

Dear Friends

Well it's been a season of change here at Sovanapoom Care these past months. We shared about some of this change in the last newsletter. Some of you will already be aware that Thoeun stepped down from being the director recently. He has decided that he does not want to carry the responsibility of leadership, so we have released him and he is pursuing his career in translating and teaching English. We shared last month also that Tonet and Sreylin have been taking on more responsibility this year, and now Tonet has taken on the role of Director of Sovanapoom Care. It is a big task for a young man, but we believe he is the man for the job. Having been with us for eight years and now serving alongside his wife Sreylin, this young couple have displayed a real love for the children and a heart for serving God number one. We are looking forward to what the future holds with these guys.



We've had one of the wettest rainy seasons for many many years here. Many provinces have been flooded and people's homes that are not built high enough are going under. Our entire village was under the floodwaters except for Centre. We built the land for the Centre up high to stay dry during the floodwaters and it has proven to be high enough, although the underground sewerage and wastewater system was under a lot of strain during this time!


The floods caused the closure of the local medical facilities which a lot of poor people around here rely on. Life has been very difficult here as the village has been cut off from road travel completely, no cars or motorbikes are able to travel and those with canoe-like fishing boats are relied on by everyone for transport. The local electricity is also cut and getting supplies to the village is difficult. As a result we have been inundated with all the local minor casualties—cuts, sores, fevers, we had one guy with a nail in his foot and also a lot of poor people seeking emergency food aid. We've helped them wherever we can with medical care and food. It's been reminiscent of the old days here when our Centre was the only source of support for the poor people in this region.



All this extra support we've provided the community here comes at a price and extra funds is not something we find easily. A box of noodles here costs upwards of \$5 and with it one family can survive for a week along with some small fish and frogs they might be able to catch. The Sunday morning outreach has still been attracting people all throughout the floods and we've been giving out three packets of noodles to each person who attends. After wading through floodwaters that are at times up to an adult's chest, they are really thankful for any help we can give. But we're not going to be able to keep giving it much longer if we have another month like we've just had.

The money we received in donations last month were just enough to cover one and a half week's expenses here. The only way we've been able to keep operating is with funds which were raised by our friends for other projects here and at the farm, projects that we need to complete as we work towards financial sustainability in this country, because we're not there yet! We can't continue like this and still be able to help the people who are really in need.

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Did you know?

It is estimated that more than 30% of Cambodians have no access to improved drinking water sources.

Cambodia also has one of the highest infant mortality rates in Asia and the majority of these premature deaths could be attributed to water-borne diseases like Diarrhoea, Hep A and Typhoid.
UNICEF 2009

With your support Sovanapoom Care has been equipping Khmer people to care for their own orphans, widows and those in need since 1998

Stories from our Home

A person's identity doesn't quite have the same cultural meaning in Cambodia as it does in Western countries. It is quite common for a person to use a name other than the name their parents gave them at birth. Some people are known by several nicknames, others sometimes change their name to avoid a dispute or a debt. We believe it is important to know your name and your identity both for personal satisfaction and for legal reasons.

So all of the trainees at Sovanapoom Care who are over 18 years old have been getting registered with a national I.D. Card. This will allow them to vote, to own land, to get legally married and to get a passport should they want to travel one day.

It sounds like a straightforward process, but for some of the students it has been complicated as they didn't have birth certificates. We're getting everyone sorted now though and the young guys are happy to know they have a legal identity in their country.

Over the years we've had many volunteers come to support the work at Sovanapoom Care. Generous people have come from all over the world, many of course from Australia, from the United States and from Europe, we've had quite a few from South America and even some visitors from Africa. A couple of years ago through the work of our friend Alice McCann with YWAM in Adelaide and in Papua New Guinea, we had Guanah stay with us from Papua New Guinea.

For our friends from the Northern Hemisphere, Papua New Guinea is a small island nation located to the north of Australia. The landscape is mountainous and many towns and villages are isolated by unpaved roads with limited infrastructure. As you can imagine there are many similarities between here and there. Our friend Guanah was able to relate to the children quite easily despite the language barrier, as there are some cultural similarities between the lifestyles of Khmers and Papua New Guineans.



This month we're looking forward to another volunteer from Papua New Guinea coming to work with the children.

Betty Kitum arrives this week as a full time missionary sent out from her church to work with our children here in Cambodia. We'll be able to introduce Betty properly in the next newsletter.

Nita Update

Well we've received some really encouraging and helpful support for Nita's operation since our last newsletter.

Rotary Oceanic Medical Aid for Children (ROMAC) has come on board and approved the costs for Nita and a carer to travel to Sydney for the operation and recovery.

This wonderful organisation works to provide medical treatment for children from developing countries in the form of life saving and or dignity restoring surgery not accessible in their home country.



This operation will mean so much to Nita both now and in the future. We so look forward to making this trip for the operation to relieve the discomfort and stigma associated with her injury.

Now we're working on getting the visa and travel documents sorted before we can work with the doctor and hospital to schedule a date to travel.

Bridge Building

Back in 2009 our friends from Christmas Valley visited for a couple of weeks and among the many jobs they did around the Centre was building a steel framed bridge. This bridge connects one half of our school and living areas of the centre with the other half and has a lot of foot-traffic every day. In August the timber footpath of the bridge was starting to look a bit worse for wear as the timber warped in the sun and rain.



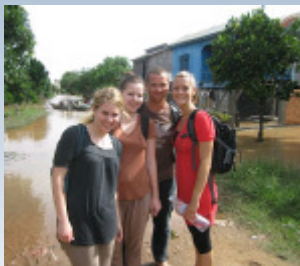
So the boys got to work, knocking up a box frame from old timber and mixing up the cement. They had a day without rain, but only one to get the job started and finished. And a good job they did too, but while we were standing back admiring their work... Dog— one of the resident dogs at



Sovanapoom thought the bridge looked pretty good too and he wanted to be the first to try it out! A quick cosmetic fix by the boys and we had a smooth, almost perfect footpath for our bridge.

Visitors to Sovanapoom Care

We've had some wonderful short-term volunteers over the past couple of months. We met teams of students from Tyndale Christian School, Temple Christian College, Bundaberg Christian College and Citipointe Church. The teams each visited us for a day and organised some wonderful activities for the children during their time with us. We've had arts and crafts, sports activities, painting, story telling, songs and dance.



Andy and Elyse returned for a visit with their friends Megan and Crystal. They spent a few days with us while the floods were up so they had to travel in a fishing boat to reach us. Their adventure was worth it though (well, we thought it was!), the children were

so excited to see their friends again and they had a few days with some more great activities planned for them as you can see!



Melissa Creaghan stayed for a few days and the children enjoyed seeing her again. Before her visit Melissa got together with her friends and they ran a great fundraiser selling chocolates. We're really glad that Melissa's friends and friends of friends like chocolate so much, their efforts translates to a lot of rice for the kids here!



We also met a new friend in July who made a real impact over the couple of months she stayed with us. Helen Pook is an energetic and highly experienced nurse from Sydney who donated her time to work with us. Helen wrote a first-aid manual for us, gave all the students a hearing test, and managed to spend some time working with them English tutoring. Her work with us is greatly appreciated, and the children loved spending time with Grandma Helen!



Volunteer Teachers

Goodbye Teacher Mandi and Gabi!! Mandi has been particularly busy these past few months (more about her work on the next page!) before preparing to leave us at the end of October. We were very sad to say goodbye to Mandi and Gabi as they returned to Texas for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and will begin a new adventure in the south of Cambodia next year. Thank you Mandi for all your efforts during your stay with us. All our team here including the students will miss you both!



After returning from a break back home, English Teacher Megan Bellamy has been helping out our teachers to give them some relief and time to work on their administrative tasks as well as working with individual students on their reading and comprehension. She's also busy with two other schools that she's teaching at here in Cambodia, so we appreciate her taking time to visit us a couple of mornings each week.

Megan's family is visiting at the moment and her sister Heather who is also a teacher, is going to spend a couple of months working with the grade one class as they learn to read and write English. Heather has been very brave these first few weeks as she's travelled from Phnom Penh across the city to our village and the Centre braving the city traffic, the ferry and for the first week she also had to catch a canoe just to travel down our street. After not long though the floodwaters receded and Heather then had to wade through the deep, slippery mud. Thankfully now our road has dried out enough that dust is the only adversary to clean feet now. The Bellamy girls certainly are adventurers, and we appreciate their work with our teachers and students here.

Thankfully, as our farmland is a gradual slope the floodwaters have not affected the land too adversely. It's located in a watercourse which means that the floodwaters pass fairly quickly when they do come. The dam is quite full now as a result of all the water we've had flowing across the land. For the rest of the year we'd love to have another dam or two to be able to draw on as outside the wet season water is limited. Hopefully by the time next year's wet season comes around we'll have some more dams dug out and will be able to make use of the excess water around the place.

Rice is a crop which thrives on having wet feet, but too much water for too long and the crop just won't survive. That's the fear which has swept through the markets locally that the rice harvest this year will be limited due to the flooding. Not just the flooding in Cambodia, but also in Thailand. The import/exports of our close neighbours has a significant effect on the price of food here so we watch the situation carefully. Since the floods have affected crops in Cambodia and Thailand the cost of rice has been rising by up to US\$0.50 a day, it's now up to US\$44 for a fifty kilo bag. As we have eaten the rice we harvested from last year's crop on our farm and we're now buying in rice again at a rate of around twenty bags a month, this really adds to the cost of living each week.

So you can imagine our relief and excitement that our rice crop is ready for harvest a month early this year. The humidity has helped it along. The land is still so wet and muddy that we've not been able to get any machinery in to harvest the rice, so we've employed some people from the nearby village for the task. This week we've had 29 workers harvesting by hand using the sickle to bring the crop in. Now we'll dry it out and it will be ready for milling very soon.

It's perfect timing, because we have some great news on the Rice Mill. Our long-awaited Rice Mill arrives next week! We're excited to finally have this within our reach after many months of hunting for a suitable mill, this one has been imported and will be delivered to the farm very soon. The trainees have been working on the foundations to install the Rice Mill on and for the Rice Storage shed. It's going to be a real practical solution to the increasingly expensive cost of purchasing rice. We haven't got the funds to continue work on this storage shed however, the framework and cladding, and finishing off will cost us another US\$22,000.

Early Childhood Centre

Sreylin continues to manage the Early Childhood Centre. She's doing a great job with the little ones who are just loving their classes with her. They're learning with a fantastic curriculum Mandi has developed specifically for them.

The year before Mandi came to Sovanapoom Care, she was homeschooling her daughter Gabi in kindergarten. Their experience with this formed a great foundation for the tasks Mandi found herself doing here. We've kept her busy teaching the grade one class their English lessons in the mornings and then she spent many hours researching and preparing folders with curriculum specific to the needs of the little ones in our Early Childhood class. Sreylin has taken this curriculum on board and is doing a great job introducing her young students to the world around them.

Vocational Training

Finding staff to work in our village is a challenge we often encounter here. Located across the Mekong River from the capital city in a village with often muddy roads or no roads at all to travel on, we don't attract many city dwellers to work here. Recently we have found a young man who was looking for work and we offered him a part-time teaching job. Seiha grew up in our district and he comes from a good family we have known for many years. He is attending university in Phnom Penh, studying towards a Law degree. Seiha has been working with us for about a month now and he is teaching our advanced Khmer class (grade six). He's well liked by the students who are eager to learn and enjoying the opportunity to progress quickly through their work-books and feed their hungry minds!



Sovanapoom Care is proud to be a partner for Project J522 with Global Development Group an Australian AusAID approved NGO carrying out approved aid and development projects with approved partners to relieve poverty and provide long-term solutions



Donating to Sovanapoom Care

John and Tess Castledine in Cambodia

Donations over \$2 to this Global Development Group approved aid and development project:

“J522 Sovanapoom Care” are tax deductible in Australia & USA.

Please Don't Forget: Use our project number “**J522 Sovanapoom Care**” for all donations made to Global Development Group for this work; this ensures that your donation will be applied to our project. If you have made donations previously but not included J522 as the reference please email us your name, the date and amount you donated to: admin.sovanapoom@gmail.com

Project Governance: J522 Sovanapoom Care is proud to be a partner of Global Development Group (ABN 57 102 400 993), an Australian Non Government Organisation [NGO] – and Global Development Group USA carrying out humanitarian projects with approved partners and providing aid to relieve poverty and provide long term solutions through the provision of quality aid and development projects. Global Development Group takes ownership of the project according to AusAID rules, providing a governance role and assisting in the areas of planning, monitoring, evaluating and auditing to ensure that the projects are carried out to Australian requirements.

Fundraising: We welcome support through fundraising activities, however all fundraising for and on behalf of Sovanapoom Care and Project J522 must be approved and authorised by Sovanapoom Care and Global Development Group and conducted within approved guidelines. Please contact Sovanapoom Care for more information.

Church Activities: We welcome donations and giving towards the Sovanapoom Church which are used for needs within the church community, outreach and welfare needs in the greater community. However any donations towards the church are not tax deductible as evangelistic and welfare activities are not a part of the Global Development Group approved aid and development project J522.

DONATION INSTRUCTIONS

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Write ‘Project J522’ on the back,

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Lakeland Florida 33811, USA

www.globaldevelopmentusa.org

Email: gdgusa@tampabay.rr.com

Ph: 1 (863) 644 6304

Sovanapoom Care and Global Development Group are working together to build better lives for the poorest of the poor and to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Cambodia.



Sovanapoom Family and Project J522 Photos



Flooded playground



Sovanapoom Centre surrounded by floodwater
(looking across river towards city)



Volunteer teachers and the students



Playing in the water



Having fun with leaves



learning how to make banana desserts



Workers harvesting rice on our farm



Rice ready for harvest



Students working on animal enclosure

www.sovanapoomcare.com