Bali and Java - 2017

Cody volunteered as a mental health activity support worker in Bali and Java for a month.

The project she worked on promoted positive mental health and daily life skills to children with autism, ADHD and learning difficulties, alongside children in orphanages and individuals with sight and hearing impairments. Cody and the team planned and facilitated various sessions and also held community outreach programmes for adults with mental illness and disabilities.

The project evolved through its duration, as the team learnt more and more about the different groups at the projects and were thus able to re-shape their session plans. They quickly learnt what areas needed improvement in terms of daily living skills and techniques for a sound mental health.

Planning sessions for a group with a significant variance in English language skills was a challenge but Cody quickly learned the effectiveness of non-verbal communication techniques. She struggled seeing service users in in-patient facilities with no hope of leading a normal life, a contrast to the UK, where resources and support would be available for them. However, she and the team she was working with were aware that there is a long term programme of volunteering for the projects, which should provide the service users with more stimulation than they would normally have.

Cody found the trip extremely rewarding - seeing the difference in the projects and the progress they had made, particularly in daily activities and communication, were particularly fulfilling.

Cody valued the opportunity to learn about non-western approaches to mental health and to improve her psychological knowledge in a practical and clinical setting. Furthermore, the wide range of experience she gained from my placement has helped her get a volunteering position with refugees, something that she remains extremely eager to develop a career in.