

RSIS UPDATE

ROUND
SQUARE
RSIS

Issue 4 - September 2012

Well time has flown in the last six months, and as ever – the RSIS office has been a hive of activity. The summer saw four RSIS Project teams head off to Canada, South Africa, Peru and India Ladakh and they have returned with some great stories, and rightfully boasting of some magnificent achievements!

But we barely have time to draw breath, and are turning our focus to the five December Projects, which are only 3 months away! So read on to see what our groups have been up to, and see if you can find an opportunity to join a team in December! Enjoy!

Liz Gray, RSIS Projects Manager

July/August 2012 Projects Update

This summer we had four Projects out “in the field” all of which were highly successful and which left four communities much better off with both material, and spiritual benefits.

All our student and adult participants came away with profound memories, and impressions made deep on their hearts by the kind and generous communities and hosts in Peru, Canada, Ladakh and South Africa.

We had 85 students and 16 staff on our July Projects, from 32 different schools and we’re hoping that we can get many more schools to join in our December Projects so that all our membership is somehow exposed to the opportunities that RSIS Projects present.

We will put the reports on to our new website as soon as they’re finished, but by way of summary, here are some thoughts and impressions of each of the trips.

PERU

It was another great year for the Peru Project this year, and the team had to hit the ground running! On the first day in Lima they went to visit a shanty town area where Markham College had been working with the community on various service projects throughout the year. Our group went to the nursery school and painted a mural on the playground wall, which was a great team-building exercise! There was a BBQ that night, hosted by the Head of Markham College and several of his staff, and early the next morning the team headed off down to Cusco.

We had programmed a few days in the Urubamba Valley area to help the team acclimatise to the higher altitude, so on the first day the team headed off to Apulaya which a music and art cultural centre nearby. Here they learned about ancient Inca design and art and were then given their own set of pan-pipes and some lessons on how to play traditional Peruvian music! The next day saw the team scale 300m of rock on a via ferrata (“iron way”) with local guides. Once they had climbed to the top of the ladder, they crossed a wire bridge, had some lunch and then had a long abseil down to the bottom again. Apparently you could hear the laughter and screams all the way down the valley!!

Then it was up to the Project village of Quishuarani. Here the team set about building a greenhouse for the community. The group had to sieve stones and dirt, mix mud and learn how to build stone walls under instruction from the local people. Each day was finished off with a game of football, card games and plenty of magic tricks provided by our Project Manager - Rafael Salomon from Markham College!

During the mid-Project break the team visited Aguas Calientes, and had a great day up at Machu Picchu, where they got the opportunity to climb Wayna Picchu which is the small mountain you can see on the other side of the ruins in all the classic pictures. After this wonderful cultural tour, the team headed back up to Quishuarani to complete the greenhouse. The local people performed a traditional blessing ceremony on the building, which involved digging up one corner, and pouring wine, fruit and coca leaves into it! In addition to the greenhouse, the group split up into smaller groups and built 4 individual cold-frames (small greenhouses) for some of the village houses (some of which were a tough hike half way up the mountains!) and they earned a real sense of achievement working with the local families on these, who gave them some of their precious, stored potatoes as a thank you!

On the last day, some of the group went on a hike up to the waterfalls, and on their return found that the community had prepared a pachamanka, which is an earth oven filled with lamb which cooks slowly over the day! There was a “Peru versus foreigners” football match, and in the evening, the team from Apulaya joined the group with costumes, drums and pan-pipes and they all played music together and had a concert and dancing around the camp fire.

The team rounded off the trip with a soak in the hot springs at Lares, then returned to Cusco for salsa lessons, visits to some of the historical local sites and a round-up debrief of a very successful trip!



“A great thank you from Denmark where our daughter came home safe, tired but very happy. It has been a fantastic and unforgettable tour, an adventure for life!”
Parent

“Our daughter arrived home very bubbly, and hasn’t stopped sharing details of her incredible journey. Many thanks to all of you and the other team members for your contribution to an enriching, memorable and awesome experience. Lessons and memories will endure!” Parent

The team consisted of 21 students from Hotchkiss School, Stiftung Louisenlund, Salem, Landheim-Schondorf, Herlufsholm Skole, Gordonstoun School, Bishops College School, Athenian School, Mayo College, Cate School, Chadwick School, Scindia, L’Ermitage, Bridge House School, Regent School Pattaya and Markham College. Kate Gibson (Gordonstoun School) was the Project Leader; Duncan Hossack (Saint Andrews School) and Emmett Zackheim (Hotchkiss School) were the Deputy Leaders. Karen Niedermeyer (UWCSEA) was the accompanying adult, and Rafael Salomon (Markham College) was the Project Manager.

CANADA

We were really excited about this trip as it's the first time we've run one in Canada, and the program had an environmental focus as well as a community focus, so it was a "first" in many ways! While Canada isn't somewhere that immediately springs to mind in terms of "why help a rich country, when there are so many needy communities in other countries?" we wanted to expose students to issues and needy communities in "first world countries". There are certainly environmental needs in Canada, and huge issues with unemployment and disconnection for young people in First Nations communities, and we feel it important to look closer to home!

The team all arrived safely in Vancouver on 17th July, where they had only one night to recover from their long international flights, before rising very early to catch the internal flight up to Smithers in northern BC.



On arrival at the camp, the team had several days to get to know each other and receive briefings from the leaders. They also met youth from the nearby First Nations communities who had come to join them on the trip and they were soon welcomed by the Chiefs with a traditional welcoming ceremony. The team had some time for briefings, and also learned to make traditional round and square drums!

However, it was soon on with the work, and they spent the first week with Rangers from Parks Canada working on the very over-grown (and now unused) Boulder Creek Trail which runs through Seven Sisters Provincial Park all the way to a glacier. The team managed to clear and restore over 4km of the trail (to the river of Boulder Creek) which really impressed the Parks staff, especially given the huge trees and bush-cover that the team had to literally hack and saw their way through! In addition to which, the team had to contend with historically high levels of mosquitos and bugs! The bug season was meant to be over a good month before the team's arrival, but due to unprecedented high levels of rain, the bugs had stayed away until later in the summer. So to quote the local people - there had been a "bug explosion"! However, buckets of repellent had been pre-bought and the team soon forgot about their hardships as they were spoiled rotten by Val, the amazing cook at the camp who cooked huge amounts of fantastic food, including regular treats such as triple peanut butter and chocolate chip cookies!

During the mid-project break, the team travelled to Stewart to watch Grizzly Bears fishing for salmon in Fish Creek, just over the border in Alaska. Before they returned to camp, they even got some body-surfing in on a snow slope near Salmon Glacier, and travelled back via some historic First Nations sites, where they all got a chance to see many totem-poles and traditional buildings.

In the second week, the team worked with the First Nations community of Kitwanga to build a Council Fire pavilion for the community. This is an open-air circular building made of wood, with benches all round the side which sits around the Council Fire, which



is the main community meeting place. The team worked really well building the walls, benches and roof and some students also went to work at the camp, making improvements with students from the summer school. The team got most of the pavilion finished (the community carpenter will finish all the roofing) and there was a great Gitksan closing feast on the last night.

After this, the team embarked on a canoe trip down the Skeena River (after a day's practice on Ross Lake!). Due to some challenging local logistics, the team ended up having to split into two, and share one 12-man canoe (the other skipper injured his back the day before the trip was due to start). But despite this, the team had a great first day at the lake then all completed the whole of the first day's route, and then each sub-team completed half a day each of the final day's route.

There was a community feast as well as a Gitksan dance celebration on the last night, which was a real honour that is normally only bestowed on visiting Chiefs from other tribes. So the work of our team, as well as the local youth was honoured by the community in the perfect way!

Then it was time to say goodbye, and the team flew down to Vancouver for an afternoon of exploring the markets before a last-night celebratory dinner together!

A really successful Project, expertly co-ordinated by Thom Henley and his fantastic local team at Soaring Spirits Camp. We hope that this is the start of a long partnership!



The team consisted of 19 students from Westminster School, Athenian School, L'Ermitage, Hotchkiss School, Salem, Landheim-Schondorf, Markham College, Mayo College, Bayview Glen School, Indian School Oman, Chadwick School, Box Hill School, Gordonstoun School. The leader was David MacLellan (Honorary Member), and Deputy Leaders were Jess Caro Quintana (Cobham Hall) and Andrew Glenville (Regents School, Pattaya). The accompanying adult was Kerstin Koehler from Landheim-Schondorf and the Project Manager was Thom Henley.

"These students were some of the finest young people I have ever had the privilege to work with...the First Nations communities loved hosting the world, and they are already asking if students will be coming again next year!"

Thom Henley, Project Manager at Soaring Spirits Camp.



SOUTH AFRICA

Through the eyes of Clare Coverdale RSIS Project Assistant

After nearly a year of working in the Round Square Projects office in Bath, Clare Coverdale was sent out to South Africa for a taster of what its like to take part in a RSIS project. She stayed for the first 12 days of the project and here are her impressions:

Arriving at Kruger airport, after our short 50 minute flight from Jo'berg, 13 expectant Round Square students plus myself, stepped out into the African sunshine, tired but excited about the challenge and adventure that lay ahead. The rest of the team arrived on a slightly later flight and after a day of adjusting to new time zones and getting to know one another, we were all chomping at the bit to get started on our task of building a classroom for the Masoyi Special Care Centre near White River.

The fantastic ladies who run the centre on a voluntary basis gave us a warm African welcome when we arrived which helped to dispel any first day nerves and then we split off into 3 teams, bricklaying and cement mixing, gardening and playing with the kids. Since the foundations had already been laid by a local team of builders with the help of some of the centre's deaf teenagers, it was straight to work with the bricklaying and on the first day the team managed to lay no less than 7 rows! Not bad for a bunch of beginners! It was soon apparent that being on the 'kids team' was no easy option, as all the children from the orphanage over the road also wanted to come and join in with the action! But it was agreed that the gardening would be the hardest physical work of all, the task being to transform what was basically rock hard scrubland into neat hoed lines of planted vegetables using only the most basic of tools.

Each day we would rotate round on the tasks, so that everyone got the chance to do a bit of



everything and also find where their strengths lay. It was really great to see all the students gaining in confidence each day and watching as they formed close bonds with the Masoyi children. They brought just as much joy into our hearts as we hope we did in theirs. The things that will stick in my mind will be our group singing sessions, making improvised shakers out of cups, paper, rice and elastic bands, playing what's the time Mr Wolf but most of all, all the hundreds of hugs!

One day, half of the team including myself got to take the children on an outing to a nearby private school to play on the playground equipment and have a ride on a tractor trailer. As this would probably be their only outing all year they were understandably very excited, and despite their disabilities they managed to have a go on everything with a little help from us. We were also there to celebrate the birthday of a girl called Fortunate, and to make it extra special, Michael from Gordonstoun school had brought along his bagpipes to accompany us singing happy birthday to her. I'm sure that will be a birthday she won't forget in a hurry!

On 18th July, South Africa celebrated Mandela day, which marks Nelson Mandela's birthday and in his honour everyone spends 67 minutes in active service to the community to mark the 67 years he spent fighting for equal rights. As a surprise, nigh on 100 students from a local agricultural college descended on the Masoyi Special Care Centre and spent the morning, cleaning, weeding, sweeping and mending things around the grounds which was a real boost to the centre and provided much excitement for all the children watching on!

We also all had the opportunity to go on a 'township tour' with the wonderful Nitto as our guide. He took us to sample some of the local 'chicken dust' (the most delicious chicken I've ever eaten!), and to visit a group of traditional healers or sangomas as they are called, where we watched a mesmerising dance display and some of the boys got to keep beat with traditional drums. He also took us to meet his youth dance crew who performed an electric and energetic dance routine for us all and then they taught us a few moves which we then in turn had to perform! You kind of had to be there but sufficed to say it caused much hilarity!

Another unforgettable experience was our visit to a Pentacostal church service in Masoyi. The



singing, music and energy of the congregation and choir moved every one of us in some way and we couldn't have felt more welcome in their community.

By the end of the first phase of the project, the classroom had been built up to roof height and was complete with window frames, ready for the second phase which was to build the roof trusses. In addition, the garden had all been cultivated thanks to the expert guidance of Toby Brown our deputy leader. This will hopefully provide an almost constant source of food for the centre and any excess will be sold to raise funds for the centre, so a very worthwhile project.

I ended my South Africa trip with a couple of days of excursions which had been organised as a mid-project break. We were lucky enough to have a close encounter with tamed elephants at Elephant Whispers sanctuary, had a tour of a coffee plantation and had a half day of geckoing (one man white water rafting with no paddles!)

Our huge thanks go out to Liz Mackintosh who was our local project manager and organised the whole itinerary for the group. We are so grateful for all the personal touches and extras you did for us, it was an experience of a lifetime for all involved. And we can't wait to get an update of our finished classroom in use!

After Clare left the group, they went on to build the classroom up to roof level, seeing the roof trusses go on! All it needs now is tin on the roof, rendering inside the classrooms, then furniture plus books and toys! Once the work was finished, they headed off down to the Greater Kruger, to spend 5 days at the Elephant's Drift conservation reserve where they did practical conservation tasks, had lectures

on flora, fauna and wildlife documentary film-making and had a night out sleeping under the stars with a lecture on astronomy, and chance to look through a telescope at the stars!

The team consisted of 22 students from Gordonstoun School, Vivek High School, Bayview Glen School, Regents School Pattaya, Athenian School, Hotchkiss School, Landheim-Schondorf, Appleby College, Salem, Daly College, Chadwick School, Cate School, Scindia and Mayo College. Damien Vassallo (Landheim-Schondorf) was the Project Leader and Toby Brown (Bayview Glen School) was the Deputy Leader. Karen Partyka from Regents School Pattaya was the accompanying adult, and Liz Mackintosh was the Project Manager.

If you want to watch a lovely video of the Project, taken by some visitors from Canada, click the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiEPRTnidjY&fmt=37>



INDIA LADAKH

Another very successful trip this year which saw our team of 24 students, plus 4 staff and a medic head off to the Himalayan foothills in Ladakh. After arrival in New Delhi, the team had barely an evening to get to know each other before catching a very early flight up to Leh. This is at high altitude, so the first day there was enforced rest, sleeping and a few walks around town. The team spent a further 2 days at the hotel in Leh, catching up on sleep, getting used to the high altitude and receiving briefings from the leaders. They also toured round Likir and Alchi monasteries which gave them an insight into the ancient culture of this mountainous kingdom.

Then it was off to the Lamdom School in Thiksey where our teams have worked in previous years. This year, our group built a new toilet block and storage room for the school and had plenty of work to do! Lots of sifting of sand/dust, brick-laying and cement mixing was done but the team worked hard together to complete their task. It wasn't all



work, work, work though and the group had lots of interaction with the community which was a really special experience. They taught at the school, played games, did music and played a lot of football. Most of all, the local children just enjoyed being swung around and were literally queuing up for the pleasure!

A real highlight of the first week was seeing HH Dalai Lama on his journey through Ladakh. They queued up on the side of the road with all the local people for 3 hours, and finally his procession came past!

During the mid-project break the team travelled up to Pangong Lake which although is a very long journey, is a real highlight for the team. They drive through spectacular scenery, and at the top of the road is this extraordinarily blue, still lake surrounded by mountains. It has been used in a lot of films ("Dil Se" and also "3 Idiots") and the backdrop to many Indian music videos too!

In the second week the team finished all their work, and then set off on their 5-day trek. Day 1 was just a 3-hour trek up the valley, but day 2 was the real challenge - a trek of 8 hours up to a pass that was 4,800m above sea-level! On day 3 they had a 4-hour walk, after which two of the fitter team members went up to Stok Kangri Base Camp! Day 4 was another challenge, with steep, rocky paths up to the camp-site where they slept out

under the stars for the night. Day 5 was a leisurely couple of hours walk back down to the transport, and then back to Leh for a delicious lunch, hot showers and comfortable beds! They then had a final day to unwind and do some local shopping before returning to Delhi and saying goodbye to their Indian friends. The international team then had a day down in Agra, where they saw sunrise over the Taj Mahal!

An excellent trip, with some really hard work done by our tough, and intrepid team!

"Ladakh is a really beautiful place. The children in the school were so nice and bright as well. We visited some cultural places which was brilliant and for the last five days we went for the trek which was fantastic. I enjoyed this trip so much. I also made so many new friends from many different countries - I loved everything about this trip!"
Manoj, from Regents School Pattaya

"I have no doubts in my mind that I spent the best two weeks of my life in Ladakh and came back with much more than I had ever imagined. We worked seriously hard for the project, it was exhausting but extremely rewarding as it helped me understand the dignity of human labour."
Accompanying adult



The team consisted of 24 students from Salem, Athenian School, Hotchkiss School, Lendheim-Schondorf, Beausoleil, Cate School, Chadwick School, Collingwood School, Regents School Pattaya, Stiftung Louisenlund, Vivek High School, DAIS Mumbai, Cobham Hall, Daly College, Scindia, Doon School and Mayo College. Matt Hall (Gordonstoun School) was the Project Leader and Colleen Lee (Lakefield College School) was the Deputy Leader. Katie Stone (Saint Andrews School) and Russelljeet Singh Khatri (Punjab Public School) were accompanying adults and Tsering Wangchuk was the Project Manager.

THANKS
Another great season of projects and Liz would love to thank our fantastic leadership teams, our great Project Managers, Clare Coverdale (admin Queen and on-call support!) and Ann West (on-call support).

Without you all - none of these students would have had the life-changing experiences they've clearly had!

New bursary application system for RSIS starting in 2013

There are three bursaries within Round Square that are available for students, and in some cases adults who attend Global Member Schools. These are all specifically for participants to attend RSIS Projects, and are all partial bursaries. The bursaries are:

1. Peter Pelham Memorial Bursary

This is only for students currently attending financially disadvantaged Global member school, or students on full scholarships to Global member schools whose families would not be able to support the cost of a project. The maximum amount given is £1,000 annually.

2. RSIS Bursary

Available to any students from a Global member school who could not otherwise afford to attend a Project. The maximum given is one third of the total cost of attending a Project.

3. Governor's Fund Bursary

Available to any adult or student from a Global member school who could not otherwise afford to attend a Project. The maximum given is £1,000 annually.

Up until now, we have taken applications for bursaries on an ad hoc, first come first served basis. However, we are experiencing more and more demand for bursary funds, and as such - some very worthy students have been denied help because we may have already used the funds on other students who perhaps were less in need of the financial aid.

So we are going to change the system to make it a more fair process, which means that we will collect all bursary applications in twice per year, and allocate funds according to need. So there will be two deadlines to submit bursary applications, and the new process will become applicable for those wanting to attend December

2013 Projects onwards. The July 2013 Project bursaries will still be awarded as per the existing system.

Nearer the time of the change in procedure, we will send an email round to all Global member schools to let you know how the process will work, and what the two important deadlines for submission are.



RSIS WEBSITE

We are very proud to announce that our new website has been launched for RSIS Projects! It has taken about 9 months of hard work by our web-developers (Fat Graphics, based near Bath in the UK) and also our RSIS team to get all the content together, plus photos, designs, site-maps and everything else you can think of.

We have deliberately tried to keep it really simple, so that it's easy to find the information you need, while also being nice to look at and entertaining. We have aimed it mostly at students, parents and schools with some small areas aimed at potential sponsors and corporate donors. There are also back-room areas where students and adults going on RSIS will find all their Project-specific information; and another back-room area for Reps and Leaders which will contain all the documentation for Projects, as well as useful templates on risk management, project planning and anything else we can think of! We will send a message to all Reps in due course to let you know how to access the back-room areas.

We hope that you will enjoy using it, and that you won't come across too many glitches (one hint – please try not to look at the site in anything older than Internet Explorer version 9) All feedback would be appreciated, and we will keep adding bits to it as time goes on.

click here to see the site: www.roundsquareprojects.org



NOTICE BOARD

WANTED

Accompanying adult to go on the Honduras Project in December! You should be prepared to roll up your sleeves and work hard, enjoy the South American vibe, and be really good at salsa dancing. OK, so we made up that last bit, but grab the opportunity while you can as it's the last time a group will be in Honduras for a while! It's also one of the only Projects that finishes before Christmas, so you'll be back in time to open your presents! If you're interested, contact Liz at the RSIS office!

BOYS VS GIRLS

The numbers for December: at the time of writing, we have 42 girls and only 12 boys going on Projects this December (In July, we had 41 girls, and 44 boys!). Your challenge, should you chose to accept it is to find 30 boys to go away on trips in December so that we can have even teams!

WEIRDEST THING TAKEN ON RSIS THIS SUMMER?

Well we had bag-pipes in South Africa, which gave a splendid rendition of "Happy Birthday" to a bemused child from the township's Special Care home!

LIZ'S POST CONFERENCE TOUR

After the RS conference in South Africa, Liz has barely a week back in the UK before heading off to the USA. She starts her trip in California, visiting our three schools there and talking to staff, students and some parents about RSIS, and Projects in general. Then she heads up to Portland, Oregon to attend the NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) Wilderness Risk Management Conference which is a world-class meeting of people from all aspects of the outdoors industry. Experts come from the fields of legal, insurance, risk management, leader selection, media-management and program delivery and Liz is very excited to be amongst other "risk management geeks" for a whole week of information swapping and ideas!

THE MOST HORRIBLE THING THAT'S HAPPENED ON RSIS THIS SUMMER

Bug explosion in Canada. Due to unseasonable amounts of rain, the bug season was much longer this year. All the bugs in BC descended on the Deputy Leader in particular, who ended up in the local clinic receiving serious medication from the doctor who hadn't seen a reaction to bites like it!

Leading Questions

With Carlos Cazorla, Project Leader



"One night we were playing games with the students when something came flying towards us. We both screamed very loud and then laughed when we realised how embarrassing that was."

What do you teach at Salem?

Spanish and Theory of Knowledge.

When and where was your first experience with RSIS?

In December 2009 I went to Ilbissil, Kenya, to build a library. It was the last of a five year project and I was touched by my conversations with these Masai girls who felt that RS had provided them with better opportunities for the future.

You started on RSIS as an accompanying adult - and have risen through the ranks to be full Project Leader! What is the biggest or most important lesson you've learned on your route to RSIS Project Leader, and what would you say to others who are keen to go on a Project in the future?

The most important lesson I have learnt is that it is important to know your own limitations and to communicate with the other responsible adults, as teamwork is key to the success of the project. If someone is keen on going on a project, my advice would be to go ahead and do it; they will be supported by everyone. As daunting as it was for me three years ago, the RSIS Projects have given me the confidence to take up new challenges and I have learnt a great deal during this time.

What have been the most difficult, and most amazing moment on Kenya RSIS Projects and why?

I have been very lucky and I have had very few difficult moments. I would say that one of the challenges is to deal with some of the students who feel unwell and find it difficult to follow your advice. On the other hand, the cultural night at the end of the project phase is always the highlight because it brings all the students and cultures together and it is our last night as a group. Everyone has something to offer and to share with the rest of us.



What's been the funniest thing you've seen or heard on an RSIS trip?

Most of the time the group have a laugh at my reaction to creepy crawlies (or anything that moves). Last year Gordon, our medic, was as bad. One night we were playing games with the students when something came flying towards us. We both screamed very loud and then laughed when we realised how embarrassing that was.

If you had my job, what would you change (if anything) about RSIS Projects?

I would create more opportunities to exchange ideas and to share experiences with the other leaders, perhaps by creating a Facebook group or organising events. I would love to hear about how the other leaders organise their routine, what their main challenges are, what makes their project special, etc. I feel that the more opportunities for exchange there are, the more successful the projects will be. (editor's note – we have now set up a Facebook page for Leaders, so thanks Carlos!)

Why do you keep coming back to do more Projects each year?

The main reason is the students, both the Starehe boys and our international group. It is exciting to work with these motivated and enthusiastic people during the project and to get to know them as individuals. The project is an amazing experience for everyone and I want to be part of this adventure; rediscover Kenya with them.

If money were no object and you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and what would you do there?

I would definitely go to Cambodia and work as a professional photographer. The landscape, the people and the temples make it the perfect location.

Which actor would play you in a film about your life, and what would the title of the film be?

I would be played by Javier Bardem, one of my favourite Spanish actors. My friends call me Carlitos Fog because I am always travelling, so the movie has to be "Around the World in 80 days".

December Projects



INDIA

Spaces left for North Americas, Africa & Europe Regions; plenty of spaces for India/SE Asia Region to join the Indian team.

The India Project in December returns once again to the village of Katapathar where our December 2011 worked to build new classrooms for the school. The group in 2011 did an enormous amount of work on the new classrooms, which were being used several months after they left (once the roof was on and the walls completed!). They attracted lots of local media attention during their stay (check out the photo montage!) and their time at the village made a real impression on the community and those running the school. This year, we are anticipating that our team will be

doing several smaller projects to bring much needed support resources to the village. The nature of this project means that the community's exact needs are only confirmed a few months before our team arrives, but that means that we will have ready targeted, and needed work to complete. The team will also be doing some rafting on the Ganges at Rishikesh, do a demanding day-hike in forests of the Himalayan foothills and also visit a local temple, where they'll help to hand out free food to the needy. At the end of the project, the group will have a great tour of Agra and Jaipur, which will include an elephant ride on Christmas Day!



THAILAND

Spaces for Africa, India & SE Asia and Europe Regions only

We are delighted to be running another Project for parents and younger students in Thailand this year. Last year's trip was a huge success, as it gave young students the opportunity to have a taste of what RSIS is all about, and also spread the ethos of the IDEALS to parents as well. Two of the students who went to Thailand last year, are now going on RSIS Projects this December so will have the opportunity to take their Thailand experience further. So far we have seven families taking part, all from schools who took part last year. They'll be working in the village of Ban Pha-An, which is around 3.5 hours from Chomthong, near Chiang Mai. They are spending their 10 Project days damming a water-source, laying pipes from the source down to the village, then building two water-tanks so that the village can store



their clean water. The team will be staying with local families in their traditional Karen hill-tribe stilt houses, and will be truly immersed into everyday life with their hosts.

This is such a great project, especially because it provides a great bonding experience for the parents and their children, and they finish the whole project in time that they are there, so can witness the difference it will make to the community. We're really delighted that two of the boys who went on last year's Project are joining our other RSIS Projects this December!

KENYA

Space for the India/SE Asia & Africa Regions only

This year we are back at Riandira Primary School for the third year, and once again – we are building another classroom for the school. Liz went to visit the school in March, while in Kenya for the conference and saw first hand the huge difference that our new classrooms have made for the school. The students were all cramped into very old, mud-brick rooms, with mud floors, no proper windows or doors. We visited the school's kitchen, where they cook for hundreds of children several times per day, and with no exaggeration – it is a ram-shackle hut made of planks and tin (see photo!), and an open fire. We asked the teacher if our team could also build a new kitchen, but he laughed and said that if we built a kitchen out of

bricks, with windows and doors – the school would have to use it as a classroom and would just build another kitchen out of wood and tin somewhere else. That is how desperate they are for classrooms.

After the Project work is over, the team heads off to the Masai Mara National Park for a 4-day safari, during which they will also visit a local Masai village, and spend Christmas Day at a special part of the park with a nice lunch!



CAMBODIA

Vacancies for India & SE Asia students only

This year's team returns to Prokeab, where the 2011 team built a one-room school for the community. This year's team will be building a family care centre next door to the school, and this will be a multi-functional facility which will provide secure, temporary care for the mothers and children who need assistance (meals, clothing, temporary accommodation) and it will also provide vocational and occupational training programs for needy and landmine-affected families. There is no other resource like this in the area, which is a commune of nearly 9,000 people.

As well as the Project work, the team will do a day of Cambodian cookery classes, visits to local enterprises, a 3-day trip to the World Heritage Site of Angkor Wat, and will visit museums and sites in Phnom Penh which will give them an overview of Cambodia's turbulent history.



HONDURAS

A few spaces left for students in the Europe, Africa & North America Regions

Well this is the last year that we shall be working with SAN after many years of trips to Honduras. We've had a wonderful time with them, helping to build resources for their orphanage and boys farm, and we only wish we could find a way to measure what the impact has been on the children in the community. What is for sure is that they've been exposed to visitors from all over the world, and have store-rooms, computer

rooms, classrooms, carpentry room and dormitories - all thanks to our teams!

This year the team is going to finish with a flourish and work with some of the communities that SAN works with around their centre in Nuevo Paraiso, just a couple of hours from Tegucigalpa. The team will work with different households to build safe, smoke-less ovens for them. This will have a huge

impact on their lives as normally they would cook on an open fire indoors, which means huge levels of smoke inhalation and all the diseases and ill-health that goes with that. So the team will make stoves out of brick, concrete and metal (to architect's designs) and will work with families throughout. During the mid-project break they will have a chance to see some of the local area, and go shopping in the markets, and after the trip

- they travel out to Tela, on the coast to get some quality beach time, and also go and explore some of the National Parks by boat!



To honour our time in Honduras, we thought we'd look back on our time there and take stock of the achievements of RSIS and SAN

What's been achieved for the SAN community from 2005 to 2012:

- A dormitory for 30 boys
- A large dining hall
- A boarding house for visiting volunteers and overflow accommodation for the boys at the agricultural school
- A food preparation room for selling food at the markets, earning SAN boys some extra income
- A huge water storage tank to help irrigate the greenhouses at SAN's garden
- A carpentry classrooms constructed to allow the boys at SAN to learn new skills
- A food storage room for the kitchens
- Stoves for family houses in the community
- House for teachers

We have spent over £30,000 from the Prince Alexander Project Fund in order to build all the above!

Materials used:

For each wall and floor that our teams have built in the last 6 years, each team has used:

For each wall:

- 53 bricks per square metre
- 0.37 bags of cement per square metre
- 0.0055 cubic metre of sand for every square metre
- 0.34 metres of rebar for square metre

For each floor:

- 0.8 bags of cement per square metre
- 0.0047 cubic metres of sand per square metre
- 0.006 cubic metres of gravel per square metre
- 0.66 rebar per square metre

What it's meant to SAN and the community:

SAN (Sociedad Amigos de los Ninos) was started to take in boys from mountainous and rural areas, and give them training and education in aspects of agriculture, carpentry and other practical skills. Many of these boys are orphans, and have lost one or both parents to suicide or illness. With education and training, these boys stand a much higher chance of earning good money in the future, and being able to support their communities and families as a result. The impact that our groups have had on SAN are huge in terms of the number of buildings we've been able to create for them. Without the dormitories, many of the boys would not even be able to come to school at all, as they come from remote areas with no existing facility. Without the food preparation and storage areas, the facilities for catering, and preparation for food that they can sell would be non-existent. Without the water storage, they wouldn't be able to easily irrigate their gardens, and without the classrooms - clearly they wouldn't be able to provide the boys with the education and training they need to get on in life.

What is harder to measure is the emotional and social impact that the projects have had on the children themselves. Our teams have come from all over the world, so they bring with them a diversity of nationality and cultural input that the children at SAN would never otherwise be exposed to. Our teams have always spent time playing sports with the children, organising lessons and training and interacting with them on a close, personal level. The impression that these interactions will have had on the boys will be long-lasting. The impression that these boys have made on our teams will be just as profound, and there will be many young people in our alumni that will never forget the impact of spending time with the SAN community.

Highlights

There are so many to mention - from the RSIS office, we will never forget how much gumption and courage was displayed by the 8 team members who finally made it to Honduras in 2010, while there was a political coup going on in the capital city of Tegucigalpa. This event made the international news and there were riots, curfews and a lot of media interest. These 8 team members decided that they were going to get to Honduras whatever it took, and all diverted their flights to arrive over 2 days at a new airport up in the north. Our in-country team made multiple journeys to get them, and during the trip - the team saw absolutely no signs of trouble at all. They were determined to go and help the SAN community at a time when many were deserting Honduras, and they felt proud to represent their schools and countries.

"The experience was definitely a life changing one for me. My favourite memory is too hard to pinpoint as I have too many but definitely getting to know the boys. The trip was physically challenging of course but I think it was more emotionally challenging than anything else. Just truly realising how unfair, unjust and unequal the world is really puts my problems into perspective. My trip to Honduras helped motivate me to focus my studying on helping people and I am now doing a BA at the University of Queensland (Australia) majoring in International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies. I sponsored one boy from Flor Azul, Nolis, through the Hope for Honduran Children Foundation (H/H/C) and now I sponsor another boy, Merlin. I am currently trying to raise money for a new computer for Flor Azul through H/H/C."



Lana and I planned to take a trip back there when we are 30 and I hope she hasn't forgotten. If I went back the only thing I would do differently would be to work harder and take more pictures."

Olivia Forrest, Gordonstoun who went to Honduras in 2008

What did they say?

"I met a little girl, Larissa in Nuevo Paraíso - we were laughing, playing hide and seek and I got a tour of her house, and met all of her friends. The pleasure that she gained from sharing a piece of fruit with a new, strange friend really put my own life into perspective. Every moment I spent at Nuevo Paraíso reinforced this realisation as well. Simplicity fosters happiness and virtues such as generosity, kindness, compassion, love and selflessness. The children I met owned next to nothing, slept in simple rooms, ate simple food, and yet they seemed more content and filled with more vitality and love than myself and most other children I have ever known.

I found each and every one of them truly inspiring and it would take a whole book to write down all the memories I have of them. Some of the work was hard, but it was more about persistence than brute strength. There was nothing that couldn't be done by the group, and that's why it is such a great project. Everyone can contribute to it and feel as though they have made a difference. If I could go back and do another project, I know I would take the experience very differently. Over the past year I have been involved with a number of forums and activities including RSIS that have helped me to grow and develop as a person, a team member and I leader. I know I would make more of an effort to create bonds and strong friendships within the group because I value group dynamics and bonding very highly."



Rachael McCullough,
St Philips College who went
to Honduras 2011

"My experience with Round Square has been great not only because it's a great organization but because it's such a cultural experience having teenage kids from different parts of the world. It amazes me how fast they become friends and learn to work together. Also the organization for the group for me is fantastic because everything is so organized and detailed that by the time the group comes everything is so easy. I guess what I like the most is seeing all this kids from different part of the world to come from so far and help the kids of Honduras, all the help that Round Square has given us is very much appreciated we wish we could have them for more time! People can't imagine the impact that building a storage room, a water tank, etc does for the people just by improving their health is a great thing."

Cato Elvir,
Project Manager from
Sociedad Amigos de
los Niños
(RSIS Honduras
2008 to 2012)



"I have had a wonderful experience with all the Round Square Service Projects I have participated in. The first one in March 2007 was only the third time in my life that I had travelled anywhere by plane! That project confirmed that I wanted to continue my involvement with service projects and began my continued interaction not only in Honduras but in Central America.

Looking back there have been challenges - the occasional illness, managing logistics and budget when I first started leading this project, a political coup... but these things all pale in comparison to the overwhelming number of positive experiences that have taken place. I know each individual and group has not only made a unique and lasting impact with me, but with everyone else they have encountered as well. None of them, their work or the spirit they brought with them will be forgotten any time soon. A big thank you to each person I have had the pleasure of meeting and working alongside during the course of this project - I hope our travels have us cross paths again!"



Lesley Buckmaster,
Project Leader
from Appleby
College
(RSIS Honduras
2007 to 2012)



Schools, students and leaders who've **contributed** to the RSIS Honduras Project

2005

17 students from Gordonstoun, Lakefield College School, St. Clements School, Salem and Appleby College.
Leader Libby Dalrymple - Lakefield College School.
Ass Leader Richard Greenway - Aiglon College
2 staff from Appleby College also attended.

2006

17 students from Gordonstoun, Lakefield College School, St. Stithians Boys, Deerfield School, Appleby College, St Clements School, St Stithians Girls, Bishops College School, Baylor, Salem.
Leader Libby Dalrymple - Lakefield College School
Ass Leader Richard Greenway - Aiglon College
1 staff member from Hotchkiss School also attended.

2007

17 students from Rothsay Netherwood School, Lakefield College School, Glenlyon Norfolk School, Hotchkiss School, Gordonstoun, Appleby College, Deerfield School, Chadwick School
Leader Libby Dalrymple - Lakefield College School
Ass Leader Rod Summerton - Ivanhoe Grammar School
1 staff member from Appleby College also attended.

2008

15 team members from St Clements School, Gordonstoun, Hotchkiss School, Salem, Lakefield College School, Athenian School, Appleby College, L'Ermitage, Deerfield School
Leader Lesley Buckmaster (Appleby College)
DL was Jennifer Moore (Lakefield College School)

2009

8 team members from Gordonstoun, Salem, Athenian School, Appleby College - a further 8 dropped out the day before departure, due to a political coup 2 days before the team was due to arrive!
Leader: Lesley Buckmaster (Appleby College)
DL: James Tudor (St Philips College)

2010

14 team members from Ballarat Grammar School, Bishops College School, Gordonstoun, Ivanhoe Grammar School, Markham College, St Clements School, Strathcona Tweedsmuir School and Landheim Schondorf
Leader was Lesley Buckmaster (Appleby College)
DL was Paul Shields (Appleby College)
Accompanying adult - Stefan Volker Schmitt from Landheim Schondorf

2011

14 team members from Gordonstoun, St Clements School, St Cyprians School, Ballarat Grammar School, Westfield School, St Philips College, Stiftung Louisenlund, Ivanhoe Grammar School, Salem, Bishops College School
Leader was Lesley Buckmaster (Appleby College)
DL was Des Vida (St Philips College)

2012

11 team members so far from Ivanhoe Grammar School, Wellington College, St Philips College, St Clements School, Bishops College School, St Cyprian's School, Ballarat Grammar School, Bunbury College
The Leader is Lesley Buckmaster (Appleby College)
DL is Des Vida (St Philips College)



Future Projects

Romania/Europe Project July 2013

Liz has been in communication with International School of Cluj-Napoca in Romania about potential RSIS Projects in July/August 2013. The school attended the Europe Regional meeting in January this year, and were struck by what a natural fit their school ethos is with the philosophy of Round Square. They are working towards Regional membership of Round Square and are very keen to get their student community involved with international programs.



They have put together some information and ideas on potential RSIS Projects in the area around Cluj-Napoca, in the north of Romania. These involve various ideas such as building sports halls for a school, re-constructing some historic buildings in the mountains and building youth centres. The work is focussed around historic communities in the area, that are still living a very old-fashioned (and therefore, mostly impoverished) lives. Working in partnership with local authorities and contacts of the International School, our team would do a few weeks of work in the communities, and also have a chance to do some treks in the stunning alpine mountains; visit historical villages and castles, and take in this unique culture which is fast dying out as they "progress" towards 21st Century living.

Liz is visiting Romania in November to go and check out some of the potential Projects, in the hope that we can launch the first RSIS in the Europe Region for July 2013.

Costa Rica/Nicaragua December 2013

Liz has been talking to several NGO's and youth organisations in Costa Rica and Nicaragua to look for potential Projects for December 2013 (replacing the Honduras Project). Although the two countries are right next door to each other, the needs in Nicaragua are huge compared to the more prosperous Costa Rica. So we are looking to find needy communities to work alongside in Nicaragua, and combining this with a trip to Costa Rica to experience their unique environmental and ecological heritage. We hope to launch our first trip here in December 2013 so we'll keep you posted!



Leader Training 2013

Australasia Region
(hosted by Regents,
Pattaya) - Date to be
confirmed

India and SE Asia
Region (hosted by DAIS
- Mumbai) - Date to be
confirmed

Leader Training
Project - December
2013. Costa Rica/
Nicaragua

