

# Volunteer handbook



## So, you would like to brave the Geckos?

There is a big chance if you have come this far that you have had a good look at the Green Gecko website. If not, now would be a perfect time to do so! ☺ The most relevant information for you is on the 'Volunteering' page. There are some handy hints and important rules and guidelines that will be essential for a positive volunteering experience.

In addition to the website, we have put together this document that will hopefully prepare you even more. If you are a successful applicant and have locked in your volunteering dates, **please print off a copy and bring it with you**, or keep it handy in your email folders to refer to as needed. Some things may not seem relevant to you now, but will become clearer once you arrive.

### :: STEPS TO GET YOU THERE

1. Once you have read our **website**, our **Child Protection Policy** and this **Volunteer Handbook** (and have decided you're still keen to brave the Geckos!) then...
2. Email our volunteer coordinator, Liz, at [volunteer@greengeckoproject.org](mailto:volunteer@greengeckoproject.org) with a **brief outline of your proposed workshop plan**. Remember, the focus of our volunteer program is now on introducing specialised creative skills.
3. If your idea fits in with our needs, we'll send you a **Volunteer Application Form** so you can provide us with details of your proposal. Fill it out and send it back to us as early as possible - as we only need 1-2 volunteers at any time, our calendar can fill up quickly!
4. Before final approval of your application, you will need to send through a **police check** from your country of residence and **details of two references** that we can contact by phone and email, in line with our Child Protection Policy.
5. When you hear back from us as a successful applicant... congratulate yourself, brace yourself and start planning your adventure!

### :: PERSONAL THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU COME

We are hesitant to give you a list of must-do's as there is a tonne of travel info out there that is a lot more up-to-date than what we can give you. Besides, we have found the most valuable volunteers are the most independent. With the everyday dramas that go with 70 street kids and their families, we need our volunteers 'to hold their own' (to be as self sufficient as possible).

The one thing we can't recommend highly enough is travel insurance... a short stay in the International Hospital for a minor illness can easily add up to thousands of dollars here! We do ask for your insurance details on our application form. Please note that Green Gecko Project is not liable for any loss, damage or injuries you may incur, while considering your insurance options.

## :: VISAS

Visas are available on arrival at Siem Reap and Phnom Penh International Airports, as well as major border crossings. Bring one passport photo and cash (correct change recommended!).

**Tourist visa (US\$20)** is valid for one month, single entry. You can then obtain a maximum extension of one month, single entry. You must exit Cambodia at the expiry of the second month. You can then re-enter to start the process again. The Tourist visa does not allow for multiple entry.

**Business visa (US\$25)** is valid for one month, single entry. You can then obtain an extension of three, six or twelve months, based on the total time you expect to be in Cambodia and depending whether you want a single or multiple entry visa. **If your total stay in Cambodia will be more than two months, make sure you get a business visa so you don't have to do a border run!**

Visa extensions can be arranged through a travel agent. We suggest WET World Express Tours or RTR Tours, which are both in the centre of town, close to Pub Street. Visa extensions take about four days to process so take your passport, cash and one passport photo in before your visa expires. No paperwork required.

## :: THE KIDS

The sad reality is that these children, as young as five years old, were the primary breadwinners for their families. While thankfully, they are now off the streets and not begging, for years they were forced to beg and sleep unaccompanied on the pavement, defenceless to abduction, abuse and disease. Their family living conditions are desperate; extreme poverty, alcoholism, substance, physical, emotional and sexual abuse is high. We have some staggering statistics which we hope will put their backgrounds into perspective - 100% of the Gecko's older sisters are (or have been) prostitutes and 100% of their older brothers have been in jail.

Social Services of Cambodia outlines that, "As with many post-conflict countries, Cambodia has a high rate of violent crime. Men typically experience public violence from gang members, peers and authorities. Women are more likely to experience sexual violence and assault and domestic violence from men. For many children, such violence is 'normalized' from an early age".

While there are no statistics available on the amount of abuse that occurs in Cambodia, our experience has unfortunately shown that it is safe to assume that the majority, if not all, of the Gecko kids have been subject to some form of abuse or neglect. Abuse and neglect can take various forms, including physical and sexual abuse, rape, emotional and verbal abuse, trafficking, child pornography and hazardous child labour. Many of the children's parents have died or are dying from HIV/AIDS. For this reason and for general safe medical practices, we provide rubber gloves and expect you to take full precautions if providing first aid for scrapes and cuts. The truth is, we don't always know which children might have a transmittable disease (of any type), so it's best not to guess and to always be safe.

Once you meet the children, it will be hard to imagine the abuse they have encountered. The majority of time, they are happy and healthy and thriving with the love and care they now receive. A word of caution - there will be times when the children will act out for no apparent reason. We are not psychologists but we do know that old trauma can be triggered at any time. If you suspect this to be the case, please don't tackle it on your own. Let the directors know as soon as you have a concern, and please remember that your role at Green Gecko is as an educator, not as a counsellor.

It is also important to be realistic about your expectations of the kids. With 70+ kids, our home is larger than the average household, so it is bound have more difficulties than a typical family. Teenagers will be teenagers and will do what they can to get out of doing their chores, kids push boundaries and ours are no different! While the kids are aware of their boundaries at Green Gecko, it is important that your expectations are realistic when it comes to their behaviour. It is also important that volunteers do not pass judgement on the children or Green Gecko. As mentioned before, Green Gecko is a home for these kids and generally people do not usually walk into families' homes and make judgements. We request the same respect from our volunteers and ask that you enter your volunteering experience with an open mind.



## Helpful hints and strategies to get you through a Green Gecko day!

### :: WORKING WITH CHILDREN

By now, you will have given some thought to why you are coming to Green Gecko, what your expectations are, and how much time and energy you have to give. As you know, children need to be in a safe and caring environment to thrive. They need the adults around them show them respect, honesty, patience, and understanding... and a good sense of humour is really important! In this Handbook, we outline the children's normal day and what expectations they (and we) will have of you. Most of this information may already be familiar to you, whether through your own commonsense, experience or training. Nevertheless, there is no harm in reviewing it and there might be something you haven't encountered before, so please read on...

**SAFETY** - Child safety is everyone's responsibility. Activities need to be safe. Where there is a risk, think about how you will manage that risk. Your own safety is paramount also.

**MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES** - Clear professional boundaries are essential during your volunteering experience at Green Gecko. Think about the relationships you had with your teachers at school. The role of volunteers is to be 'friendly' with the kids but not 'friends'.

**HONESTY** - You need to be honest. Do not promise things you cannot deliver, doing so will make the children feel unworthy. Be true to yourself, and it will give a good example for the children to follow.

**UNDERSTANDING** - We all need to be shown understanding and these kids are no different. What are they feeling? Are they tired, hungry, hurting? Are they confused, distressed or unhappy? Observing each child will help you to pick up on how they are feeling. Take time to make observations and respond to what you see and feel. If a child is sitting alone in the corner, gently approach and share their space for a while. Give them a hug and reassurance, and try to follow their interests. Remember children may go a little step forward, then perhaps a little step back. They may have very little understanding of English, and may be relying totally on your body language to interpret what you want them to do. Give them time and keep calm. If you feel you are losing your patience and you start to feel stressed (it happens!), give yourself some space. Tell other staff and volunteers around you and take a little break.

**SENSE OF HUMOUR** - Being in a playful mood is the basis of all play. Any game or interaction depends on our inner mood. You can play with a child without any props if you have a good imagination and you are feeling playful. If an adult is too serious, a child will pick up on this and it will worry them. Children live in the present and they love to play. They learn well through play because it is a happy time without fear or stress blocking their learning ability. Adults can live in the past or the future, and they sometimes forget how to relax and live in the moment and feel playful. So bring yourself into the moment... and have fun!

**BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-RELIANCE** - When we are given opportunities to achieve, learn, take a chance and give something a try without being ridiculed, we begin to build a strong feeling of self-worth and a good feeling about ourselves. When we live with fear, abuse and mistrust (as most of these kids have done), our self-esteem and our feelings of worth disappears. We become afraid to try anything new, we are frightened and depressed, and it becomes hard to open our minds and take in new information because we are in "fight or flight" mode. This is why it is so important that we present the children with the right environment. Unfortunately, most of our kids do not get any support at home, little encouragement and not much praise. So at Green Gecko we constantly go into raptures of 'well done' and 'that's fantastic' to the kids, even if they just drew a couple of lines on a piece of paper.

Things we can do to build children's self-esteem:

- Showing respect, kindness and trust.
- Being attentive and listen (difficult when they are all vying for your attention!).

- Not making judgements about them.
- Calling them by their name (it will take a while!).
- Trying to give all children equal attention (even the quiet ones in the corner).
- Appreciating them just the way they are and enjoying their individuality (these kids certainly have spirit!).
- Giving them plenty of eye contact (not something they are used to).
- Giving your time to them (the precious gift is you giving them your attention).
- Giving clear uncomplicated messages (not easy when their English is not fluent).
- Using open body language. Open arms, a smiling face, eye contact, face-to-face listening, a gentle hug or a pat on the shoulder all send an open and interested message.
- Coming down to their level. We are a lot bigger than the children and generally so were those that have abused them, so try not to tower over them while interacting.
- Helping them to achieve and praising their efforts (like all kids, they thrive on it and have had little of it).
- Giving them positive support and encouraging them to take chances. Children need to practice what they know and take a chance by trying the unknown. What does it matter if that attempt is not perfect? The outcome should be that they feel good about what they did achieve so they will be happy to attempt it again tomorrow.

## :: GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

When guiding children's behaviour, it is important to give positive guidance. So instead of saying "don't do that", try "do this please". In other words, tell them or physically show them what you do want them to do. Communication might be difficult because of the language barriers. If you want them to drink some water, take them to the water and drink some yourself, or put a cup in their hand. Lead by example.

- Use short instructions and ask one thing at a time. Have realistic attitudes to what you expect of the children. Remember they are learning and they respond best to being noticed when they are doing well.
- Praise is a fabulous tool. Find the child who is behaving appropriately and praise and make a fuss of that child.
- Noisy and very appealing children tend to get a lot of attention (only the squeaky wheel gets oiled). It is your responsibility to draw the quiet children to you. It's not easy to not show favouritism.
- Remember play is exciting and noisy and busy and sometimes looks like out-of-control chaos.
- Be consistent. If you say no, mean no. If you say, "no- no- yes", you are giving a confused message.
- Be calm but firm. Children who are disruptive or rude or physically too rough with other children should be told a strong "no" and if they persist they should be asked to leave the activity. Do not put up with bad behaviour, especially from the older children.
- Never hit or shout at a child. Such behaviour is abuse and something they experience far too much at home. Once you are here, we will take you through our guidelines on behaviour management and discipline. If you need help at any time, speak to the volunteer coordinator, staff or the directors for guidance and support.
- At Green Gecko, we have more of a child-centred approach to behaviour management than is typical for Khmer culture, and our Khmer staff are still learning too. The way we manage kids' behaviour is not the same way they would have been brought up or even necessarily the way they would bring up their own children. Even though, as a volunteer you are the 'new kid on the block', it is ok to be assertive if you see a child not listening to one of our staff or not showing them respect. This will be explained further when you arrive, but if you are unsure at any point please check with the volunteer coordinator.

## :: GROUPS

Because the majority of children have not come from a stable and caring family environment, we have created smaller family environments to belong to. They have their own coloured t-shirts that let you know where they belong: Singing Snakes (red), Mighty Monkeys (Blue), Buzzing Bees (yellow), Cool Crocodiles (pink), Fabulous Frogs (green), Energetic Elephants (purple) and Terrific Tigers (orange). The groups (families) sit together for lunch, do their chores together and work as teams when they have carnival or sports.

## :: GROUP FRIENDS

As a group friend, you will sit with the kids during their lunch and speak English. We have an 'English only' rule during weekday lunch times to encourage the kids to practice their English with the volunteers.

## :: HOUSE GOVERNORS

Each group has a House Governor and Deputy Governor. These are older kids who have been elected by their constituents (their group members) and are responsible for general day-to-day care of their group and group duties.

## :: FAMILY SUPPORTERS

Our kids and families are supported by our outreach team. Each family has a designated Family Supporter, who works closely with them to address any issues they might have. If you notice any issues or concerns that extend beyond the day-to-day responsibilities of the House Governors and Deputy Governors, please speak to the volunteer coordinator or staff so they can follow up.

## :: CHILDREN'S E-DIARIES

We have found a great way for you to get to know the kids is to provide a small e-diary about any memorable interactions you have had throughout the week, such as an interesting conversation you have had with a child or something funny they did or said. It doesn't have to be much, just a couple of sentences. E-diaries are recorded in our volunteer database, which will be explained to you by our volunteer coordinator when you arrive.

Here is a great example:

*\*\*\*\* is maturing every day and becoming much more confident. She is blossoming into a lovely young lady. Today she has just been elected as the group leader for Bees. Well done.*

*\*\*\*\* has been quiet reserved. She tends to sit a bit apart from the rest of the group in the lunch hut, she will always reply if asked something but tends not to instigate conversations.*

*\*\*\*\* has stopped crying before going to Khmer school in the afternoon, which has got to be good. He has a back-to-front week, in that every piece of clothing that he has been wearing he has worn back to front - pants, t-shirts, the lot!*

### **QUOTE OF THE WEEK:**

*When asking \*\*\*\* what happens when we cross the International Date Line her reply was "we all die". ☺*

## :: VOLUNTEER MEETINGS AND LESSON PLANS

On Thursday mornings, we have our volunteer meeting. Here, we share our adventures of the past week and discuss any ideas or issues. Thursdays is also the day we come together to plan the following week's activities, because preparation is the key to less stress and more fun! ☺

## :: CODE OF ETHICS

We follow the Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics for working with each other and with the children. Please go to their web site and read the Code of Ethics at [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au).

## :: BEING PROFESSIONAL

Taking a professional approach to your volunteering is so important. Some past volunteers have taken a more relaxed approach to their service simply because they weren't getting paid for it... so we do like to point out that while your time at Green Gecko will be rewarding, exciting and fun, it is a full-time commitment and not a part-time activity for your holiday itinerary. Obviously, it is in the best interests of the kids to be as organised and consistent as we can (which is not always easy, but we try!). We hope you will feel a great sense of achievement from taking a professional approach to your work with us. We have created some guidelines to make our expectations 100% clear:

- No substances (drugs or alcohol) on the Green Gecko premises. Smoking is only allowed outside the Gecko gates and not in full view of the kids.
- Do not turn up to Gecko hung-over or smelling of alcohol. If you have a break during the day, do not consume any alcohol. Most of the kids have witnessed the destructive effects of alcoholism within their families, so it is essential that we do not give them any reason to doubt the security they feel at Green Gecko. Having volunteers turn up smelling of alcohol is not comforting for them. Ensuring that you are well rested will mean you have the energy needed to keep up with the kids, too!
- Don't wear your Gecko Crew t-shirt while you are out socialising in the evening, or drink alcohol while wearing your Gecko Crew t-shirt at any time. Siem Reap is a small town and people will soon recognise you as a Green Gecko volunteer. Please be aware that your behaviour reflects on Green Gecko and behave accordingly.

## :: RESPECTING KHMER CULTURE

Khmer culture is quite intricate and while our kids and staff are great at making exceptions and understand that 'barang' (western people) do not always understand their complex culture, the kids at Green Gecko have come up with a few tips on what they find important and are happy to share some of these with you. It's ok if you forget, but it is nice to make an effort!

In Khmer culture, as in many Asian cultures, it is believed that **the head holds positive energy and the feet release negative energy**. It is good to keep this in mind as you may notice that some forms of manners are based on this belief. Some examples include:

- Never hitting someone, especially if they're older, on the head, even if you're just playing.
- Not pointing your feet at someone when you are sitting down, folding your feet under you or directing them in another direction. This is especially important if you go to a pagoda or are around a monk or old person.
- Never throw a shoe at someone or hit them with it - this has happened in a joking manner before!
- Not stepping over people if they are sitting or laying down, including over their legs, as this is giving them your negative energy.
- You may notice that a younger person will never sit on a higher level than an older person or someone important like a monk.
- It is impolite to throw things at people. To be polite people will pass something with two hands if it is someone old or in an important role. With people younger than you it is ok to pass with one hand.

**Khmer people are traditionally modest**. Although you may see things changing slowly it is still considered polite to dress modestly. Therefore it is important that you wear clothes that cover you (no bums, boobs or bellybuttons on show please!). We have made this easy for volunteers by supplying Gecko Crew t-shirts that you are required to wear when you are at Green Gecko. By wearing long shorts or skirts (to the knees or longer) and by being careful how you sit when wearing skirts, you will be sure not to offend anyone.



## Rules of Conduct with the children

These rules may seem harsh and unnecessary at first, but please be assured we have very serious reasons behind them. If you would like to learn more about the reasons why we are so protective, please don't hesitate to ask management.

- DON'T SOCIALISE WITH THE CHILDREN OUTSIDE THE CENTRE APART FROM A FRIENDLY HELLO (unless arranged by management).
- PLEASE DON'T BUY OR GIVE INDIVIDUAL PRESENTS TO THE CHILDREN OR THEIR FAMILIES (favouritism causes jealousy and self esteem issues).
- NO ADULT IS TO BE ALONE WITH A CHILD AT ANYTIME (for your protection as well the child we ask you to be with another adult or be in clear view of another adult).
- DO NOT TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CHILDREN WHILE THEY ARE SHOWERING OR IN A STATE OF UNDRESS (this is to protect their privacy and you from allegations).

We understand that our volunteers have the best intentions, but to go against these practices could make the children vulnerable to people who are not as trustworthy as you. The children's long term safety and wellbeing are our highest priority. We are sure you can understand our position.



## Timetable

The Green Gecko Project is a 24 hour/365 day operation. The main hours for volunteers are Monday-Friday, 8.15am-4.30pm, although there may be some special outings or events outside these hours. Saturday and Sunday are mostly free days - the kids play sport, do art, ride their bikes, play on the computers and hang about, and many go home for family integration time. Occasionally, we may ask volunteers to help out with special and fun activities on the odd weekend, however most weekends are free weekends for the kids and volunteers.

On public holidays, volunteers are asked to organise and assist with fun activities for the kids. This might include outside excursions or games and activities at Gecko, like rollerblading, swimming and kite making. Holidays are always filled with action-packed fun for kids... and us big kids too! ☺

### :: MONDAY TO FRIDAY

#### MORNING SESSION

- Younger kids go to Khmer School from 7.30am-11.30am, Monday-Friday.
- Older kids are at Gecko for Activities, Khmer studies and English class.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION

- Older kids go to Khmer School from 1.30pm-5.30pm, Monday-Friday.
- Younger kids are at Gecko for Activities, Khmer studies and English class.

**What to do during the following events:**

Classes: In one session (morning or afternoon), the kids rotate between three different activities. Khmer classes are taught by Khmer teachers, English classes are taught by a permanent English teacher and other activities are taught by

YOU. ☺ The only day that is different from this structure is Thursday, when the kids are studying Bokator (an ancient martial art). This day we use for activity planning, organising, non-kid duties and the volunteer meeting. However if you are feeling super fit and want to take on the physical challenge of bokator, you are more than welcome to join in the classes once we have finished planning the following week's activities.

**THE TRAFFIC LIGHT SYSTEM:** Activities start with a one minute traffic light. We use these movement activities and brain gym exercises to enhance the kids' full potential as learners. The children are to start with one minute at red, where they are silent and clear their thoughts before green and starting the lesson or activity.

**ASSEMBLY:** Children sit for assembly, please encourage them to sit down and calm down. Please do NOT chat with other volunteers at this time, as you will see any little thing is the greatest distraction to the children. During assembly time we meditate, introduce new volunteers and say goodbye to the ones who are leaving, present awards or share any important news. Assembly is also a general house keeping and information time. Volunteers are welcome to raise any issues they feel are important at this time.

**CHILDREN'S LUNCHTIME:** All volunteers are invited to sit and chat with the kids in their groups for lunch. Your main role here is to speak English with the kids and try and encourage the quiet ones to practice also. This is also a good opportunity to build up a rapport with the kids, and make some mental notes for your e-diaries!

**CHORES TIME:** All of the kids are responsible for keeping Green Gecko clean. The grounds of Gecko are divided up into provinces that each group is responsible for cleaning and maintaining. All the Gecko kids are also responsible for washing their own clothes by hand and for cleaning of own bowls after each meal.

**SHOWER AND HAIR WASHING:** The Khmer staff will organise the showers but if you see some kids running in a direction AWAY from the shower block, a little redirection would certainly be appreciated. The children wash in the open with a traditional 'krama' (checked scarf) wrapped around them like a sarong. Volunteers are **not allowed** to be in the wash area at this time.





## Planning activities

At Green Gecko, we want to make sure that our volunteers give 100% of their energy 100% of the time at the centre so they AND the kids make the most of their visit. Preparation is the key to less stress and more fun. Below are a couple of sample activity planners to give you an idea on how simple they can be.

### Things to remember when planning an activity

- Firstly, is it safe? If not, what are the risks and can you manage them?
- The kids have their own activity groups (approximately 10-15 kids in each group) based on their ability. How would change your teaching techniques accordingly?
- How will you manage working with children who have little English? Think about holistic communication - body language is a valuable tool!
- We base our activities around a three-monthly study theme.
- What materials will you need for this activity? Remember you can buy things here and most are very reasonably priced. Green Gecko does have some materials, but if you think your activity needs certain items that you can easily gather and bring from home then please do so. Being flexible and resourceful is the key, improvisation is often required.
- Don't underestimate the power of creative play as a learning tool.
- Will it be fun for you? If you enjoy it they will too, so choose things you enjoy doing.
- Don't get stressed out about your activities. It's not about being perfect, it's about the journey - so make sure the process is happy and relaxed for you as well as the kids. We also have weekly evaluations to make sure your activities are on track and to discuss any issues you might have.
- If the plan is not working, make some changes and go with the flow... or ditch it altogether and start something new.
- Remember to trust the children to take ownership of an activity. They are normally enthusiastic, but sometimes not. If they lose interest, gather them back and give them more of a role to play. Make them important to the activity.
- One of the main pre-requisites for our volunteers is flexibility, and this is especially important within our activities. Things often change and you need to be flexible with fitting into wider plans within the centre. You might make a lesson plan that you never get to use, we need volunteers who can 'roll with the punches'. For example, power cuts are common throughout the year, with some lasting the whole day or rolling across the entire week. When the electricity goes out with no warning five minutes before the start of your day of computer classes, this just adds to the excitement! ☺

## Sample Activity Plans

These two examples are kept very basic. In Green Gecko, we would plan out much more detail, and have variation for the different abilities of each of the activity groups.

### Current three monthly subject: "The Olympics"

#### :: ME AND MY PLANET ACTIVITY

*We study Me and My Planet on Monday. It's a theoretical class about our theme and often sets the flow for the rest of the week's activities.*

<b>Time:</b>	45 minutes
<b>Goal/Objective</b>	Study the history of the Olympics
<b>The process:</b>	<p>The volunteers are dressed as ancient Greeks in a toga. From "scroll" they announce that the Olympics are coming to Green Gecko.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing out a timeline so kids understand how long ago the first Olympics were held. We put flashcards on that are related to the kids (e.g. when Angkor Wat was build)</li> <li>- We use the globe to show where Greece is. How far is that from Cambodia?</li> <li>- We tell the old legend of the origin of the Olympics (story about Zeus). Afterwards the kids write the story in their own words. We make a word list of words that are new.</li> </ul> <p><i>This activity could be used for all our classes. You would change your teaching style and difficulty of the words and your story though.</i></p>
<b>Materials:</b>	Toga - scroll - flashcards - story - globe - activity books - stationary box

#### :: LOGIC ACTIVITY

*Logic is an activity to enhance the problem-solving part of the children's brains. We use maths riddles, bingo, word association games and other puzzles to make learning fun. We also use our current theme for Logic (e.g. "The Olympics"). It could be as simple as changing the words of an existing game.*

<b>Time:</b>	45 minutes
<b>Goal/Objective</b>	Using maths in a creative form. Trigger creative and logical thinking.
<b>The process:</b>	<p>We have prepared different maths riddles (based on Olympic games) which we will give the kids as a class challenge/ individual challenge/ challenge for pairs...</p> <p>E.g.: In the 100 metre freestyle swimming during the Olympics games of 2010, we have Pov, Saron, Kunthea, Kory and Siengly competing. Pov came in ahead of Saron. Pov finished after Kunthea. Kory beat Kunthea but finished after Siengly.</p> <p>Where did Kory finished? Where did Pov finished? Who won the gold medal?</p> <p><i>This example would definitely be used for our older and advanced class!</i></p>
<b>Materials:</b>	Stationary box - Activity books - Prepared math riddles in Olympic style



## Final note

From experience, the volunteers who enjoy themselves the most (and we have the most fun with) are independent, flexible, quick thinking and resourceful souls with an innate ability to go with the flow. Despite our organised appearance (looks can be deceiving ☺) we are still fundamentally a big raucous home for 70 former street kids in a developing nation. We have no prior experience and are by no means a well-oiled institution. Programs will change at a moment's notice, and we will improvise and be spontaneous as need arises. We have no human resources department and times may get tough. There will likely be tantrums, traumatised children and even the odd victim of domestic abuse. The children have head lice and snotty noses. There is seldom poo and vomit, but it does happen. Travelling in a developing country (for those new to the experience) is not a walk in the park and dealing with 70 formerly abused street children makes the path even rougher. BUT in saying that, if you have what it takes and are not faint-hearted, then being a Green Gecko volunteer can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life.

**We will leave you now with a few words from a past (and returning) volunteer:**

*"We all live our lives day-to-day and in doing so we often don't take time to give thought to the full impact of that which we do. I once read 'Everyone has a past which drives their future' and I believe these few words reflect the Green Gecko Project. Green Gecko provides hope and opportunity where previously there was none and the children there benefit so much from their experiences, education and care provided them. As these children grow, Green Gecko will be perhaps the most singular influencing experience of their past and I have no doubt in my mind their futures will be so much brighter for the love and the opportunities created for them by Tania and Rem and the staff and volunteers fortunate enough to find themselves at Green Gecko.*

*I feel so privileged to have had the opportunity to spend time with this amazing organisation. But it's certainly no picnic. You need to roll with the punches, think on your feet, change and challenge your ideas at a moment's notice. It is physically challenging keeping pace with the children, in what can be very hot, uncomfortable conditions at times. Mentally and emotionally challenging because you are only too aware of very hard/abusive conditions these children suffered prior to arriving at Green Gecko. This manifests daily in the behaviour of individual children as/when something triggers memories of their past. You will work, you will teach, you will tend to cut, scratched and bruised bodies, you will cradle them when they are sick, you will cry, you will hurt deep in your heart, but in a most rewarding way... if you are up to it. Reward for self and life opportunity for the children of Siem Reap does not come easily but I for one look forward to returning time again.*

**Doug South, Victoria, Australia**