

Interviews with Missionary Kids

Rachel Clarke lives in Phnom Pehn, Cambodia with her parents David and Lalit who run Bible classes, Sunday school and free English lessons from their home. Rachel shares with us about being an MK (missionary kid) in Cambodia...



How long have you lived in Cambodia?

I have been in Cambodia for about four years.

(Not counting the 6 months I spent on home leave or the short yearly holidays.)

How is Phnom Penh different to other parts of Cambodia?

It certainly is different! I haven't really been in any of the very rural provinces myself . . . but from what I've heard they are much poorer and almost all families are rice-planters. Also, there is a whole bunch of areas where the land is off limits, because of land mines and stuff like that left over from the wars that went on here.

What do you think is the best thing about living in Cambodia?

The temperature. . . DEFINITELY!!!! I love the heat and humidity!!! Also that you see and do so many interesting things here! Often, when I'm at school, I go out during the lunch break (this is allowed here) and just walk down the street, just for the sake of seeing what happens to be out there that day (different vendors come all the time). It's quite fun . . . everything is so close. I tell everyone that before I leave here I'm going to go out and make a long list of things to get them, and they can all give me their money and I'll come back with a bunch of stuff, like sugar-cane, sugar-cane-juice, fried rice, ice creams, incense, pea juice, coconuts and a bunch of other things. . . mostly food. Since there are so many different vendors and restaurants by my school, I always come back with something interesting!

The other great thing about being here is that many things are very cheap! Take today for example, I went out at lunch time and while I was out I got myself a strange-juicish-thing made up with beans and soy milk and a bunch of other things all combined, an ice-cream and two sugar-cane-sticks (each about two feet long) and altogether I spent around 50 Australian cents.

And the best thing about visiting Australia?

To see all my friends, of course!!! It is so great, when you've been away for so long, to see all your old friends and catch up on life!! Also, to go back to the more regulated lifestyle, with a normal school and proper teachers, friends your own age, tarmac on the roads etc. etc. etc.

Where would you call 'home'?

Australia, probably because I can speak the English language fluently and because it was where I grew up.

Do you speak the local language? Could you tell us how to say 'hello', 'how are you' and 'goodbye' (in english alphabet)?

Well, I learnt the language for a year, while I was at one school where they provided the language. However, I had to change schools and when I did, I had to learn another language as Khmer (that's what it's called) was not available. So I can understand and speak a little, but not much.

They do have their own alphabet, but I don't have Khmer reading or writing skills, so even if you could read it, I couldn't write it.

Hello is: chum-reap-sooa

How are you? is: suck-sabiy-cheea-tay?

Goodbye is: chum-reap-leea

Not everyone has an 'outreach ministry based in their home', how do you find that?

Well, it's a bit hard. Since I am doing my school work through Distance Ed., I have to spend most of my time studying, and it can be hard when there's a ton of people singing and talking and shouting downstairs!!! It is also not so much fun, because it means that I can't really feel totally comfortable: I can never go downstairs in my pyjamas, and when I DO go down, I am often greeted by people who want to practise their English with me, which can be annoying when I want to just pop downstairs to get something quickly. So, basically, I don't really like it so much, but I know the students have a great time and learn lots, so it's not all THAT bad!

Another good example of how interesting life is here, is that just yesterday I came home to find a baby snake at my gate! I had some of the English students (who study at my house) who knew about these things to tell me about it, and to convince me that

it didn't bite, before I decided to give it to my friend who had always wanted a pet snake. It turns out that the snake was a Python and that it would grow to be over three metres long (which is just the kind of snake my friend wanted!!) The snake is staying at my friend's house tonight, but we (and one other friend who was with me when I discovered the snake) have joint custody of it.

How is church different in Cambodia to Australia?

Well, the church here is in my house, we have a Cambodian preacher who leads a service in Khmer, and when he preaches the sermon, the English speakers go out into a separate room and have their own Bible study. So, as you can tell, it IS very different.

What's one thing that you enjoy about being an MK?

Being able to have a bunch of experiences that people who aren't, don't get. I have exposure to so many different cultures, foods, languages, temperatures etc. For example, living here I am able to try ALL KINDS of food that other people would never get a chance to try, such as deep-fried crickets!!!!

And one thing that really bugs you?

Well, I don't really like it that I have to keep moving around so much, because before we decided to become missionaries I went to one school, with a bunch of friends. Then we moved out of town to go to 'missionary-school', and I had to leave all of my old friends, and go to new friends. Of course, by the time we had finished our year there, I had become very close friends with the people nearby. Then off we went to Cambodia, and I had to say good-bye to all of my newer friends. Then I stayed in Cambodia for three years and went on furlough back to Australia, and had temporarily to say goodbye to all of my friends in Cambodia, Then I stayed in Australia and made more friends again. And the whole cycle goes on and on and on!!!! I also hate having to have to do my school by Distance Education.

What do you do to have fun?

The normal things: I go shopping, watch TV, see my friends, listen to music, read, play on the computer, play the piano, draw etc.

Is there anything you would like to say to the GFIG readers?

That if you ever want to go on holiday somewhere, Cambodia is a great place to see, and while you are here you can stay with me and I'll show you around!!! Love, Rachel

Lucy Collie lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina with her parents Michael and Elspeth who prouduce books in spanish for Christians and work in their local church. Lucy shares with us about being an MK (missionary kid) in Argentina...



I'm Lucy and I live in Argentina, but I'm in Australia for nine months. I'm living in the missionary flats and I have friends next door. One of the things I really like doing is playing on the computer.

I like living in Argentina because I've got friends there and because in Argentina I can invite friends over and watch videos. My favourite video is *Atlantis*.

My family has four people; my sister Katy is five years old, and I am eight years old, turning nine on August 28th. My mum and dad are Elspeth and Michael.

I like going to school in Australia. In Argentina I do two schools: home school and Spanish school and I like both of these schools. Now I am old enough to go to a camp in Argentina and when I get back I want to go to the camp.

Lucy's family, above, usually live in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her parents work with a Christian book publishing and book selling company called 'Certeza Argentina'. They also help with Bible-teaching in their church, which often means working with the very poor who live in a slum in the neighbourhood.

Naomi Smith lives in Japan with her brothers Jeremy and Rohan, sister Erina and parents, Grahame and Cathy. Her parents are missionaries with CMS, NSW. Naomi's father works with Japanese university students, organising Bible studies and conferences and meeting with the students. Her family also show's God's love to the students by meeting with them and showing hospitality. Here we talk to Naomi about life in Japan...

Naomi Smith lives in Itami, Japan with her parents Grahame and Cathy. Naomi Lucy shares with us about being an MK (missionary kid) in Japan...

Where in Japan do you live?

In a city called Itami. It's halfway between Kobe and Osaka, and it's a loooong way from Tokyo.

Which school do you go to? What is your favourite subject/things to do at school?

I go to Marist Brothers International School. My fave subject is English. And I like all the different sports.

What are your fave hobbies?

I love reading, e-mailing, collecting things, and any kind of outdoor adventure.



What is the weather like (compared to Aust)?

There's not much of a spring or autumn. It gets boiling hot in summer, and sprinkles snow in winter.

What are your fave foods?

Some Japanese foods I like are – udon (thick, white noodles in soup – omanju (japanese snack which is a sticky rice cake with sweet red beans inside) – senbei (rice crackers!) I also like Italian food!

What are your fave sports to play? Do you follow Japanese sports teams?

I don't follow the Japanese BIG sport, baseball, but I play soccer, softball, and basketball at school.

If I were to visit Japan, what places would you recommend I visit, and why?

Visit Kyoto, it's the traditional city with beautiful temples and palaces etc. Visit Osaka and Kobe, they are the big cities with character. And they not only

have the mountains but the sea as well. And Hokkaido, the place where all the cows is supposed to be pretty, but I've never been yet.

What thing/s do you love/hate about being an MK?

I like being able to speak two languages, I love plane movies, and I love knowing heaps about the bible 'cause of my parents. I don't like having to be dragged out of countries and their schools constantly, I don't like feeling different always, and I don't like not seeing my relatives.

Tell me three things about Japanese culture that Aussies might find bizarre?

They bow at cars who let them cross the road. Foreigners in Japan are called "gaijin", which means "outsider", all the time. Japanese middle schools are very strict, you can't wear earrings, have dyed hair, and your fringe must be above your eyebrows.

Any particular message?

Pray for us MK's. Pray for everybody! And read the bible heaps. And have fun doing it.

Dhanu Eliezer lives in Cambodia with her brother Dhiva and Mum and Dad. She answers some questions so you can learn more about her and the life she leads in Cambodia.



What is the best thing about living in Cambodia?

The best thing about living in Cambodia is that most things there are so cheap, and we get to see new movies even before they appear in the cinemas here. The worst thing about living in Cambodia is that it is hot all year round without any decrease in the average temperature of 34°C. There's no McDonald's or any other fast food restaurant that we get here, except one called Lucky Burger. The burgers are almost like rubber, but the American French fries they have are good.

What sort of school do you go to?

We go to an international school called International School of Phnom Penh. It's got about 350 students from reception 1 to year 12. There are tons of nationalities there, Australian, American, Khmer, Thai, Swiss, Korean, Canadian, French, Malay, Indian, Dutch, Fijian, Danish, Japanese and tons more. There's an elementary school from reception 1 to grade 5, and then there's a secondary

campus from grade 6 to year 12. There's no canteen, but there's a shop just outside that's owned by a Khmer family, where students buy snacks. At lunch, most people have their lunch brought to them by their helper or driver, so lunches are almost always hot.

Lately, the school has asked a hotel to bring some food in so that we can buy, although it's very expensive.

How is Phnom Penh (the capital city of Cambodia) different to Melbourne?

Phnom Penh is very different from Melbourne in many ways. The traffic is very different, and most of the roads aren't tarred in Phnom Penh. There are a few supermarkets, and many markets. You can buy almost anything at the markets, but they aren't in buildings, so it's really confusing. People dump their rubbish on the sides of the roads, which makes it smell awful. We eat lots of rice and curry, pasta, bread and chicken. Once in a while we eat in a restaurant; there are many French and Chinese restaurants there.

Have you visited anywhere else in Cambodia?

My family went to Siem Reap, where Angkor Wat, the old city temple is. Angkor means city, and wat means temple, there are

many old buildings like that in Siem Reap, because it used to be the city.

Do you speak the local language?

We don't learn Khmer in school, because the teachers aren't really good, but our parents do. I know a little bit, because my parents speak to our helper and driver in Khmer, but not much.

Can you tell us about your friends?

Most of my friends are from my school, some of them go to the International Christian Fellowship, a church in Phnom Penh. But, because they're not Cambodian, they don't stay in Cambodia, and they leave back to their home countries. Some of my friends are still at school, though.

What do your Mum and Dad do?

My mum works at the University of Dentistry, teaching English to the university students. My dad manages a centre for street kids called the Sunshine Centre. These kids spend most of their day collecting garbage to make money for their families. The Sunshine Centre gives them a break from that! On Sundays, at the Sunshine Centre, my mum and dad have helped organise a worship group with some of their Khmer friends. When they first started, I played the flute for their singing time, but I stopped and a Khmer man began playing the keyboard. Sometimes I play for big occasions, but I don't really have time to play every week with all the homework. My brother played the saxophone a few times, too.