a pagoda or temple.
- Ask permission before you take someone's photo.
- Dress appropriately by covering your knees, shoulders, stomachs, backs and cleavage especially in pagoda and temples or working with children.
- Bow your head slightly with hands pressed together at the chest for greeting.

### USEFUL KHMER WORDS AND PHRASES

Below are a few words to help you during your time in Phnom Penh. If in doubt, ask a CCF staff member to help you. We are always happy to share and help you learn more about Khmer language and culture.

### KHMER CLASSES

If you are interested, CCF provides Khmer classes twice a week at lunch time for all volunteers. Classes cover the basics and focus on words and sentences that you would find useful in day-to-day life at CCF. Classes are for all levels, so don't be shy!

If you would prefer learning by yourself, we have many language tutor contacts that would be willing to help you. One hour lessons are approximately \$10 and you can often get a discount if you learn with a friend.



# KHMER

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## Khmer

Chum reap soour  
Sou s'dey  
Ah run sou s'dey  
Ti vea sou s'dey  
Chum reap lea  
Ter nak sok sa bye tay  
Baat (man) or jaa (woman)  
Ort te  
Ter nak Chhmoo Ey?  
Knyom chhmou...  
Orkun  
Som  
Som cgut loy  
Tau veah tly pon man?  
Bok ch-weng  
Bok sadam  
Trong  
Som chop  
Angka Moul Niti Kuma Kampuchea  
Psar Toul Tompong  
Psar Tmey  
Psar Rea Trey  
Mat Tounle  
Veang  
Mun Ti Peit  
Sa La Rean  
Bai  
Ma houb  
Banle  
Cafe  
Tek Tei  
Tek  
Moi  
Bey  
Bai  
Bouen  
Pram  
Pram moi  
Pram bey  
Pram bai  
Pram bouen  
Daab  
Roy  
Moi roy  
Pboaan  
Moi pboaan

## English

How do you do (formal)  
Hello (informal)  
Good morning  
Good afternoon  
Goodbye  
How are you?  
Yes  
No  
What is your name?  
My name is...  
Thank you  
Please  
The bill, please  
How much is it?  
Turn left  
Turn right  
Straight  
Stop please  
Cambodian Children's Fund  
Toul Tompong or Russian Market  
Central Market  
Night Market  
Riverside  
Royal Palace  
Hospital  
School  
Rice  
Meat or soup  
Vegetable  
Coffee  
Tea  
Water  
One  
Two  
Three  
Four  
Five  
Six  
Seven  
Eight  
Nine  
Ten  
Hundred  
One hundred  
Thousand  
One thousand



**Transforming**lives

## Contact Details

**Registered office:**

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