

Samrong Education Centre and Foster Houses Academic Year 2012-2013 Report

1) What we were planning to do: a reminder of the project's objectives

The overall aim of the education programme in Samrong, Cambodia is to “improve the material living conditions of young people to enable them to develop intellectually, emotionally and morally”. The programme provides access to education to poor students. These students are provided with various types of support (rice, hygiene products, school uniforms, school supplies and medical care) on a monthly basis, in addition to free tuition and extra curriculum activities. Those who live too far from the school are accommodated in foster houses. Without this support, they would not be able to pursue their studies.

It was planned that in 2012-2013, 374 students in the province of Otdar Meanchey would receive this monthly support as direct beneficiaries. Among them, 239 would be provided with tutoring and non-academic activities. Finally, 50 of them would be accommodated in 5 foster houses with free meals and medical care.

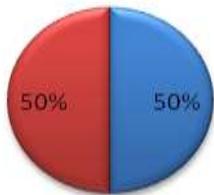
2) What we have actually done: reflection on activities carried out and their impact

In a snapshot, Samrong Education Centre in 2012-2013 was:

- 320** direct beneficiaries
- 153** students in the centre
- 52** fostered students
- 1,500** indirect beneficiaries
- 1,000** hours of tutoring
- 20** teachers
- 2** social workers and 1 cook
- 2** overseas volunteers
- 300** hours of sport and art activities
- 43,000** meals
- 30** visits to the doctor/hospital
- 66** meetings in villages
- 60** visits in schools
- 17** meetings with school directors
- 250** families formally visited and a numerous informal meetings while visited villages

320 students were part of the programme. Among them, 153 students in the centre and 86 students in villages received tutoring, and 50 were accommodated (aged 13 to 21 years old). 78% of supported children were secondary school students, where accessibility to secondary education is really difficult in the province of Otdar Meanchey.

**All beneficiaries:
Gender**



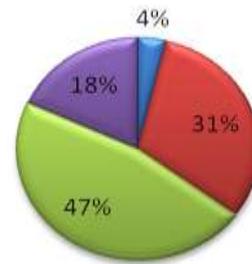
■ Girls
■ Boys

**Foster Houses:
Gender**



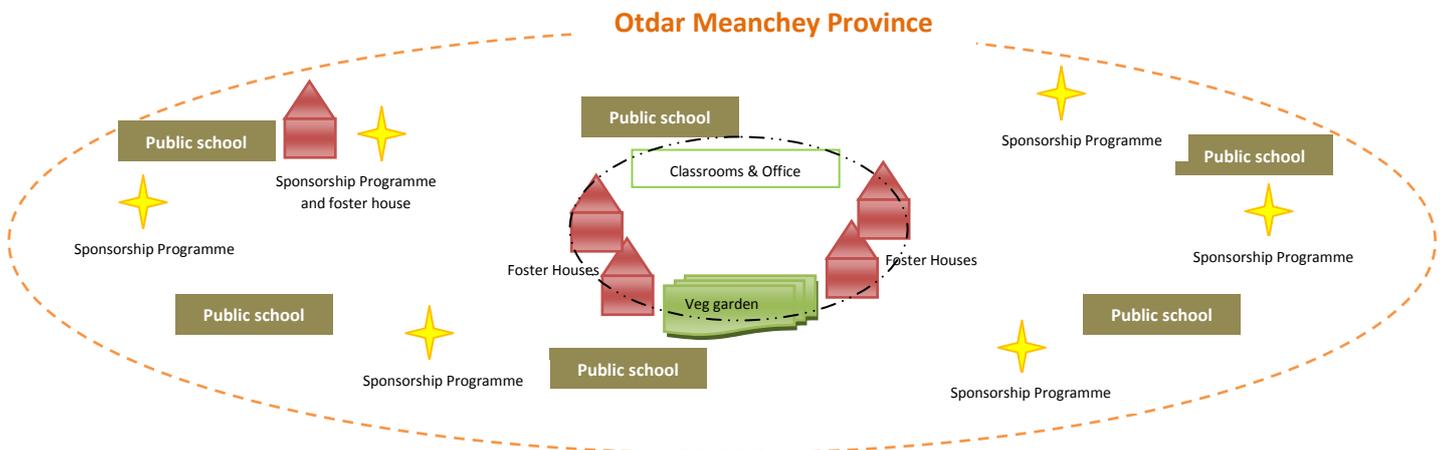
■ Girls
■ Boys

All beneficiaries: Schooling



■ Vocational Training
■ High School
■ Secondary School
■ Primary School

How does the programme work?



6 Sponsorship programmes where 320 children receive support on a monthly basis and 86 of them are provided with tutoring in villages. All children go to local public schools.



Foster houses: There are 5 foster houses: 4 located in the centre welcome 45 students, and 1 located in a remote village welcomes 5 students.



Children of the Mekong education centre welcomes 153 students every day for complementary courses. All students go to local public school. Two overseas volunteers and 2 social workers manage the centre. Teachers are privately hired by COTM from local schools.



Veg garden

In 2012, COTM partnered with a local NGO "CIDO" ("Community-based Integrated Development Organization") and the UK based charity "Green Shoots Foundation" to create a vegetable garden in the centre. The purpose is to teach children organic agricultural techniques, encouraging the sharing of the new knowledge at home, and in turn, contributing to area crop diversification which has environmental as well as health and nutritional benefits.



Monitoring & Evaluation

The Monitoring & Evaluation report provides key information about the activities of the programmes, and their impact.

The programme had 3 aims to fulfil:

AIM 1: GET A QUALIFICATION

AIM 2: GET READY TO WORK OR GET A JOB

AIM 3: BECOME RESPONSIBLE, HELPFUL, AND WELL-BALANCED MEN AND WOMEN

I. AIM 1: GET A QUALIFICATION

- There is a tight selection with only 5% of the candidates to the centre were admitted.
- All students receive every week 9 hours of tutoring in villages and 18 hours of tutoring in the centre (Mathematics, English, Khmer, physics, chemistry, and biology).
- All students have a satisfactory level at school. The majority of our students are ranked in the top 7 of their class at public school (there is on average 40 students per class). There is a 96.8% rate for successful completion of Grade 12.
- 100% of the students who have completed Grade 12 pursue their studies.
- The dropout from the programme is: 2.1% for fostered students and 13% for sponsored children in villages. A child is dropped out of the programme when he/she stops going to school.
- Close monitoring of sponsored children and their families in villages with more than 300 meetings/visits per year. Close daily monitoring of students in the centre. Close partnerships with school directors.
- Medical assistance to all children in the centre, so they can pursue their schooling in good conditions.

II. AIM 2: GET READY TO WORK OR TO GET A JOB

- Students take part in an orientation forum and a job forum organised in the Children of the Mekong centre in Sisophon. The orientation forum helps them to find out about their post high school study options, whereas the job forum allows them to meet employers to learn more about the jobs available on the market.
- Meetings with alumnus twice a year are very inspiring for students and also help them to have a better understanding of the job market.

III. AIM 3: BECOME RESPONSIBLE, HELPFUL AND WELL-BALANCED MEN AND WOMEN

- Students have access to a library and a computer.
- Activities, such as sport and art, are organised every weekend to promote self-development and broaden the students' outlook on the world.
- Fostered students were trained on modern organic agricultural techniques and set up a vegetable garden in the centre.
- Students take part actively in the cleaning and routine maintenance of the centre and the city.
- Significant changes in behavior can be observed for fostered students, as they are the beneficiaries who benefit from most of the activities.

3) Successes and area of improvement of the year**Successes:**

1. The **close monitoring of sponsored children's families** helped to avoid a high dropout rate because the reasons why school is so important were explained to the families. This encouraged them to then think twice before taking a decision to send their son or daughter to the paddy fields or to Thailand for work.
2. The **Orientation and Job Forums** were extremely appreciated by students who started discovering what they can do in the future. The youngest all wanted to be policemen or doctors because those were the only professions they had encountered in their lives. The orientation and job forums opened their eyes to the variety of professions that they can do and provided them with information regarding the studies necessary for each profession. Children of the Mekong did not only encourage university studies, but also vocational training, a great alternative for those less capable of longer studies.
3. The overseas volunteers and social workers were unanimous about the changes they saw in the children's attitude throughout the year. Often shy and withdrawn at the beginning of the year, the **various extra-curriculum activities** organised in the centre helped the students to broaden their outlook on the world, developed team spirit and teamwork skills, and fostered their sense of responsibility. The vegetable garden encouraged them to value agriculture and they learned techniques that they can reproduce at home.
4. The **cleaning of the centre and the city** helped them to realise that they are responsible as citizens of their environment and that they have a role to play to change attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours to be more environmentally friendly.

Area of improvements:

- There were more boys in foster houses, despite one of Children of the Mekong's objectives of gender equality in its programmes. COTM will emphasis gender equality in the next recruitment of students.
- COTM will offer even more activities to help all beneficiaries broad their outlook on the world.
- COTM will increase self-development activities to non-fostered beneficiaries.



Sima, secondary school student

Hello,

My name is Sima and I am studying in Grade 9. It is my second year at COTM Education Centre. Before, I used to cycle 2 hours to go to school and to have complementary courses with COTM, but I was always tired and I often did not have time to take lunch.

Everything has changed now that I live in the centre. Now I can not only study, but also spend time with my friends Kim and Sreysal. I love going to school with them as we can chat and laugh on the way!

This year, I live in the girl's foster house, 50 metres away from the centre. I am very proud to live there because it is for the oldest girls only! I hope I will stay here until my A-Level, and then I would like to study to become a Khmer teacher.

Thank you so much dear benefactors!

Sophea, COTM centre alumni



Hello,

My name is Sophea, and I have been living 3 years in COTM centre in Samrong. I enjoyed a lot my life there as it felt like a family. I could play with the youngest, and help them for their homework. In the centre, we were lucky to have complementary courses and enough time to study and read. In November 2013, I will leave my village because I was admitted in a college to study IT in Phnom Penh.

I think I will miss the centre, but I am happy to go to COTM University Centre in Phnom Penh, where I will meet other COTM students.

Until the academic year start, I am coming every day to the centre to work on the computer and take English classes.

I would like to thank you very much our benefactors!

More stories and photos on our blog:

<http://blog.childrenofthemekong.org/category/samrong/>

A video about a day in Samrong Education Centre:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMDiZQ6DZLQ>

4) Financial Report

Samrong Budget 2013 (\$) Forecast versus Real	Education Centre		Foster Houses		Other education programs		Total 2013	%	Budget repartition		Total 2013	%	Budget repartition	
	FORECAST	REAL	FORECAST	REAL	FORECAST	REAL	FORECAST				REAL			
Social monitoring	1,816	2,852	1,816	2,852	25,972	24,368	29,604	36%	Social support and monitoring	64%	30,072	39%	Social support and monitoring	71%
Accommodation	0	0	3,900	4,933	72	16	3,972	5%			4,949	6%		
Energy	0	0	1,188	884	0	0	1,188	1%			884	1%		
Food and water	120	0	15,480	15,076	252	555	15,852	19%			15,631	20%		
Maintenance work	240	61	120	0	701	1,485	1,061	1%			1,546	2%		
Health	0	0	300	207	516	688	816	1%			895	1%		
Education	12,383	8,837	672	115	10,236	8,196	23,291	28%	Education	29%	17,148	22%	Education	24%
Extra curriculum activities	420	609	144	171	48	223	612	1%			1,003	1%		
Local admin costs (local office)	84	132	780	793	4,680	3,336	5,544	7%	Admin	7%	4,261	6%	Admin	6%
TOTAL	15,063	12,491	24,400	25,031	42,477	38,867	81,940	100%	TOTAL	100%	76,390	100%	TOTAL	100%

Comments:

- The local administration costs were less than expected with 6% instead of 7% of the total budget. This is due primarily to the non-payment of rent for the office.
- The social support and monitoring weighted more in the budget than expected, due to the price increase for food and water distributed to the supported families, in addition to some unplanned building maintenance work.
- The education line weighted less than expected mainly because the teacher payrolls were lower than planned, and the planned expenses for the IT room did not take place.