

## Building Project

Last Updated Monday, 09 August 2010

A single three hundred dollar donation was enough to begin the first building project and provide a home for the family of Sovanapoom twelve years ago. Land on the banks of the Mekong River was purchased and together Thoeun, John and Tess built what was to become theirs and the children's home, church, school and refuge centre. For several years the growing family existed on such a tight budget that the roof of this home was merely a sheet of plastic and every night during the monsoon, rain flooded their beds on the floor. Over time more donations were received and the building grew, as did the needs.

This makeshift home reached capacity long before the new building was ready to move into. We had five classes squeezed into one room, the children were crowded into two small bedrooms and the kitchen area regularly flooded with the rising of the Mekong River. Things were getting desperate!

The crucial need for a new building to house this community was obvious and day by day the young men worked under the supervision of John and Thoeun who has now also become a very competent building foreman. With each donation they were able to purchase more bricks, cement, sand and other necessary building supplies.

Not a moment too soon in January 2008 we were able to move into the new building site. Temporary dormitory style rooms have been constructed over an open courtyard next to the kitchen where the students and our faithful head chef Ra prepare all the meals, far from the rising flood waters they once had to contend with! The auditorium presently holds the school classes, church, outreach and various community events throughout the year. There is still a lot to be done and the Centre is quite obviously on a building site, but we are progressing. As each donation is received for the building work we are able to continue the construction and are excited that soon we will reach the goal of completing the Centre. The finished Sovanapoom Care Community Centre will provide individual bedrooms, to house up to two hundred children in family style accommodation. Within this building our school will be provided for with purpose built classrooms and a large grassy sports field and play area.

For the use of the local community in education programs, the building includes a main auditorium and capacity to seat hundreds at a time, with a full working stage and projection facilities. The building will contain a vocational training area for teaching sewing, weaving, and other practical skills. The plan includes a fully equipped office for training the students in administration and IT. Both a large commercial standard kitchen and laundry will be incorporated into the building for the needs of students and for training in hospitality. Accommodation units for volunteers and local workers are also going to be built onsite.

The entire building is being built on a level raised 1.7 metres higher than the land level to place it above the flood line. There is no local infrastructure for any necessary amenities so this building is to be fully self contained. All electrical equipment will run on a combination of solar and diesel generated power. A water tower and filtration system will filter all water through a series of tanks which will provide hygienically clean and pressurised drinking water to every tap in the building. All water and sewerage will be disposed of onsite.

The contrast from the previous living situation to the new building is huge and represents a new era for the family and the work of Sovanapoom Care. The village is presently isolated from the capital city of Phnom Penh by the Mekong River. This is about to change in the next few years as plans for a bridge from the capital city to the village have been approved and funded, we are now only awaiting construction. Once this is in place the region will change from the present local village to become a suburb of the city. It is imperative to provide the children that we're working with a stepping stone from the bamboo shacks that many were born in to the progressive environment of the near future. Just as much of the world now takes running water, electricity, the internet and other first world luxuries for granted Cambodia is quickly entering this age but through poverty and a lack of education many are incredibly unprepared.

This building project is an investment into the our students's future and will help to facilitate the education they need in all areas of life, from the academic, spiritual, and practical life skills for the future.

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To find out how you can donate towards this essential project and help to provide for the future of Cambodia's children please click here .