

Julie Grant, new VSO volunteer at *aaina* shares it all



Namaskar my name is Julie. I'm a VSO volunteer working with *Aaina* as a physiotherapy trainer based with the CBR program in Kamakhyanager. I arrived in Kamakhanagar on the 9th of April with Dillip the program manager and was warmly greeted by the Sataybhama project team of Santap, Abhishek, Supriya and Lalit. My first few days involved visiting schools, resource centres and local villages to meet CWD and see first hand the wonderful work the project is doing. I've enjoyed getting out and about meeting the children and getting a better understanding of their needs.



I have met children with a variety of disabilities and levels of ability. Throughout the month of April I have assessed 28 children and worked with their CBR workers and parents on developing their treatment programs. I have visited a number of villages with Abhishek and visited children in their homes assessing their needs and advising their parents on home treatment programs. Working closely with families

is an important part of Community Based Rehabilitation. The physiotherapy unit in Kamakhanagar is a great space to bring the children to for treatment. We have treated eight children at the unit in April and aim to increase this number by organising daily treatment sessions and workshops for the CBR workers. I am enjoying teaching the CBR staff and find my work with the children and their parents

very rewarding. I look forward to developing the training workshops with my colleagues over the next few months.

Lots of things have been firsts for me in the last 4 weeks. Such as riding a motorbike, trying different Indian dishes and negotiating crossing the road in Bhubaneswar. I'm starting to enjoy being a passenger on a motorbike, although wearing my red motorcycle helmet doesn't help me to blend into Kamakhanagar. Everyone in work are quite impressed that I'm coping so well with the temperature, today it was 45 degrees and I'm hoping it doesn't get much hotter. Being from Ireland our summer temperature normally peaks at about 20 degrees and involves lots of rain, so the monsoon season won't be too much of a shock.



So my tasks for May include pushing forward with training my colleagues and the CBR workers, learning some Oriya and improving my culinary skills. Languages have never been my strong point so it's going to take time and patience, with a little help from my friends.