



Arivu Peace Child India

-empowering YOUNG people-

We decided that in honour of the new Friends of APCI network we would have a newsletter that was written by current and ex-interns and UG delegates each celebrating their time here.

Headlines

1. **Read All About It!**: Tessa and Hannah on 'India: Through Our Eyes'.
2. **Peace (Child) and Quiet**: Sam on living and working in rural India.
3. **The Lost Boys**: Wen, Alec and Freya on interning and how the Boys Home has changed.
4. **Variety is the Spice of Life**: Julia on interning with multiple projects.
5. **APCI United!**: Tereza on the United Games of Nations recent project "The Indian Woman"
6. **Tinker Tailor Appeal**: A call to aid the increase in vocational training at the Boy's Home.
7. **Staff Room**: news of our staff.

Read All About It! by Tessa and Hannah

When we left Perth, Australia to intern at Arivu Peace Child India for two weeks this February, we had no idea what to expect. What we did learn was that India was very different to home! The traffic, the concept of time, the people... but Arivu Peace Child India, and the oasis of the farm, eased us into the chaos.

As cliché as it sounds, interning with Arivu Peace Child India was the best thing either of us has ever done. We worked with twenty year seven students from Banjarapalya primary school, teaching them journalism techniques such as writing, interviewing and photography. We were flabbergasted by the social awareness the kids displayed throughout the program.

This was especially evident when we asked the students to pick topics to report on and they decided upon 'Education', 'Religion', 'Crime', 'Men's roles' and 'Women's roles'. The students interviewed people in nearby villages and took photos to create a book entitled *India Through Our Eyes*. With a great deal of help from Sam, Deepak and Mala, this book was presented to the students on the 12th March 2014. The underlying theme of the project was to promote youth empowerment by emphasising the importance of each of the children's voices. Below are some of the students' photos of India, through their eyes:



We would like to thank Peace Child India and the students of Banjarapalya for welcoming us so warmly, and for opening our eyes to the wonders of India.

Peace (Child) and Quiet by Sam

I learnt that my home for this year would be a farm in rural India while reading my emails on my phone, standing in a twisted position, on a London bus. I turned left to see up close the drained face of a tired mother and then right at the sound of a businessman jabbering loudly down his blackberry and I smiled. Six months later and the only jabbering I've had to deal with is that of the chickens roaming free over the lush green grass of Banjaraplaya.



The work that Arivu Peace Child India does is varied in location but the key aim remains the same regardless of where we work. Whether in an urban setting with the Boys Home or Government Schools or in the rural villages and communities empowering the youth is our focus. As an old Londoner the idea of community spirit, of a strong neighbourly bond is a difficult one to grasp. But in India, where water is sparse but shared and food is essentially communal, it is second nature. In London everything is close, winding streets and towering buildings, here there is space to roam and vista views around every corner. Don't get me wrong, take a rush hour bus here and you'll be standing in an awkward position but you'll also be answering the smiling and inquisitive people pressed up around you. "I'm from the UK, I work for a charity, I like India so far, yes I have eaten thank you." You can't go 100 yards without a smile or a wave in these villages and that is only the beginning.

So far I have been warmly invited and attended religious festivals, birthdays, school dances and a wedding. I have drunk a hundred offered cups of tea, eaten a thousand grains of offered rice and smiled in countless photos. The peoples' eagerness here to learn your language is equal to that of teaching you theirs and in my case they have demonstrated an impressive level of patience with the latter.

The farm is a peaceful building, sitting in splendour under the sun and in serenity beneath the stars. But it is also an opportunity to live, laugh, eat and drink with the warmest and most welcoming people. We work with and for them when empowering the next generation of their leaders but then they work so naturally with and for us, so that even though I'm 8,000 Km from my house, I am very much at home.

The Lost Boys by Alec, Wen and Freya

Alec on interning at the Home when times were tougher

I went May-June in 2008 as part of my gap year. I wanted to do something rewarding and hopefully helpful to others. I enjoy working with children and have considered teaching so it seemed like a good chance to do both. I had also always wanted to visit India.

I had a mainly positive experience at the Boys Home. There did seem to be a lot of politics going on at the home and it was a bit hit and miss in terms of what we were doing and how much time we had with the boys. When we did have time with them we were able to do some teaching although this was difficult given how many boys there were and language barrier. But my main impression was that the boys looked forward to us being there and enjoyed the time we spent with them.

Playing games with the boys and seeing them laugh was the most rewarding part of the experience for me. It was fun to interact with them and see how they all acted towards each other when we were there but I had the feeling that things were quite different when we weren't around.

It was also great getting to know all the other interns and Arivu Peace Child India staff members during my time there. If I had the time, I would definitely return. Even if just to say 'Hi!' to everyone who is still there and to see the changes at the boys' home. Because of the well run and friendly atmosphere created by the APCI team I would definitely recommend this experience to friends.



The Lost Boys continued...

2 Years Later: Wen on why we need to be at the Home.

I visited because I have always been involved in volunteer work and as I visited India I wanted that to be part of my agenda which became the bulk of my itinerary.

I visited in October 2012. During the Diwali time. My experience at the boys home is one that will last me a lifetime. It was a little heart breaking to meet these little boys with various backgrounds in such circumstances and we all wonder how their future will be like, how these bright little ones could do so much with their life if given some attention and resources.



But the visit and time spent there was motivating for myself. It was delightful for me to be able to work so closely with the beneficiaries and encouraging when you see them smile - knowing that at least this very day, you made a little positive impact on their lives.

Though I believe the collaboration between NGOs like APCI and the boys home's governors can be tighter and more cohesive, the results can be even more astounding! All in all, it was a good experience and I will be back and will recommend it to my friends.

Freya on how the Home has changed over the years, Interning and India.

I first visited India in 2008 and have been back 4 times since to see the progress that Arivu Peace Child India have made with the boys home, local schools and other projects. It has opened my eyes to the amount of dedication everyone puts in and I continue to support as many aspects of this good cause as I can.

The first time I visited I stayed for 1 month and spent most of that at the boys home in town. I experienced the boys home, a hard place to enjoy working but the boys smiling on the rare occasion made it worth while. Yes there was poor hygiene, abuse, poor conditions and a pretty bleak future for the boys living there. This I am glad to tell you is improving, the last time I visited the boys were healthy, well groomed, wearing clean clothes, the public were welcomed inside, a new governor was overseeing the home, the toilets had been resituated, a sun shelter had been erected in the central area and the boys were learning trades whilst inside the home to aid them on the outside.



On my free time I tried to experience everything Bangalore had to offer, I fell in love with the bustling streets, meeting locals, playing with children, the vibrant colours and scents, amazing shopping opportunities and have come away from the whole experience with dozens of friends that I keep in very close contact with today. Since visiting Bangalore I have ventured to several other areas of India and travelled around Hampi, Mumbai and the coast around Gokarna.

At the drop of a hat I would return and plan to again in the near future to check-in and see everyone. On my last visit I donated a computer printer to a local school supported by APCI, I intend to go back and see how this has impacted the children's studies and see the work they have completed.

I would recommend visiting India and working with APCI to anyone who enjoys a challenge, is understanding of other customs and can see the potential and necessity in helping others.



Variety is the Spice of Life by Julia

I worked for Arivu Peace Child India from October 2012 until the beginning of January 2013. I was really lucky, because I was able to get experiences in the schools, Boys Home and summer camp. Also I saw a UG project. I liked everything very much. Everything was different in it's own way. All three projects are very interesting and exciting, I learnt from every single project a lot.

The summer camp was the first project I was really working for. So I will start with it to give a short report. The camp was in the basement of the old office. In the morning we did English lessons and in the afternoon we played games, danced and did some arts and crafts. Every morning they had to write the ABC, that was a really good practice for them, I taught them the vowels, difference between Noun- Verb- Adjective, easy conversations, colours and animals. I liked to work in the summer camp very, very much. It was a nice working start for me, we had a lot of fun but I think the kids also learnt a lot.



In the school I was able to see the difference between the kids who went to the summer camp and who did not join it. In my opinion it is very good that APCI offers the kids an opportunity like this. Mala and Samy did a really good work there. In the school I worked together with Samy most of the time. We went through their English books and taught them unit for unit. It was sometimes pretty hard for me to explain the stories in an easy English. But Samy helped a lot to translate for me. We also played some fun games there, the kids always enjoyed it.

The third project I was working on was the Boys Home. I went there twice a week and stayed there with Deepak. I liked the boys there very much. We taught the boys different body parts, math skills, Indian history in the mornings. In the afternoon we played different games with them. Some boys tried to teach me the game "carom". Sadly it was pretty hard for me. The boys I was working with were very open to learn and they really enjoyed spending time with us.

All in all I can say I had the best time of my life there! I enjoyed every minute there. First of all the work was a great experience. Also the whole APCI family became very good friends of mine. From the first day they were open, invited me to their family parties and tried to make my time in India awesome.

APCI United! by Tereza

During the November 2013 thanks to cooperation of Indian and Czech branch offices of the United Games of Nations I got chance to join a project named The Indian Woman. The project was situated in Bangalore and together with other participants from India, Czech Republic, Slovenia, UAE and United Kingdom we focused on the status of women in Indian society and its' changes through time.



The project had two main parts: non-formal educative program for kids from a local school supported by Arivu Peace Child India which consisted of three different workshops – Art, Theater and Documentation. And research part mapping concrete stories of woman across all social classes, education levels and economical statuses.

As the member of Documentation workshop I really enjoyed our work with the kids. They were absolutely perfect, smart and full of enthusiasm with lots of energy and willingness to learn and observe new possibilities. They got a chance to learn something new and used it for a 100 % input. It was amazing to see all those small talented journalists doing research for us and asking their parents, friends but also neighbors questions which could be never truly answered to someone who is not part of their community. We could also see how the kids worked with the information they got and how they learned from them. Another interesting aspect of the project there, was the information we got about the Indian woman, their daily routine, life but also dreams.

APCI United! continued...

For me personally the whole visit was not just fulfilment of my dream but also a huge inspiration. I did not experience any big cultural shock as I was really interested in the culture diversity between our countries already before our travel. But it was nice to see and feel everything that I knew from books, articles and peoples stories.



India is a beautiful, colourful country with friendly people, with big hearts. And of course with amazing food. I was the luckiest one because I got a chance to meet young people who are socially active and work for their community and try to do as much as possible for others. It was a huge inspiration and I came home full of new energy and ideas.

Tinker Tailor Appeal

We have begun stage two of our increase in the vocational training for the older boys at the Boys Home investing some of your generous donations into the infrastructure available to the boys willing to learn tailoring.



You may have seen on our Facebook page the initial products of this increase in training and we will be moving on to print design to give the bags and shirts they've made colour and life. We are now talking to fair trade factories about succouring jobs for the boys when they leave the home.

This process requires all the support we can get so I'd like to thank those of our friends that have raised funds so far and make an appeal on behalf of the boys that are so willing to work hard and improve their chances of a rehabilitated life outside the remand home for more fund raising and donations from you, our alumni and friends.

Please contact **Sam Bayes** at sam.bayes@peacechildindia.org if you are keen on helping us with either fundraising, advocacy or even just more stories like those above to share!

The Staff Room

Homeward Bound: After a lot of thought our International Project Manager, **Sam**, has decided to head back to the UK at the end of August when his visa is up. As such we are now looking for his replacement and are welcoming applications for the role. To find out more about this incredible opportunity please contact us at india@peacechild.org.



Helping Hands: Deepak, our Boys Home Coordinator, is looking for Indian volunteers to assist our work at the Boys Home. Any recommendations or volunteers would be greatly appreciated, please email us at the below address.



Back in Business: Our Creative/Intern Coordinator **Samy** took a tumble recently but is now making a full recovery. We continue to wish her all the best and hope you'll keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

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