

Asian Outreach Cambodia Quarterly Report January - March 2013.



For more information contact: info@aocam.org

A Note from the Director

Dear Partners and Friends, greetings from Cambodia!

Thank you for partnering with Asian Outreach Cambodia (AOC) and supporting our development work, towards holistic community transformation. Over the first quarter of this year we have achieved and learnt so much. I hope you will be encouraged after you have read this report. The best is yet to come!

Recently, in reviewing AOC's first MOU with the government on the 6th May 1994, I found that it said this: "The objective of AOC in the Kingdom of Cambodia is to provide the people of Cambodia primary health care through its clinics.." and we have been able to achieve this for so many Cambodians. The MOU goes on to say, "...in the future, AOC will also help to improve livelihoods by proposing the following projects in their possible order of priority: A poultry farm; A vocational school; An aqua-culture centre; A school of animal husbandry."

After reading this, I reflected on the mandates of the past and present and possible future. I have learnt that it is easy to come up with big dreams and great ideas, but it is more important if we, along with the leaders of ancient Issachar, "...understand the times in which they lived and knew what needed to be done." 1 Chron. 12:32. Yet even if we do understand our times and what needs to be done, it is very challenging - often impossible - if we attempt it alone, without any collaboration with partners, other organizations, or the government.

Every day I see positive changes and growth in Cambodia and these very much reflect AOC's past and present mandates for the people of this country. By God's grace we really believe that we can continue to fulfill the mandate given by Him, through collaboration, because working together we can achieve so much more.

I have personally learnt so much about Kingdom partnership during my time serving AOC. I hope and pray we can continue to work with our wonderful existing partners and also that God will bring us alongside new ones in the near future. Thanks again for your partnership, support and prayers. It means so much to us.

God bless,



Thong Romanea
National Director, Asian Outreach Cambodia



Romanea and his wife Noroth

Thank you to AOC's Visitors

Many thanks to Pastor Lynn and Judy Everswick along with your team, John and Debbie Deline from Westover Church (who carried the ManaRelief powder all the way from the US to Cambodia), as well as Carrie Cook, Moeun Rathana, Teap Chittra, Seng Vuthy and Kak Mesa for their visit to Stung Treng in January. John Grover, Board Member of Asian Outreach International Canada, made a visit in February and Scott Douglas, from Life Aid International, Australia, made a visit and provided leadership teaching to the local church in March. Also thanks to Ian McIntyre, David Gerrard and Lee Wilkinson for the hard work they have put into designing the Stung Treng training facility.

Acknowledgement to AOC partners

AOC would like to thank God for his faithfulness. We also want to thank our partners and individuals for their generous gifts and donations. To Samaritan's Purse for funding the Water/Sanitation, Agriculture and Livelihood project in Prey Veng and Stung Treng. Thank you to the Reign Foundation, Canada, for your donation to help assist children to school. Thank you to Hungry for Life for your donation to the youth center and women's empowerment in Beng Krom, Lvea Em district. Thank you to Neverthirst for your donations to fund the wells in Siem Bouk, Stung Treng and also for considering to fund the water supply system on the new land in the future. Thank you to Fong Chee Meng from Singapore for your generous gifts which helped fund the Income Generation project in Lvea Em district. Thank you to our partners who gave through the Asian Outreach Alliance, including AO Canada, AO New Zealand and AO Singapore, for your contributions to the areas of greatest need.

Finally, thanks goes out to all of you for your support, prayers, and your heart for Cambodia.

Organizational Overview

1. Kandal province

2. Prey Veng province

3. Stung Treng province



2

Project Areas

Kandal province has 11 districts, 117 communes and 1087 villages over a sparsely populated area (20.23 sq. km). The provincial population is 1,300,797 people, 15% of which are below the age of 15 and 45% of which live in rural farming areas.

Prey Veng province has 12 districts, 116 communes and 1139 villages with a population of 947,357 spread over 4,883 sq. km. Prey Veng is located on the far side of the Mekong River in southeastern Cambodia. It is very lush and fertile and only 60 km from the capital city of Cambodia, Phnom Penh.

These southern provinces were greatly impacted by the civil war, as the Khmer Rouge ravaged the country, killing many innocent people and destroying a vibrant society. Due to this catastrophe, the people of Cambodia have suffered a terrible set-back as they lost everything and were plunged deep into poverty and hardship which has lasted over 35 years.

Since 1993, AOC has been working with the community members of Kandal and Prey Veng to develop a sense of personal and local responsibility so that they will take ownership of the transformation of their communities. AOC works to build strong ties within these communities, which is the best way to begin understanding their needs, and thereby to help them improve the quality of life for the generations to come.

When AOC began its work in Kandal and Prey Veng, there was no church presence at all. Now there are four denominations with 18 churches. AOC work closely with Christian believers to empower and train them to deliver its development projects: Assisting Children to School, Ministry Development, Women's Empowerment, HIV/ AIDS Homecare, Agriculture and Livelihood, and Water and Sanitation.

Stung Treng province is located in Northern Cambodia and is one of the poorest and most isolated in the country. The current population is just over 112,000, including seven minority groups, of which 97% work in some kind of agriculture. Of this percentage, 89% own or have access to land of one hectare or more from which they can sustain their families. The majority of these people live on or below the poverty line (41% below) and etch out a subsistence using the limited resources available to them. Although most have access to fertile land, what many are lacking in is the knowledge to utilize their land to its fullest potential. Traditional farming methods have been used and handed down from generation to generation, but as natural resources become scarce and the demand grows to provide for an ever-increasing population, new and smarter methods need to be introduced in order to be sustainable.

Because of this need, AOC proposes to start an agricultural training center in Stung Treng city whereby farmers will have opportunity to learn new methods and farming techniques to help them understand how to use their land in a more productive and sustainable way, both for livestock and cropping. Marketing techniques will also be addressed as many farmers lose out to the middlemen, who offer very little for the produce, then sell it on for a healthy profit. AOC will train the farmers to work together and form cooperatives, so as to be able to join their resources together, form viable markets and sell for a fair price. For this project, AOC has bought a piece of land to set up a hands-on training school where crops, gardens and livestock can be grown and new techniques taught on site.

AOC identified in its research that there is a high need to minister to the youth in Stung Treng city. Education and vocational training opportunities are extremely limited

for young people, which lead to apathy, hopelessness, and illegal practices in order to make money. To help address this pressing issue, AOC has already established successful water/sanitation, agriculture and livelihood projects, and a youth center for non-formal education to teach computer, English, and Bible classes.

AOC will start with these initiatives but the long-term vision is to reach all of Stung Treng province and its five surrounding neighbors.



Stung Treng city



Stung Treng market



Farmers planting rice

Operations Update

AOC has two main offices in Cambodia, one based in the capital city of Phnom Penh and the second one based in Stung Treng province. The office in Phnom Penh oversees the overall work of AOC and directly manages projects in Lvea Em district in Kandal province and Pearang district in Prey Veng province. Combined, our offices have 31 staff, 12 of them female. Nine staff members serve in Stung Treng and two of these are an expatriate couple, Grahame and Katy Dyer, who manage all the ministry up there.

AOC Vision

Vision: Lasting holistic transformation at all levels of Cambodian society.

Mission: AOC is a Christian organization that holistically serves, equips and supports Cambodians across all four dimensions of development; economic, physical, societal and spiritual.

Goal: To contribute to the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of human dignity in Cambodian society and beyond.

Strategy: AOC is working to achieve this goal through our projects, as follows.

Project Reports

Q1 2013

Assisting Children to School (ACTS)

Prey Veng & Kandal

Page 5

Agricultural Livelihoods

Prey Veng

Page 6

Agricultural Livelihoods & Land Development

Stung Treng

Page 7

Livelihoods

Kandal

Page 8

Ministry Development

Kandal, Prey Veng & Stung Treng

Page 9

Non-formal Education

Stung Treng

Page 10

Water & Sanitation

Prey Veng & Stung Treng

Page 11

Assisting Children to School (ACTS)

Prey Veng and Kandal

Overview

The ACTS project provides an opportunity to children from vulnerable and poor families to go to school, providing all the requirements needed, as well as further support for students who have missed out on schooling, parental training, support and evangelism with the families.

The project has been implementing in the remote districts of Por Rieng, Prey Veng province and Lvea Em in Kandal province. The activities involved in this project include: Extra tuition classes, offered to younger students to accelerate their school learning; Part-time classes for older children in grades three-nine; School visits; Home visits, which sometimes leads to further helping families in poverty or suffering debilitating illness; Parent training, particularly on the value of educating the next generation; Evangelism, which involves Sunday school classes for children.

5

This quarter we started giving small snacks to the children to encourage them to stay during the hot afternoons. Currently only 13 children are able to attend part-time classes, but ACTS will continue to work with the schools to help all program students to access extra classes.

Sponsored Student



Achievements this Quarter

- 182 students have been provided the opportunity to attend school for school year 2012-2013. There are 132 studying in grade one and two and 50 students in grades three to nine.
- Provided four extra tuition classes
- Provide part-time class access for 13 pupils who are studying in grades three to nine (Math, Khmer or English)
- 183 students received uniforms and study materials
- Two parent training classes in two villages with a total of 115 parents participating

Story of Change

Mrs. Meng Heng is a 51 year old with seven children, three boys and five girls. She and her husband are farmers who earn a subsistence living. She lives in Chrang Toteong village, Prek Antash commune. Her youngest daughter, Run Raksmei is seven years old and studies in grade two at the local primary school. Raksmei has been receiving school support through ACTS, including school uniforms, study materials and extra tuition classes.

Meng Heng tells us, "In the past, I often got violent and would hit the children, or I was angry at the husband or at everyone in the house." Sometimes she would curse them whenever she was unhappy. She felt no peace in her heart and she didn't think about her children's future. She added that, "I often forced my daughter to help me earn money by catching snails and shellfish in the lake or collecting forest vegetables to sell and made her do a lot of housework." All of these things combined to slow down Raksmei's learning.

"One day, Aunty Yom and a village leader came to invite me to participate in the parenting training. I could not read any of the articles at the training, but I was interested in the pictures as it helped me a lot to understand about the responsibility and duty of parents to look after our children. I now motivate Raksmei to go to school regularly. Through the training, I have learnt about the value of educating our children. I really want to see my daughter get good study results through to grade 12 and to become a good nurse in the future."

Through her association with the ACTS program, Meng Heng has heard the good news about Jesus Christ. Her Christian neighbor often came to visit her, so she decided to join the cell group in the village. Not long after, she accepted the Lord and as a result has changed many things in her life. God has changed her heart and she has stopped using bad words, curses and violence in the house.

Meng Heng concluded, "I would like to say thank you to AOC for helping my daughter and other children in this village with study materials, extra tuition classes, and good advice on parenting. I thank God for giving His wisdom and blessing my family".

Agricultural Livelihoods

Prey Veng

Overview

The Agricultural Livelihood project aims to enhance the sustainability of the agricultural sector in Prey Veng province, an essential part of Cambodia's current and future economic growth.

The Royal Cambodian Government (RCG) wants to enlarge the base of sustainable economic growth and accelerate poverty reduction. Around 85% of the population live in rural areas making a living through agriculture, but due to lack of skill and knowledge many only grow enough to survive on from day to day. The challenge is that many people don't have enough land to farm on or are landless, and they also do not have access to irrigation systems, technical knowledge in sustainable farm yields, or experience in animal raising.

The strategy of this project is, in tandem with the water and sanitation (WatSan) project, to provide technical training on home gardening, rice farming and animal raising, providing small loans for initial small business inputs. The project is run by two staff who work with village authorities to select to select 60 needy families from a lower socio-economic demographic. Additionally, the project aims to expand to more types of farming systems and to promote more widely in other villages in the region. The project relies on volunteers who will champion the project, its methods and successes to others.

The Agricultural Livelihoods project shares expertise and successes with other AOC income generation projects, and works closely with the WatSan project in establishing village connections. We also look to work together with other organizations and projects in the target area and also with Pearang district Agriculture Office of the RCG.

Achievements this Quarter

- 10 household trained in: Rice planting; Compost and natural pesticide production; Mushroom planting; Crop planting; Gardening; Animal raising; Marketing.
- One farmers support group has been formed
- 10 households trained on health and hygiene
- 10 households trained on diet and nutrition
- 44 households received business loans
- Integrated prayerful and evangelistic components in each activity, informing the beneficiaries of how funds come from the generosity of the global body of Christ.

Story of Change

Mr. Em Chem, is a 66 year-old retired primary school teacher from Pak Sbai village, in Prey Veng province. He lives with his wife, son and daughter.

Mr. Chem is one of our most active household representatives even though he is the oldest member of the project group. Mr. Chem has many years experience in vegetable farming around his house, knowledge that he learned from his parents. He has two hectares of land for rice farming and 300 square meters of land where he plants vegetables all year round.

After training he was able to double his income, from \$75 to approx. \$150 dollars every three months. He said before getting training, he worked very hard and spent so much on farming inputs. Now he was able to reduce expenses to only \$10 dollars including seed, natural fertilizer, pesticide and labor. He said this is because of the better farming techniques he has learnt from AOC.

Mr. Chem says, "I am very pleased with the yield this year. I don't know if there are any other ways to improve. I think I'm the best vegetable farmer in the village, but after training I see that I really needed these new techniques to improve my farming." He continued, "This is the first time that I have made this much money from my farm. In fact I can make a lot of money with my home garden. I really love these new farming techniques"

Mr. Chem is very thankful to AOC for helping his village and says they are the only NGO to work with his community. He continues that, "When the villagers get more income, they will stop migrating to other cities or countries. They can work in their hometown and help their country and their children to go to school."



Mr. Chem

Agricultural Livelihoods & Land Development

Stung Treng

Overview

The Agricultural Livelihoods project has two goals. The first is to provide food security and an economic uplift to rural farmers. The second is to develop a model of ministry which is financially sustainable from an operational level. By achieving these, not only will people be helped, but they also will be empowered to help themselves and others well into the future. This creates a cycle of sustainability not only for the beneficiaries, but also for the project itself.

This will be achieved through training in sustainable agricultural techniques, providing pump wells to villages without a reliable source of clean water, building capacity for business, and providing micro-loans.

The Land Development project is being undertaken concurrent to the Agriculture project. The land is purposed for agricultural training and for project sustainability purposes. **The goal of developing the land is to establish a multi-purpose training facility and intensive farming trials area to be used to improve the livelihoods of the people in Stung Treng.**

Achievements this Quarter

- Successful meeting conducted with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
- Met with Sre Ruessei commune council and villagers to introduce the Agriculture project
- Collected data for database from all target group
- Two farmer support groups established, including 25 farmers (10 farmers in Sre Ruessei Village and 15 farmers in An Lung Kromourn village)
- One construction team established for land development
- Entranceway and fence finished, property secured
- Electricity connected
- Hydroponics/odorless pig-pen begun construction
- Staff house renovated
- Land contract completed (as of April)

Story of Change

Yem Khem is the An Lung Kromourn village chief. He is 42 years old with four children. Yem Khem lives in his village in Sre Ruessei commune, Thala Borivat district. After being interviewed he told us:

“Many years ago, our people never received any training or were able to take part in development activities. I have faced a lot of health problems in my village, many people have died due to dengue, malaria, diarrhoea, typhoid, liver disease, stomach aches and especially amongst children, malnutrition due to parasite infection, a lack of nutrition, low crop yield and animal death.



Front entrance to land



Commune council meeting

Now AOC has started working with our community. I am very happy to welcome them. I hope that our villagers will learn a lot from AOC such as sickness prevention, about clean water, sanitation, hygiene, good animal raising, natural fertilizers, and crop planting. AOC has a very good development program that could help to change the attitudes and behaviours of the community. Our village is seeing less of many common diseases. Our people are saving some money from medicine and treatment. Our harvests are improving their yield.

Finally, on behalf of our village, I would like to thank AOC for supporting our community and helping to improve our standard of living through the Agricultural Livelihood project.”

Livelihoods (formerly HIV/AIDS/TB Homecare)

Kandal

Overview

The Livelihoods project in Kandal province is a natural extension of the former HIV/AIDS/TB Homecare project. The goal is to provide much-needed income and greater food security to 60 vulnerable families in the region.

With the recent Royal Cambodian Government refocus from AIDS prevention and cure to economic sustainability as a result of dramatically improved infection rates, AOC has determined to appropriate this change in its projects. The result is that the former Homecare project will be working mostly with the same target group towards sustainable incomes. The target group include people living with HIV/AIDS and at-risk families, including widows, migrants and those otherwise classed as being “under the poverty line”.

Food security (and attendant issues such as unemployment, lack of land ownership, and/or lack of space for cropping) is the next natural concern noted by those suffering from debilitating illness such as AIDS or TB. By focusing on sustainable livelihoods for at-risk people, AOC is providing a way out of the illness/poverty cycle, rather than only focusing on short-term medical treatment (which is still important).

The project team together with village and commune leaders will select those who meet the at-risk criteria and who are dedicated to working with the AOC staff to make their business a success. Each group of beneficiaries will have 12 leaders, and there will be 12 groups covering all 60 families.

At this time, the project is in its transition phase between medical activities and true sustainability activities. Greater funding is required to fully support the intended livelihood goals.

Achievements this Quarter

- 21 families received a loan for their small business
- 21 families received training on business management, savings, and integrity
- 14 new patients treated for TB this quarter. Including last years ongoing patients, this comes to 154 patients total.
- Homecare has tested 260 at-risk people for HIV/AIDS

Story of Change

Loch Da lives in Beng Krom commune with her husband and three children, and they joined the Homecare program in 2010. Before joining, Loch Da's health was not good and she spent a lot of money on different treatments with no success. After trying everything, Loch Da suspected that she might have HIV and she was very scared. However, she and her husband decided to get tested at the AOC program.

Since receiving the HIV+ diagnosis Loch Da's health declined, so Homecare sent her to Chey Chom Neas hospital. Two months later she was able to go back home. In one home visit she said, “I'm very happy and I thank you so much for helping me. If Homecare did not help me maybe I would have kept spending money on treatments and still not know my condition. When I stayed at hospital I felt so hopeless and sad that I wanted to commit suicide but could not do that to my husband and children. I was also afraid my relatives would look down on my husband. I also remembered Homecare, how they brought my family food, came to hospital to look after me and encourage me, so I decided not to end it”

The project gave a loan to Loch Da's family of 40,000R (100 USD) to begin pig raising. Her husband works as a tuk tuk driver, so Loch Da looks after the pigs at home. Every day her husband's income covers food and petrol, with the leftover money generally between 30,000R to 40,000R (approximately 10 USD) and so each month they pay back their loan to the Livelihood project. Loch Da is thankful for AOC's help: “My husband and I are very happy and want to thank the Homecare team who continue to work with us on our business and now my pigs are really big and their value has increased. Many thanks again for visiting us and giving us good suggestions and encouragement to continue making a better future for our family.”



Loch Da

Ministry Development

Kandal, Prey Veng & Stung Treng

Overview

The Ministry Development project aims to build up the local church. It has six focus areas: leadership training, discipleship, empowering women, youth group and Sunday school development, and income generation for church members in need.

Many Cambodians today consider the indigenous Christian church to be foreign, since the church culture and institutional structure are so unfamiliar to most people. For a Cambodian, becoming a Christian is not an easy thing. The convert experiences not only a spiritual transformation, but faces rejection and isolation from their friends and relatives. They also struggle to adapt to church culture. For this reason, most of the churches have a difficult time discipling new converts, as they tend to return to Buddhism after a brief sojourn as Christians.

Many church leaders notice that evangelizing to the Khmer people is easy, but discipling them in faithful Christian living is hard. This is due to the fact that it is a slow process to renew the mind. For this reason, the church should not neglect the importance of contextualization. We believe that indigenization without contextualization is ineffective in the long term. It is important to reconsider the outward form of Christianity such as how we dress, the songs we sing, our conduct etc., so that the church of Christ may have a local look, rather than a French or American one.

Achievements this Quarter

- Conducted GCI Level One which had 31 participants from seven different communes
- Two units have been set up ('Abiding in Christ' and 'The Carnal and Spiritual Man')
- There were two trainings each month conducted for 25 Sunday school teachers in Lvea Em and Poreang districts
- Conducted The Greatest Journey tool guideline for Christmas boxes with 25 Sunday school teachers
- Trained 60 women to understand the economic exploitation of women
- Conducted the Butterfly program with 35 women
- Home visits with 60 families
- 60 women celebrated at a fellowship party we threw
- 35 youths (including 23 females) regularly studied basic administration skills
- 19 youth enrolled in the English class, facilitated by AOC since July 2012
- 45 youth trained in a monthly Bible class
- Conducted a youth survey with high school students in Lvea Sor commune
- Youth forum event with 120 young men and women, achieved with great success
- Conducted business training with 45 direct beneficiaries and 25 indirect beneficiaries in Kandal and Prey Veng Provinces
- 45 families from seven different communes have received loans to start small businesses

9

GCI training



Women's fellowship



Ministry Development (Continued)

Story of Change

Mr. Keo Thal and his wife, Mrs. Chan Sopohn, have five children and are a very poor family from Tuk Kleang village, in Lvea Em district. Mrs. Chan Sopohn is a follower of Christ who has been faithfully attending the church service at Somrong village for a long time.

Keo Thal comes from a farming family, working hard to feed the family every day. Their income was so low that they could not afford to let their children attend school. The family could not afford to grow their own crops, they could only sell their labour to other wealthier families, who pay approximately US\$2.50 a day per person.

Mr. Keo Thal turned to alcohol to drown his sorrows, and would argue with his wife about his excessive drinking and about her faith in Jesus Christ. He tried to blame their family's increasing troubles on her faith.

All of the church members prayed with Chan Sopohn for her husband. The AOC team heard her story and joined a few people from the church in visiting her house in Tuk Kleang village. AOC provided a small loan to the family so that they could start working their paddy field to grow rice and other crops.

After much initial resistance, Keo Thal finally agreed to meet with AOC and through our discussions with him, is now open to receive mentoring and is willing to support his wife's agricultural business. AOC also support their children to school, to help reduce their expenses and enable them to save some funds to continue investing in their business and to pay off the loan.

Today, thanks to the ongoing prayer and support of the local church, Keo Thal is a changed man. He is open to the presence of the Lord in his life, and he has set himself to love and care for his family once more. For many years, Keo Thal worked in construction in Phnom Penh and had no time to take care of his family. His eldest daughter, now 15 years old, especially needed a lot of attention, being mute since she was born. These days Keo Thal and Chan Sopohn spend time together with their family, with the result that all of them are open and eager to be mentored in the ways of God.

"I am a changed man, satisfied in what my family has, and I thank the Lord for giving me a chance to repent, receive His grace and be blessed," Keo Thal told us.

Non-formal Education Stung Treng

Overview

The Non-formal Education (NFE) project aims to provide English speaking and computer skills to youth and local business people in the Stung Treng region.

In this period, NFE Stung Treng has seen a steady flow of students coming through the gates. The numbers have been down since the last quarter of 2012 as we put the study prices up to try to cover costs. However this increase must have been too much for the majority of students as the numbers dropped from over 100 to around 30 per day.

This result though has been a good learning curve for us and we can readjust the fees again to try to find a price that works. Having less students this quarter has had its positive side as the team has been able to build closer relationships with students and deliver better quality training due to smaller class sizes.



Children in class

At the end of this quarter, the Filipino team heading up the program stopped their partnership with AOC for personal reasons, so now the project is on hold until their positions can be filled. Although this is difficult presently, in the long run it could prove to be advantageous as we are now looking at restructuring the NFE program to operate more in line with The Centre model (in Chiang Mai). The lessons we have learnt over the past six months will be valuable in helping us do this. Taking an operational break will be best while we look to improve the project model.

Achievements this Quarter

- Cutting Edge Advanced Class - 3 students
- Beginner Class Two - 4 students
- Beginner Class One - 15 students
- Pre-school Class - 8 students

Water and Sanitation (WatSan)

Prey Veng, Stung Treng

Overview

The WatSan project aims to provide BioSand water filters (BSF), household latrines and wells and health care education to needy communities.

It has been another challenging quarter in Prey Pnov commune in Prey Veng. The road was in bad condition from Phnom Penh to the project area, and the village leaders have been very busy with their small businesses, making it hard to find time to meet with them. Also, keeping up with the BSF monitoring has been challenging as the number of filters implemented continues to increase. For this quarter, 150 filters and 150 community latrines were planned for construction and implementation, but the reality amounted to 132 filters and 132 community latrines. This is due to multiple issues, including difficulty in motivating the beneficiaries to undertake construction and installation, and to conduct timely community meetings. We hope to meet our goals for next quarter as well as make up the difference for this quarter.

Achievements this Quarter

- Constructed and installed 132 community latrines
- Constructed and installed 132 BSFs
- Conducted health promotion in 8 villages across two communes
- Conducted Village Development Committee training in Kompong Brang commune
- Monitored nine villages across two communes

Story of Change

Mrs. Bech Ream, a 43 year old lady, lives with her husband Seam Tha in Prek Taroth village, Prey Veng province. She has three children and the family are farmers, raising animals and crops for a living.

Every morning before going to the field, Bech Ream had to boil the water to prepare a meal and drinks for taking with them. During harvest time, they need extra water because it gets so hot in the field. Bech Ream admitted to sometimes being too lazy to buy firewood and take the time to boil the water, so that occasionally her family drank it untreated, even though she knew it was not good for their health.

This last quarter, AOC went to build relationship with Prek Taroth village leaders in order to conduct the health promotion program there. Bech Ream's husband attended the meeting and after watching the hygiene and sanitation movie, he was interested in the BSF and latrine because he could see how important it would be for his family. Seam Tha registered as a participant in BSF and latrine construction and a few days later was able to transport them home.

Since the BSF arrived, Bech Ream has been able to save money on firewood and medical treatment and she has lots of time to take care of her animals. She told us that one day her cow got diarrhea and the normal medication was not helping. Her husband told her to take water from the BSF for the animal to drink. After just one day drinking the filtered water the cow got better. Since that time, her family does not boil water for drinking anymore as they all use the filter water for drinking and cooking. It has been a year since the filter and latrine arrived and they have clearly made the family's life easier and healthier.

Lastly, Bech Ream and her husband would like to thank AOC staff for providing latrines and filtered water for her family and many other people in her village. She thanks AOC for always monitoring and educating the community. She was very happy and made a commitment to use filtered water and the latrine forever, and she will take good care of them as they are so important for her family.



Mrs. Bech Ream and children