

Monitoring and Evaluation Report

Samrong Education Centre, Cambodia

Academic Year 2014-2015

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Children of the Mekong

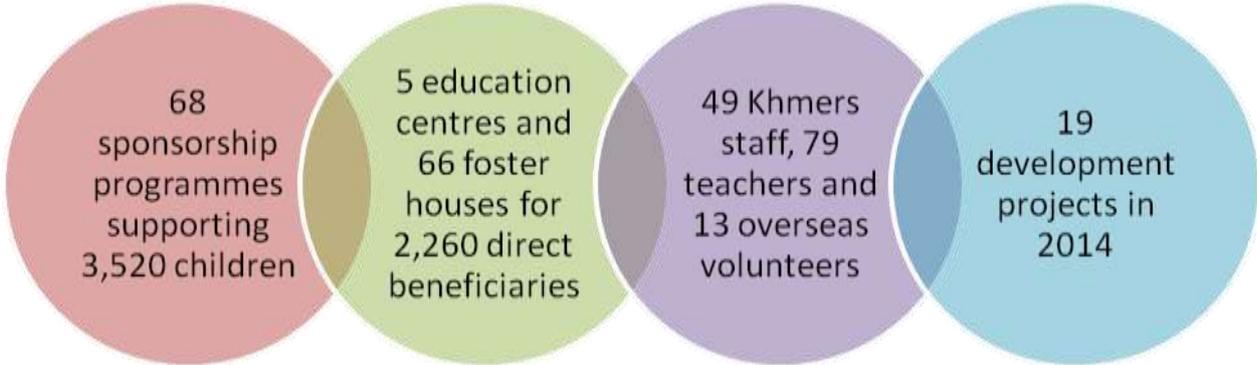
Children of the Mekong (COTM) is a charity registered with the UK Charity Commission (No.1116375). COTM works with local communities to **improve the accessibility and quality of education** in Southeast Asia. It is the UK branch of “Enfants du Mekong” (“EDM”), a French NGO founded in Laos 55 years ago.

COTM supports children’s education in three ways: i) With programmes allowing **individual child sponsorship**, ii) By running **education centres and foster houses**, iii) By implementing **development programmes** to improve the children's environment.



Our programmes in Cambodia

COTM/EDM has operated in Cambodia since 1991, working with the authorities at provincial level since the beginning and with the Ministry of Education since 2002. In 2014-2015, our activities in Cambodia included:



The 2015 objectives were:

- The implementation of a **“pedagogical project”** within all centres based on the educational principles of EDM, which establishes the top priority pedagogical goals for the next three years.
- To **reduce the dropping-out rate** of the children we support in primary and secondary schools.

- Build a **new centre for Samrong**, with aiming at welcoming students for the new academic year in October 2015 (the current centre is rented and has to be returned to the landlord at the end of 2015).

Samrong Education Centre

The centres provide accommodation, tuition, extracurricular activities and various types of material support (food, hygiene products, school uniforms, school supplies and medical care), to help students pursue secondary education. Young people who submit applications for the centre need to go through a series of selection procedures based on their family's economic situation, and the students' motivation and academic records.

There are also **six child sponsorship programmes** managed directly from the centre. The children are from poor family backgrounds and are sponsored by individuals in Europe.

The centre aims to provide the students with the means to:



1. How the centre is organised

Samrong Educational Centre is located in Otdar Meanchey Province in Cambodia. In the 2014-2015 academic year it welcomed 120 students, and of them 59 were fully accommodated in our four foster houses.

The infrastructures available at the centre are: a library, one computer, a football pitch (a large area of grass), a volleyball pitch (a net on the grass), an office, five classrooms and four foster houses.

The centre is managed by two French overseas volunteers and two Khmer social workers.



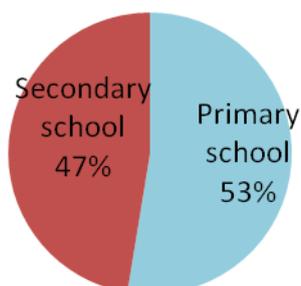
Aksinia and Victor
Overseas volunteers 2014-2015



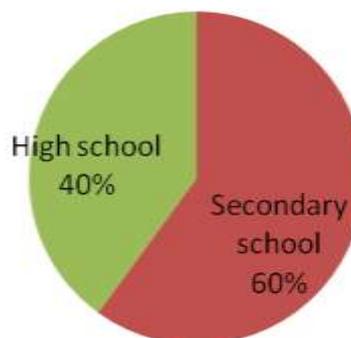
Sokkheng and Sochea
Social workers

2. Profile of the beneficiaries

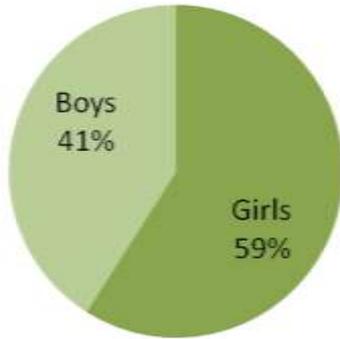
Level of studies
Sponsorship programmes



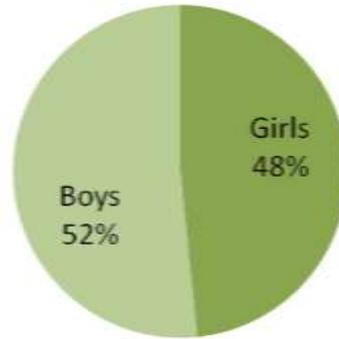
Level of studies
Centre



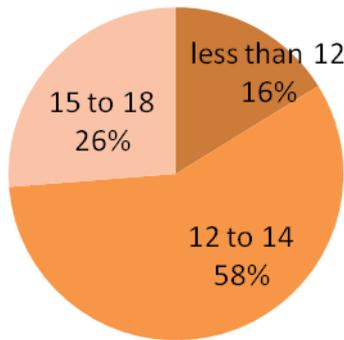
Gender
Sponsorship programmes



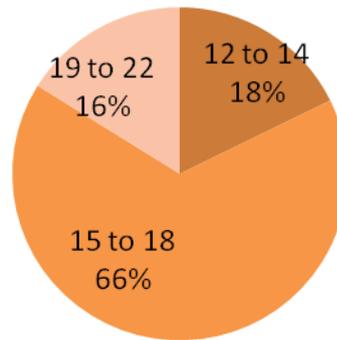
Gender
Centre



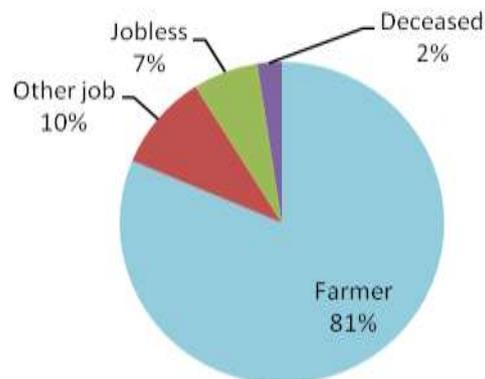
Age
Sponsorship programmes



Age
Centre



Profession of the parents
Centre



3. Achievements in studies

The results are from last academic year (2013-2014) as the baccalaureate will take place at the end of August 2015 in Cambodia. We will be able to share the results of 2014-2015 in early October.

100% of our Grade 12 students, four girls and four boys, successfully attained their baccalaureate (end of high school exam). Among them, three out of four girls are pursuing their studies, as well as all of the four boys. The girl who had to stop studying after her baccalaureate was asked by her mother to return home to help her, and quickly got married. It was the choice of the family despite her potential.

Regarding the other students, one girl and one boy are studying Khmer literature in Phnom Penh (the Royal University of Phnom Penh), one girl is studying to become a secondary school teacher in Battambang, one girl is studying to become a primary school teacher in Siem Reap, one boy is studying engineering (ITC) in Phnom Penh, one boy is studying law in Phnom Penh and the final boy is studying economics at the BBU University in Sisophon.

Of those seven students, four of them have been selected to join the "Centre Merieux", a University Education Centre run by Enfants du Mekong, which aims at providing support to university students from poor family background with housing, supplementary classes, personal development activities and preparation for entering the job market.

4. Aims, activities and indicators

Our overall aim is to improve the material living conditions of young people and enable them to develop intellectually, emotionally and morally.

Outputs	Inputs	Indicators
RESULT I: GET A QUALIFICATION		
OBJECTIVE 1: Get a degree or baccalaureate	ACTIVITY 1: Increase access to education with individual sponsorship programmes in villages.	There are six sponsorship programmes managed from the centre in Otdar Meanchey, with 159 children sponsored by individuals. Every month they receive financial and material support so they can go to school. 33% of the students are in primary school, 52% in secondary and 15% in high school.

	<p>ACTIVITY 2: Improve the access to education with an education centre.</p>	<p>120 students come to the education centre five days a week to receive between 18 and 27 hours of supplementary courses in Mathematics, Khmer, English, Chemistry, Physics and Biology. Only one student has left the centre as her level was too poor; she was directed towards vocational training, which was more adapted to her level. For the academic year 2013-2014, 100% of Grade 12 students got their baccalaureate and seven out of eight students are pursuing their studies.</p>
	<p>ACTIVITY 3: Social support and monitoring of the children and their families</p>	<p>Our overseas volunteers and/or social workers have organised 84 sponsorship distributions during the year. They paid visits to 274 families, went on 65 visits to local schools and had 28 meetings with school directors. The social workers spent two third of their time bringing social support to families and one third in their office (updating the database, paying bills and calling families...)</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Have a good enough level to be successful</p>	<p>ACTIVITY 1: Quality supplementary courses in the centre</p>	<p>Children of the Mekong hires the best teachers from the local schools to provide supplementary courses to 120 students. The courses are given before and after the public school hours, in order to raise the level of education and provide poor background children with the opportunity to be successful in their studies. During the academic year, a total of 5101 hours were offered, and the centre employed 12 teachers. The English class is organised by level of fluency, and the other classes are organised by Grade. Students in Grade 7 receive 18 hours of extra classes a week; Grade 8 to 10, 24 hours; and Grade 11 and 12, 27 hours. The schedule is very intense for students who are extremely motivated to study. The admission is tough, as this year 143 children asked to enter the centre, and only 16 could be accepted (63% girls).</p>
	<p>ACTIVITY 2: Quality supplementary courses in the villages</p>	<p>Given that the level of education is also poor in villages, Children of the Mekong offers supplementary courses to their sponsored children in villages. In the villages, 435 children have asked to become sponsored, but only 28 were accepted according to the three criterion: poverty of the family, motivation for studies and grades. During the academic year, 46 students received extra courses (72% girls) and seven teachers were hired.</p>
	<p>ACTIVITY 3: Evaluation exams in the centre and the villages</p>	<p>The quality of education is fairly poor in public schools, and Children of the Mekong organises a monthly exam in the centre, in order to monitor the level of our students, and take action if some of them are having difficulties (see average grades on Appendix 1). Furthermore, Enfants du Mekong runs several other centres in Cambodia, and twice a year a national exam is given to students to check the level of each centre. This aims to find out how to give the best orientation to the students, according to their capacity, towards university studies in Phnom Penh or Sisophon, or vocational training. The average grade for students living in the centre this year was 40/100, and 29/100 for those coming to receive supplementary courses but who do not live in the centre. We can see from these figures that life in the foster houses provides a favourable environment to study in and be successful. Finally, two students won the provincial competition in physics and Khmer. They are both now running for the national level competition.</p>

OBJECTIVE 3: Focus on studies without financial problems	ACTIVITY 1: Accommodation and food in foster houses	59 students receive full accommodation at the centre. They live in four foster houses (two for boys and two for girls). There is a cook in the centre, who prepared 558 meals over the last year, working six days a week. On Sunday the young people take it in turns to cook for everybody. During the academic year, one girl left the centre to go and work in Thailand.
	ACTIVITY 2: Medical support to the children and their families	Over the year, 54 children or members of their families received medical support, to a maximum of \$490.
RESULT II: GET READY TO GET A JOB		
OBJECTIVE 1: Choose studies that suits them and that responds to a market demand	ACTIVITY 1: University Forum, Vocational Training Forum and Job Forum in Sisophon	Enfants du Mekong organises three forums every year in our flag centre in Sisophon, aiming at helping the students to get to know more about the options they have for their future studies and work. This year, 43 students from Samrong took part in the University Forum (56% of them are students living in the centre), 67 took part to the Vocational Training Forum (75% of them are students living in the centre) and 42 of them took part to the Job Forum (55% of them are students living in the centre). It was a great opportunity for them to learn more about the studies available in the country, as well as the job they could start dreaming of doing in their future.
	ACTIVITY 2: Support from the alumni	Alumni come to the centre on a regular basis to say hi when they come to visit their family in the province. They are always very grateful to Children of the Mekong. This year, three alumni took part to the forums in Sisophon to inform the younger students about their studies.
	ACTIVITY 3: Discover the corporate world	Five elder students had the opportunity to visit Siem Reap airport, to discover how the company works, and meet the staff.
	ACTIVITY 4: Organic vegetable garden and rice paddy	The centre partners with the local NGO "CIDO" to train students on organic techniques for maintaining vegetable gardens and paddy fields. This year the vegetable garden was not successful for several reasons. However, the paddy field saved the centre \$600 by growing our own rice, which is the equivalent of 1500 kg. The rice was also of a superior quality with more nutrients than the rice that can be found in the market.
RESULT III: BECOME RESPONSIBLE, HELPFUL AND WELL BALANCED YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN		
OBJECTIVE 1: Get involved in the society	ACTIVITY 1: Cleaning of the centre, tuition to young children, cooking	Every Sunday, a group of six students go, in turns, to give tuition to poor children in the villages of Bansayreak and Roumdoul Veasna. The other students all take part to the "pulakham", which is a general cleaning of the centre. They also help to collect and cut wood for the kitchen, carry rice bags to the mill etc. These activities encourage young people to be involved in the society. It also shows them that everything is not granted.

<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Knowing myself and be open to the world</p>	<p>ACTIVITY 1: self-development activities</p>	<p>The overseas volunteers and social workers organise activities all year long on Sunday afternoons for the 59 students staying in the centre. Activities are various and range from big outdoor games (football or volleyball matches) to workshops/conferences on topics related to health, hygiene, environment, art and craft activities, indoor games etc.</p> <p>The students from Grade 11 and 12 also benefited from a one-week creative writing workshop run by our partner NGO "Writing Through", in order to enhance their fluency in English, boost their self-confidence and develop their conceptual thinking.</p> <p>This academic year, the overseas volunteers and social workers have been asked to think of a "pedagogical project" to implement in this centre, in order to meet COTM/EDM's education goals.</p>
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5. Successes and area of improvement

Successes

Overall, Samrong Education Centre **achieved its goals** of supporting the children to achieve a better level at school, so they can earn their baccaulaureate and pursue their studies. It has also organised numerous activities to improve the students' self-confidence and openness to the world beyond.

Thanks to our monthly exams, and the two national EDM exams, we can monitor closely the level of the students and take action if something is wrong.

The dropout rate was very low for the students staying in the foster houses, as only one girl left the programme. The pressure from her family was too high and she had to stop her studies to go and find work in neighbouring Thailand.

The dropout rate of the sponsorship programme in villages has decreased compared to the last two years. It was 13% in 2012-2013, and went down to 12% in 2013-2014, and this year it is at just 10%. This is due to a better care taken while selecting the sponsored children but especially to the close bond between our staff and the families and the **continuous social monitoring and support**. **Raising awareness** on the importance of education is crucial, particularly in this province as it shares a border with Thailand, where many young people and adults alike are tempted to go to earn money.

Areas for improvement

The vegetable garden has not been as successful as last year, when the students had a chance to learn new organic techniques, but this project was not at the heart of the centre as it was the year before. The main reason was the lack of interest shown by the overseas volunteers, who considered that the academic training was the most essential element for the students. COTM will take action so it will not happen again next year, by making the **vegetable garden an essential part** of the pedagogical programme of the year, which will be under the responsibility of the new overseas volunteers. Moreover, plans to hire a security guard in the new centre, whose duties will include overseeing the vegetable garden, are in the pipeline.

Since the departure of a social worker in the beginning of the year, it has been difficult to find a new social worker to work alongside Sochea. Two social workers were hired during the year but they left after a few months. The main reasons were the **low wages** that we offer and the **isolation of our area of operations**, as Samrong is a small provincial city with not so much to do for non-locals. COTM is still looking for the ideal candidate; the ideal would be alumni from our centre, who has his or her family in the area, and know well EDM/COTM's values and work ethic.

6. What's next for the coming academic year

Pedagogical Project

The newly-launched pedagogical project is designed based on the needs and concerns of students. Based on the educational principles of EDM, it establishes the essential pedagogical **goals for the next three years**. This comprehensive and structural methodology of the project will not only help to greatly advance the ability of students, but also assists the capacity-building of the centres in improving the efficiency and effectiveness.

The overseas volunteers and social workers have been asked to work on this pedagogical project by giving their views for Samrong Centre during the year. The project will be structured and validated by the Asia Development Director and should be implemented in the year to come, **along with a monitoring and evaluation framework**.

The new centre

Early 2015, EDM bought a large piece of land in order to **build a new education centre** in Samrong. Indeed, the place where the centre was until now was rented and the lease due to end this year. A major donor has funded the entire purchase of the land and the building of the new centre. It is located not far from Samrong town centre.



The new centre will have four foster houses, a small flat for a social worker, a small flat for the overseas volunteers, a guest room, a building with an office, a library and an IT room. There will also be six classrooms with moveable walls, a football pitch and a vegetable garden. There

is also **a large cemented reservoir to provide water** to the centre all year long. Plans of the centre can be found in Appendix 2.

The centre should be ready for the start of the new academic year **early October**.

7. Testimonies

Watch this video of Savong, a young boy living at the centre.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VscqPq1-bvq>



8. The year in pictures!



Left: Volley ball time!



Right: football time!



Left: Group picture during a day out



Right: Group picture during a day out



Left: Children laughing out loud watching a movie Right: outdoor cooking activity



Left: Students are learning organic techniques in the vegetable garden Right: Harvest time in the paddy field



Left: Girls in front of their foster house Right: Meeting with parents



Left: Semester EDM exam to check the level of our students Right: boys in the library



Left: Games in the villages, Right: Sponsored children from villages attending EDM exams in pagoda



Left and right: Sponsorship distribution in villages

Appendix 1:

Average grades of students in the centre, year 2014-2015									
Out of 100	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	TOTAL AVERAGE
Grade 7	55	51	64	71	37	64	Khmer New Year	73	59
Grade 8	49	50	49	54	41	60		54	51
Grade 9	59	48	55	54	35	61		50	52
Grade 10	43	51	57	56	27	57		50	49
Grade 11	55	47	61	53	35	59		45	51
Grade 12	49	53	61	53	28	43		55	49

Appendix 2: Plans of the new centre

