

# Volunteer Stuart Westcott

Partner organisation All Ears Cambodia | Phnom Penh

Management accountant and a psychology graduate Stuart Westcott chose to volunteer in part to 'push his own boundaries, to experience new things, places and people' whilst 'being of service to others' as well. All Ears Cambodia (AEC) provides vital support to children and adults affected by deafness and ear disease through diagnosis, treatment and referral, with care directed at those most in need. "There is no cause nobler than to give the weakest a better future; to give them a chance and to see how they fly" (AEC website). There are permanent clinics in two of the major cities in Cambodia and part time and temporary outreach clinics are also provided in other locations across the country.

## THE ASSIGNMENT

AEC's financial records and reporting were mainly dealt with by the Director, a doctor and audiologist who had no financial training and used a 'paper and calculator' method of bookkeeping. They were growing quickly and required a higher quality of financial reporting to donors (a donor had recently requested audited accounts as a condition of a grant), as well as more useful management information and a more efficient method of bookkeeping. Previous volunteers had developed a computer-based method of bookkeeping and prepared detailed annual financial statements, but AEC was not able to maintain the books in the suggested format or prepare the financial statements independently, so the initial objective of Stuart's placement was to help equip AEC to carry out these tasks themselves.



*"By the end of my placement I felt inspired, motivated, and with a widened sense of perspective. It gave me a greater appreciation of my own skills and value, and an increased sense of self confidence both at work and more widely in facing new situations and change."*

**Stuart Westcott**

*"Stuart's contribution was brilliant. An enormous amount was accomplished and he is dearly missed. We remain in need of the expertise, guidance and wisdom of AfID's volunteers."*

**Glyn Vaughan, Director AEC**

## WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

The Director was trained in an electronic method of bookkeeping, allowing him to produce management information and providing an efficient basis for the preparation of annual financial statements. General training was also provided with a view to eventual handover of the preparation of annual financial statements, which also improved the Director's understanding of financial management. A method of tracking the use of restricted donor funding was developed. AEC was then able to have a better view of how costs were being expended and how restricted and unrestricted funding was being used, informing decisions on what activities the NGO had the financial resources to undertake and the priorities for further fundraising. This work contributed to the on-going viability of AEC and hence the security of staff employment, helping to ensure that AEC can continue to provide training and continue expanding its medical care.

## LOCAL IMPRESSIONS

**Stuart:** Although apparently a bit of a 'Wild West' until not too long ago, I found Phnom Penh to provide a comfortable existence; decent accommodation & food, relative safety and populated by a welcoming people with infectious smiles.