

# ASIAN OUTREACH CAMBODIA THIRD QUARTER REPORT 2013.



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# DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

## PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Continuing the theme of sustainability from our previous Update, AOC National Director, Thong Romanea, speaks candidly about working towards lasting change, the importance of community ownership, and why these can be so difficult to achieve.

### How do you plan sustainability into a community development project from the beginning?

The most important lesson we have learnt is to ensure full participation at all levels of the local community. Their involvement is not just for decoration, but in decision making and in taking action, from the start to the end of the project. To make certain that involvement is genuine, you must make sure that the local community is functioning well - the structure of leadership and representation is set up from the start. In the best scenario, community members know their roles and clearly understand the project.

### What is the importance of involving the local community?

When you involve the local community, all kinds of local resources are opened up which can benefit everyone. These resources might be local knowledge that is specific to the region, local skill sets, local land, labour, and equipment. Accessing these can be invaluable for fostering community ownership of a project.

The relationship between the project team and the community is a very important aspect; it develops confidence, trust and encouragement between all parties, without which a project will not get far! Relationship is the backbone of sustainability.

Where a community is strong and has good relationships amongst themselves and with the project team, then the chance for longer lasting impact is increased. When there is relationship you do not have to fear change and you trust each other. You share information instead of keeping it to yourself. When you speak up and others listen, it means that you are valued by others and this increases the good in the community.

### Why is sustainability difficult to achieve in less developed countries?

Corruption is a constant drain on sustainable community development. This is sadly one of the bigger roadblocks preventing progress in least developed nations.

Ignorance and misinformation also prevent change. Often authorities are not well educated and pass on harmful ideas to people. This is why training and education is so important.

Providing clear, basic information for people to understand in ways that will empower them to make more choices, and not limit them. AOC focuses on training and empowerment as our key approach to community development.

In the Cambodian context it's very difficult to find good examples of long-term sustainable change. I have learnt that you don't have to do big projects, but do smaller scale projects and do them well. Focus on perfecting a simple model. When this works, then people will see it and follow. When people realise something is important to them, like their family's health or their children's education, then they will contribute and take ownership of a project. Local ownership gives sustainable change the best chance possible.

## PRAYER POINTS

The political situation, although thankfully calmed down from the violent tensions of past weeks, is still very difficult. Beneficial change is in the wings but the new Government will face significant challenges. Please pray that justice and openness will prevail in Cambodia's politics.

AOC is looking to the future and sees the need for some key organisational changes. Along with the expected benefits, these changes will bring new issues. Please pray for wisdom in planning, and smooth transitions in the near future.

It is rainy season and right now roads are flooded in many places. In Stung Treng this is preventing work from going ahead. Floods are also a yearly risk for the crops of subsistence farmers. Please pray for the impact on the most vulnerable to be limited.

AOC's two trusty vehicles, the van and truck, are senior citizens and both require extensive repairs. It is a priority to get our vehicles fixed as we rely on them to take materials, staff and donors out to the villages. Please pray for the funds for proper repairs, or to buy new ones.

We have a shortfall in funding this year, due to significant and unexpected overheads for the pioneering work in Stung Treng. Please pray that we can cover the gaps and for wisdom in project management.

Please continue to pray for rest and refreshment for the Dyer family, on leave in New Zealand. They have left a big hole for the team to fill!

# FIELD PARTNERS UPDATE

## MANNATECH PHYTOBLEND POWDER PILOT PROJECT

Asian Outreach Cambodia, through Asian Outreach Canada, and in partnership with Mannatech, piloted a feeding program for 150 vulnerable children. The project was in operation for a three-month period from May to July 2013. Phytoblend Powder is a product designed by Mannatech to provide complete nutrition for children aged 3 to 12 years. The project set out to discover what would be the effects of daily doses of the product for disadvantaged or malnourished children. A large number of the child participants were a part of other AOC programs in Lvea Em district, including Assisting Children to School, and the former HIV/AIDS Homecare.

The Livelihoods project team (former HIV/AIDS Homecare team) operated the program because of their experience in delivering health services to patients. Former staff member, Ms. Naroth Phin, was asked to volunteer as team leader.

The results of the pilot were very encouraging, with consistent reports by parents of improvement in their children's attention span, behaviour, school results, and general health and energy levels. AOC will consider further partnership with Mannatech in order to bring nutritional benefits to children who would otherwise suffer from deficiencies.

2



## NEVERTHIRST

Neverthirst is a Christian non-profit organisation that seeks to "bring clean and living water to the poor through the local church". We are proud to partner with them in our Water & Sanitation projects. Please visit their website to see what else they do around the world: [neverthirstwater.org](http://neverthirstwater.org)

Earlier in the year AOC and Neverthirst partnered together to successfully drill 12 wells in Oh Chralang and Tboundg Khla villages, in the Siem Bouk district of Stung Treng province. These are places that have had difficulty accessing potable water, villagers previously collecting it from the river and lake, so the wells are making a massive difference in the lives of between 120-140 families.

In August we also partnered with Neverthirst to drill a borehole for a well on our land development site in Stung Treng. The drilling was a success, with water being found at a depth of 50m. This was a major undertaking at this time of the rainy season. The well will be used for irrigation across all the various agricultural initiatives on the site. These will in turn be used for training purposes for many local farmers, to help them improve their quality of life. Thanks to Neverthirst for helping us on this important mission!



# OPERATIONS UPDATE

# STAFF UPDATE

## FINANCE VOLUNTEER

Mark Harter from the UK was with us for three weeks in April this year. He volunteered through AFID, an organisation that mobilises accountants as volunteers in development settings. Mark was a huge help to our Finance department while he was with us. Thank you Mark and AFID for partnering with us!

## GOVERNMENT REGISTRATION

AOC has recently successfully gained another three years of registration with the Royal Cambodian Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We are now in the process of renewing a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) for all the work we do relevant to the Ministry of Rural Development. A lot of time and preparation goes into these MOUs, but the end result means that we continue the good relationship we have with Cambodia's authorities.

## STAFF RETREAT

During the month of August we had our annual Staff Retreat, which was a chance to relax, build relationships, and spend some serious time together planning out the future of AOC. Our first two days were spent in the office at Phnom Penh, where board members Graham Taylor and Sheila Reid spent time sharing their expertise and heart, followed by a time clarifying the vision, mission and future program structure with the Director and Matt Crosby.

Our last few days were spent staying at Kep, a fishing village turned local resort destination. We continued with meetings and project updates but also had a great time of team building on the beach and eating tonnes of fresh ocean crab.

## BRUCE AND DIANE TAYLOR VISIT

Our illustrious Board Chairman, Bruce Taylor, and his lovely wife Diane, joined AOC for an extended visit in July and early August. During this time Bruce helped convene strategic planning sessions for AOC's future direction, and both he and Diane made visits to various project sites in Kandal and Stung Treng. Diane, with her considerable experience in ESL teaching, was able to assist Kerrie-Anne in setting up the AOC staff English learning program. Bruce and Diane have many years of relationship and experience with Cambodia and AOC, and it is always a joy to have them both here.

## PISETH'S FAMILY

Piseth is the Project Manager for our Community Hope Development program and is a valued part of our team. His family is under severe financial distress due to his older brother, Sona's, chronic illness.

\$4000 USD is needed to pay for Sona's surgery, and he cannot work to support his family until completing post-surgery rehabilitation. We want to raise money at AOC to help the family.

Please pray with us for God's healing presence. Please contact Romanaea at [director@aocam.org](mailto:director@aocam.org) or Kerrie-Anne at [communicate@aocam.org](mailto:communicate@aocam.org) if you are interested in hearing more about Sona's story.

## FAMILY ADDITIONS

Samai and Hourn, two of our Stung Treng staff members, have both had new additions to their families in this last quarter. Congratulations Samai, Hourn and families, we celebrate with you!



# PROJECT REPORTS



4

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## **AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS**

Prey Veng & Stung Treng

5

---

## **LAND DEVELOPMENT**

Stung Treng

6

---

## **ASSISTING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL**

Kandal & Prey Veng

7

---

## **COMMUNITY HOPE DEVELOPMENT**

Kandal, Prey Veng & Stung Treng

8

---

## **LIVELIHOODS**

Kandal

9

---

## **WATER & SANITATION**

Kandal, Prey Veng & Stung Treng

10

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# AGRICULTURE LIVELIHOODS

## OVERVIEW

In Stung Treng the current goal is to work with 100 farmers to reduce sickness and disease caused by malnutrition and a lack of agricultural success, in 10 villages of 2 districts of Stung Treng province, through agricultural training, loans and mentoring.

The goal of the Agriculture project in Prey Veng is to reduce the incidence of sickness and disease in the project area, resulting from malnutrition and a lack of agricultural success.

### STUNG TRENG Outcomes this quarter:

- 3 support groups formed with 37 household representatives. 15 group members are female.
- 1 volunteer selected and trained to be the local church advocate.
- 37 households were selected and trained in: rice planting; effects of using chemical fertilizer and pesticides; composting; making natural pesticides; cassava planting; mushroom planting; cashew planting; grafting (mango, rubber tree, cashew); home gardening; pig raising; chicken raising; fish raising; bean, soybean, and peanut growing; agricultural marketing; nutrition and diet; good hygiene practices; gender issues.
- 91% of target families were eligible to receive a loan to help expand their agriculture business.
- 10 meetings set with the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, Commune Council, villagers and farmers support group leaders.

### PREY VENG Outcomes this quarter:

- 29 families trained in: rice planting; effects of using chemical fertilizer and pesticide; compost and natural pesticide production; mushroom planting; cropping; home gardening; animal raising (pigs and chickens); agricultural marketing; good health and hygiene practices; food and balanced nutrition.
- 10 household representatives received loans from the project to expand their farms.
- 2 farmer support groups formed.
- Mainstreaming of spiritual components across all activities, such as setting aside time to pray in meetings, prayer for farmers' crops when at their field, prayer for farmers' animals, and sharing about the generosity of church donors locally and overseas.



## SUSTAINABILITY:

The Agriculture Livelihoods program is by nature a sustainability building program. Eight farmer support group leaders have been trained to oversee, problem solve and monitor all loans, as well as giving technical support. Groups are able to discuss problems with AOC when they need more knowledge. Empowering farmers to solve their own problems as much as possible helps to ensure the knowledge from training sessions is retained and encourages greater local ownership.

# LAND DEVELOPMENT

## OVERVIEW

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.



### Outcomes this quarter:

- Road construction has been completed this quarter, with two sealed roads through the property; one at the main entry and the other for heavy machinery access. Both these roads now give all-weather access to the ongoing projects.
- Pig pen construction is now complete, using local and sustainable materials. Ten piglets have made their new comfortable and spacious homes. AOC's pig pen will provide a model for organic, free-range pig farming for local farmers, as well as needed income for the project.
- Borehole drilling and well construction took place in August (for more information, see the Neverthirst update earlier in the report). The borehole was successfully drilled and the upper water tank foundation is now complete.
- The hydroponic Food Machine has seen ongoing work, with construction of a timber and tile roof covering the fish tank. Work on covering the grow beds will begin shortly. Just recently the first crops of salad vegetables have come through. We are very excited about the developments!
- Other land activities include construction and first harvest of five mushroom beds. After the rainy season mushroom growing will recommence, with every expectation of it providing good harvests and a great model for local farmers. All four hectares of land have been cleared and the existing cashew nut trees pruned.

6

## SUSTAINABILITY:

The Land Development project provides a two-fold purpose. Firstly, to use the land site for creating models of sustainable, efficient agricultural techniques for use in our Agricultural training project, as well as space for building a multi-purpose training centre for all Stung Treng based projects. Secondly, as part of an evolving plan to increase the financial sustainability of AOC's programs. As well as providing models for training purposes, produce from the land will be used to create income for the projects. There is still a lot of scope to explore the potential of the land, a lot of lessons to be learned and fine-tuning of goals.

# ASSISTING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL (ACTS)

## OVERVIEW

The goal of ACTS is to empower children from vulnerable Cambodian families to receive an education, by equipping families and teachers with the understanding and resources to help them do so.

### Outcomes this quarter:

- 132 children received the opportunity to study in Extra Tuition Classes.
- 51 children in grades three to nine received uniforms, study materials, and school bags.
- 13 students have undertaken daily part time classes in computer, English or Mathematics.
- Every Thursday, there are around 35 children who come to learn and play at the Happy Children's Club.
- Regular home visits to families of children in the program.



## STORY OF CHANGE

Yeh Tong is a 13 year old boy, studying in grade five at Hun Sen Porthom Primary School. He has three brothers and a sister and lives in Tameng village, Prek Antash commune, Por Rieng district in Prey Veng province.

Tong's family live in a desperate situation where lack of food is a constant reality, so his parents find it very hard to support him to go to school. He rarely gets new shirts to wear to school. He often resorts to using old bags and used study materials.

This new school year, Tong received new school uniforms and study materials from the ACTS project. He is very happy and does not feel so ashamed at school. Not only did Tong receive practical help, but the family benefit from home visits, where the ACTS team encourages Tong to go to school regularly and study hard and advises the family on hygiene and health issues. He has also joined the Happy Children's Club where he can learn about God with other kids and be introduced to right living.

Tong's mother told us that, "Before he joined the ACTS project, Tong was a naughty boy; he liked to make other children cry or be angry with him. He disobeyed us as his parents. Sometimes he used bad words to me when I was late preparing food for him. Sometimes he would break things in the house. He did not study very well, he was lazy. He liked playing with friends more than studying."

Today, one year on, Tong is much improved. He studies hard and is getting good results. He has changed his attitude and behavior completely. His parents are very glad and are proud of their son. They tell us that, "The benefits of the project are so helpful, they contribute to better living and give us hope for a better future for our son."

Tong tells us about himself: "In free times I like playing basketball. In the future I want to be a doctor because I want to help sick and poor people."

## SUSTAINABILITY:

Project sustainability is established in the communities in which we work by training and empowering them to take ownership in all aspects of the project. Parents have expressed the desire to continue the Extra Tuition Class by hiring teachers to teach their children, even after the ACTS project exits. During strategic planning to collaborate and integrate with the Agriculture and Livelihoods projects, we select the more vulnerable families of children in the program to receive training and a loan to start or expand a small business.

# COMMUNITY HOPE DEVELOPMENT

## OVERVIEW

The Community Hope Development project aims to build up the local church, so they can have a positive impact their communities, providing them with the understanding and resources to share the gospel and fully express the values of the Kingdom of God to those around them.

### KANDAL & PREY VENG Outcomes this quarter:

- 30 students under 20 years old regularly attended computer and English classes. Four classes per week.
- Weekly bible studies every Sunday afternoon with youth pastor, Sithoun and his family. Out of the 30 students, 12 have shown interest in knowing Christ.
- 20 young people attended two Sunday School teacher trainings a month in two communities. They learnt bible story teaching and child program management approaches to use in their local churches.
- Women who are AOC beneficiaries from two communities met together regularly in cell groups to share their lives with each other, providing spiritual and physical support.
- CHD supports 48 families, mostly church leaders and the most vulnerable, to improve or start small businesses by giving loans with a low interest rate. This quarter, the families have repaid their loans on time and businesses have been improving.

### STUNG TRENG Outcomes this quarter:

- In partnership with Dr. Mordegai, who runs mobile health clinics, CHD provides translation help as well as evangelism. This quarter the medical outreach went to the Charay tribe in Ratanakiri province.
- Visited Sre Russey village with the WatSan project, and built relationships with the beneficiaries.
- Provided dental and health check-ups and distributed medicine to people at Sre Russey and Samang communes.
- Visited communities with Agriculture team, evangelized with beneficiaries and prayed with them as they received small business loans from AOC.
- Two cell groups started in Chhvang and Anlungkramon.
- Church volunteers have begun consistent relationship building in AOC target communities, with the hope that in time they will produce new disciples and cell groups.
- 2 evangelism volunteers raised from New Life Church and Four Square Church.



## STORY OF CHANGE

Chan Thol lives in Kandal province, Lvea Em district, Tuk Kleang commune, Somroung village. She is married to Mr. Chea Chhoun, and they have six children. Chhoun is disabled from during the civil war in the 1970s and he cannot lift heavy things.

Before knowing Jesus Christ, Chan Thol was very mentally stressed because of her family's poverty. She was most concerned for her children as she did not have enough food for them to eat or money to send them to school. Every day she worried about her family, and sometimes she was in such despair that she contemplated suicide, but whenever she thought about her children she could not go through with it.

Chan Thol has a sister in the same village who has been a believer since 2008 through AOC's training. Her sister constantly shared the good news with her, but Chan Thol did not believe that anyone could help her. Eventually, through her sister's persistence and prayer, Chan Thol accepted the Lord. Since 2010, she has been attending the CHD ladies cell group at Tuk Kleang village with other women in the village. In just three years, Chan Thol has become a leader in the ladies group and regularly teaches.

In an incredible turn-around, Chhoun has recently been able to start work again and provide enough money for the family's food security. The family sees this as a miracle of God's healing and provision. Chhoun has softened in his heart towards Jesus. He has been very impressed by his wife's discipleship and this has helped him change his mind.

Through our connection, the ACTS project is also helping her kids to go to school and providing them with uniforms for the coming year. We also plan to support them in starting a small business in the future.

Today Chan Thol is full of hope and is sharing this hope with others around her.

# LIVELIHOODS

## OVERVIEW

The goal of the Livelihoods project is to assist in the economic and business development of the at-risk population in the project area, so that they can experience a more healthy and holistic lifestyle.

### Outcomes this quarter:

- This May-July, the Livelihoods team took on a pilot project on behalf of Asian Outreach International Canada, providing Mannatech's Phytoblend powder to vulnerable children in AOC project areas. For a brief report on the outcomes, see the Partner Update earlier in the report. The pilot took a lot of the team's capacity during the period, but was felt to be very worthwhile.
- The project started working with 46 families, but 11 families have completely paid back their loans, so this quarter we focused on the 35 remaining families. The ones that have finished we continue to follow up and monitor their success, and many still attend our training sessions.
- 7 trainings were conducted on 3 topics, including: pig raising, chicken raising and husked-rice diseases.

156 participants joined the training sessions, 59 of them beneficiaries and 97 neighbors invited by the beneficiaries. The feedback was encouraging and the attendees are motivated to improve their farms and businesses.

- 6 soft skill training sessions were conducted covering 4 topics, including: household budget planning, integrity, communication skill and saving. 136 participants joined, 57 of them existing beneficiaries and 79 of them neighbours.
- Marketing staff visited all beneficiaries running small businesses to help them find the best small or large market to sell their produce.
- One time a month the project team visited families of people living with HIV/AIDS who were beneficiaries from previous project activities. The team followed up on their health, encouraged them to visit hospital when they are sick and to continue taking their anti-retroviral drugs. The team always brings some medicine to treat those who are sick from opportunistic infections.

9



### SUSTAINABILITY:

The Livelihoods project works to help rural farming families become financially sustainable. The project is successful when small business owners take the business and agricultural training and use it to create a more secure income, strong enough to weather the problems and vulnerabilities that come with rural living.

# WATER & SANITATION



10

## SUSTAINABILITY:

The WatSan project requires a small ownership fee for the filters and latrine rings in order to encourage ownership of the materials. Participation from the beneficiaries in the actual construction of these structures is highly encouraged. Training the community volunteers thoroughly on health, hygiene, proper care and maintenance of the BSF means they are a constant resource for the community members if any problems or questions arise. Training volunteers allows this project to be sustainable by creating a permanent information hub of local community members within each village that remain in contact with the WatSan team. Volunteers also aid in the monitoring of the BSFs to ensure proper functioning and usage even after the WatSan team has left the area.

## OVERVIEW

The purpose of the WatSan project is to reduce the incidence of sickness and disease due to water borne diseases in the project areas.

### PREY VENG Outcomes this quarter:

- 147 BioSand Filters (BSF) constructed, 112 installed and 259 latrines installed.
- Health promotion sessions conducted in 7 villages in Roka commune. There were 295 participants, 196 of them women.
- We conducted 4 volunteer training sessions with 147 participants (118 of them women) attending.
- 2 community-based volunteer groups have been completely formed and trained.
- 2 group beneficiary trainings conducted with 26 participants (8 of them women).
- There are 1445 families with BSFs that AOC staff and community volunteers monitored on a monthly basis through home visits. During monitoring visits we inform and educate our beneficiaries on safe storage of water, and how to maintain the filter.

### STUNG TRENG Outcomes this quarter:

- 65 BSF's constructed.
- 30 BSF's installed.
- 1 volunteer group formed and trained - 5 new volunteers trained and working in their communities, 3 females and 2 males.
- 1 health promotion session conducted in the village (60 participants, 40 of them women).
- 30 latrines built - benefitting 150 people.
- 15 latrines installed - benefitting 75 people.

The Stung Treng WatSan project is a bit behind schedule due to the late delivery of materials and funds. Due to the rain, the road conditions in the villages have also slowed down project implementation. As the rainy season ends, construction and installation will increase in pace. The project is still planned to be completed on time.