



Professional Volunteer Interview



Lorna is a GP working in Edinburgh who wanted to take a break after completing her training. She decided to volunteer at CCD for four months between August and November 2008. Being the first ever doctor we have sent over to Thailand, we wanted to catch up with her about what it was like working for CCD as a professional, and what challenges she faced:

1) What initially led you to want to volunteer for CCD Lorna?

I have followed the work of CCD for about 5 years after being touched by a report about their work with the children. I had been considering taking a short career break after fully qualifying as a GP, so I looked into combining this with volunteering with CCD, applied and a few months later was in Thailand!

2) What hopes did you have as a volunteer who could bring not only energy and time, but also a professional skill too?

Since I was the first doctor to go out, it was an unknown for both myself and CCD as to how and if I would be able to use my medical skills. My primary aim was to serve CCD in whatever way I could, giving the children the love and care that they so desperately need, even if that meant that I wouldn't use my professional skills much.

3) Did you find you were able to contribute using your professional skills?

Yes. Although it was a far cry from my daily work as a GP, I was able to adapt my skills to the situations I was faced with, assessing the children, advising on treatment where appropriate, and applying basic principles when helping with the general care of the children.

4) What were the challenges of volunteering out there having been trained as a professional under the UK system?

There were several challenges such as the language barrier, limited resources and working with people who had different ways of managing conditions, whether medical treatments or different therapies. Furthermore, as a UK doctor, I was not registered with the Thai Medical Council which did limit to some extent what I could do. However, it was an immensely rewarding time, being able to utilise my skills to help some very needy children, and even see some small yet significant changes in the lives of these young people.

5) Would you do it again?

Yes, definitely! I had an amazing experience and learnt a great deal that is impacting on my work back in the UK. It was a privilege to work with CCD and their dedicated staff and I hope to return one day.

6) What would your advice be to a professional, say a qualified physiotherapist, OT or nurse, who is considering volunteering for CCD?

I would encourage any professional considering volunteering to get in touch with For Life so that you can be put in contact with previous professional volunteers for more information about what your work might entail. Your skills, of whatever profession, can be of huge benefit to CCD and the children, and it is great to be able to share your expertise, but be cautious about going with your "western" hat on, expecting to work as you do back home. If you have a heart for helping the children and a willingness to serve, in whatever capacity, then you will not be disappointed!