

## Sri Lanka

## Tom Cella & Sophie Minor

Our trip to Sri Lanka was one of the most memorable experiences of our lives. We met some lovely people, saw some fantastic sights and did things we never thought we'd be able to do.

We travelled to Sri Lanka having been in contact with Mohan Samarasinha and SPICE, in order to help run follow up TEFL programmes for English teachers. This was a huge challenge for us as we hadn't done anything of this nature before! However, we were made to feel very comfortable and welcome, and completed 5 two day workshops. We felt our work was greatly appreciated and the compliments and good feedback we received gave us a huge sense of achievement.



In amongst the workshops, we were asked to do a few lessons for teachers at Carlton Pre School. Whilst it was a different challenge to the workshops, it was also hugely enjoyable as it was clear that the teachers enjoyed themselves. As their level of English was fairly low, we could have fun with basic games, and rounded off each lesson with a sing-song! We were overwhelmed by their hospitality, as they frequently brought us gifts, and invited us to dinner and even a local dance.



This hospitality and friendliness ran throughout our stay, and was the same for everyone we met. The Sri Lankan people on the whole were genuinely some of the nicest people we have ever met, always going the extra mile. We were looked after for the duration of our stay by a lovely man who would always ask us what we wanted to eat on each day and do our laundry, whilst another man would ensure we were transported around and shown some fantastic sights on our free days. Even when our teaching responsibilities finished, they ensured we were happy and having a good time.

Finally we were asked to do a couple of sessions with the Sri Lankan Army, which we were pretty anxious about for obvious reasons! As we were pioneers for TEFL teaching in the Army, there were a few teething problems, for example we were expecting a small group of around 20 but walked into a auditorium of over 70, handed microphones and left to it. After the initial shock, it was a great experience, and one thing we'll never forget is singing Louis Armstrong's 'Wonderful World' with a group of Sri Lankan soldiers!

Overall, it was an unforgettable experience, where we were able to teach in the morning and



ride elephants, see hatching turtles, see waterfalls, swim in the beautiful sea and eat richly spiced foods in the afternoon!

We genuinely believe we found a jewel of a country that is pulling its way out of a history marred by natural disaster and civil war, and the happiness and enthusiasm of everyone

we met is something to be admired. Since returning, all we have done is tell stories of our trip and of the people we met, we are looking forward to going back one day, and we would recommend the experience to anyone!