

The Youth and Children's Work Committee gave me a very generous donation towards my trip to Cambodia in July 2012. I had to raise £3,500 to spend a month there improving the lives of the community in Beng Mealea. I had the most amazing experience, and I am so thankful for the donation you gave me. I am so proud of the work I completed out there with the 21 other people I went with from England.



While we were there, we spent a day repairing an older lady's home. She lived there with her 2 grandchildren, and their home made out of palm leaves and bamboo had been affected greatly by the storm. It was a challenge to repair such a rundown home, but we took it on, and when it was finished

the feeling was incredible! The look on her face reduced all of us to tears, it was such an achievement, and it has since changed her and her 2 grandchildren's lives around. This was the most rewarding part of the trip, and it's a memory that will stay with me forever.



We spent 2 weeks doing a project at the local school which was tiny compared to my school back home. It had very little resources and definitely wouldn't have been a nice environment to work around. There was a classroom filled with old broken desks covered in spider webs, geckos and scorpions which we had to empty! We did up the classroom by adding cement to the cracks in the floor, dusting down the ceiling and painting the walls. We also repaired 30 desks!!!!!!



and made a black board! We even had time to do the same to another classroom, which we didn't expect to have enough time to do! Our camp manager was very proud of the work we completed as were the children! At the school, their kitchen before was just made of wood and straw, so we made a new one out of bricks. We managed to do all the walls, but we didn't do the roof, this will be done by the group who go out next summer.

Also, the surrounding fields around camp were rice fields where all the farmers grew food for their families. Some of the crops being planted





were giving people illnesses because of the ox which also lived in the fields. So in our evenings, we had a jungle garden project. It was a big field, which we fenced off using bamboo, where farmers can plant their food knowing that no illnesses will go back to their families! This was such a fun project, and enabled the whole group to work together at once.

I was also so lucky to go on a jungle trek, and had an experience not many people can say they had at 16! It was incredible; we visited many pagodas and temples, a bat cave and even swam in a waterfall! After that, I spent a couple of days resting, visiting museums and the royal palace in Phnom Penh! I also went to the killing fields of the Khmer Rouge which affected me greatly, and also S-21 (the prison cells). I was so lucky to meet 1 of the 7 survivors, only 2 being still alive. He lives to tell his story, and to hear what he's been through was awful, and I can't even begin to understand the pain he went through as one of Pol Pots' victims.



To finish, my trip to Cambodia was a life changing experience, and I am so grateful for your donation. I managed to change some lives around, and they've affected mine greatly. The experience, the memories and the support from all the people that gave me donations will stay with me forever, and I wish that all teenagers had the opportunity I had.



Emily Johnson