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Skills with no borders

Anna Prytz

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RMIT University is hoping to pioneer the IT equivalent of Doctors Without Borders.

Digital Divide Data, a non-governmental organisation, is encouraging student volunteers to travel to Laos and assist in their work of equipping disadvantaged young people with IT skills.

Recently returned from Laos, RMIT academic Dr Heiko Rudolph is hoping students from the School of Engineering and Computer Engineering will take on the exciting challenge.

"It's a fantastic place and there is so much value in work like this, helping people who really need it," he said.

Through its offices in Cambodia and Laos, DDD offers free IT training to those afflicted by polio, landmine victims, orphans, rural migrants and sex-trafficked women to give them the skills required to gain work.

This training enhanced English skills, supported further education with scholarships and in some cases, supported their medical care, Mr Rudolph said.

The student volunteers work in specialist areas like networking, data base set-up and data back-up while experiencing a new culture.

DDD is gaining world recognition for its efforts receiving a Skoll Foundation award for social entrepreneurship on March 11. Founded by eBay's Jeff Skoll, the foundation rewards organisations working for underdeveloped countries with three-year grants.

Interested in volunteering? See www.heikorudolph.com/Overseas.html or email Mr Rudolph at heiko.rudolph@rmit.edu.au or heikorudolph@yahoo.com

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NO BORDERS: Heiko Rudolph with trainee Metta Thippavong in Laos.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: A DDD computer lab in Laos.

Local News

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- Rises fuel inner city
- Group fires first shot in graffiti war
- Time against gala

Local Sports

- Champion revival
- Olympic Park's question mark
- Mascot mania
- Unbeaten but unlucky Eagles score a draw

Local Footy News

- Hawks no match for Roosters
- Williamstown recruits star in win
- Scorpions fade in opener
- Werribee Tigers' pride cops beating at home

Play

- Mother of all shows
- Switch just for laugh to the Ice Halos
- Light on dark days
- Eltham artist masters happiness

Strange Tales

- Possum's wine-tasting tour of Eltham
- 'Magician' thief vanishes with dancers' valuables
- Now pod goes mod
- It's life, but not as we know it