

# ASIAN OUTREACH CAMBODIA

BI-ANNUAL REPORT. JULY-DECEMBER 2016.



# DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

A NEW SEASON



“Everything has seasons, and we have to be able to recognize when something’s time has passed and be able to move into the next season. Everything that is alive requires pruning as well, which is a great metaphor for endings”.

Henry Cloud

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I trust you are well both spiritually and physically.

In Cambodia, there are two seasons known as hot and rainy. In reality, both affect the lives of our farmers, but they have learned to be adaptable no matter what nature brings.

We have an annual national festival in May called the Royal Plowing Ceremony to celebrate the beginning of the sowing and planting season. Every year, this cultural event takes place at the park next to the Royal Palace. The royal servants drive two royal oxen to seven golden trays containing different crops. The royal soothsayers then interpret what the oxen have eaten and predict events such as floods, epidemics, excessive rainfall and good harvest to help the farmers prepare for their fields.

After 10 years serving at AOC, it is now time for AOC and I to go our separate ways in to the next season. Changes are a natural part of life with its many ups and downs. We grieve the losses, but also look forward, with excitement, to what a new season will bring. Proverbs 16:9 states, “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps”. God promises to guide and fulfill his plans in all seasons. His presence is constant and continually working in us to deepen our faith.

I would like to take this opportunity to give thanks to God for his rich blessings. Thank you to all the friends and supporters who invested in AOC under my 10 years of leadership. Thank you to the staff for loving and caring for

me and faithfully walking through the journey together. Thank you to the Board of AOC for your cooperation and showing trust in me. Thank you to AO International and AO Alliance for giving me the opportunity to serve alongside and learn from you. And finally, thank you to my dear wife, Naroth, and two sons, Apinune and Apisak, my extended family, pastor, and church for your prayers and support over the years.



I wish you all the best and a spirit-filled Christmas season and a happy 2017!

In Him,

Romanea Thong

# A HUGE THANK YOU, BUT CERTAINLY NOT FAREWELL!!

Some people come into our lives for a short period and then part ways, while others journey with us for a long time. We become woven into each other's' stories, enriching the chapters of our lives.

Romanea has been part of the AOC journey for over 20 years. As a young man and new Christian, he joined the AOC team as a translator and helped with the Boat of Hope project. He became a much-loved member of the AO family. Then he left for a few years to further his experience with another organization, yet we still kept in close relations.

Romanea then returned to serve on the AOC Board before becoming our first Khmer National Director 10 years ago. It has been such a joy to be included into his family of Naroth, his wife, and their two boys, Apinune and Apisak.

Earlier this year, we announced 2016 will be the final one for Romanea as our National Director. Sad as we are to see him step down from this role, we understand that he needs to move on to the next season of ministry and call in God. Along with Naroth and Edith Watt, he has registered a new local NGO called iLive Cambodia to focus on youth discipleship and leadership development.

Edith started her journey with AOC as a staff member of one of our valued international partners. She then felt called a few years ago to come to Cambodia to live, and so joined our AOC team as Program Operations Director at the beginning of 2015. Once again it has been a privilege to be part of each other's journey in serving together in the great nation of Cambodia.

So although both Romanea and Edith will be officially finishing their staff roles with AOC at the end of this year, and new leaders will be appointed in their place, it is certainly not a matter of farewell and then forgotten. We are family and Kingdom partners. Next year Romanea will serve on the AOC Board and we will be partnering with iLive Cambodia in one of our Assisting Children To School projects.

So with heartfelt gratitude, honor and love we release Romanea and Edith into their next season of ministry, and are so pleased that the journey and fellowship together will still continue.

**From Bruce Taylor, AOC Board Chair**

3



# THE NEW APPOINTMENT OF AOC'S NATIONAL DIRECTOR



4

The Board of Asian Outreach Cambodia is very pleased to announce the appointment of Nhap Piseth as our Acting National Director.

After a 3-month recruitment and interview process it became evident that to find an available Khmer leader at the level of experience and Christian values that was required for a country director was not going to be easy. We then felt challenged by God to look within our own ranks at our emerging and dedicated leaders - someone who carried the vision, values and DNA of AOC.

One of our key values is national leadership, with international partnership. Therefore to fulfill this value, we have appointed Piseth to be our Acting National Director for 2017, which will entail a year of intentional training, coaching and support in his new role. That is, to grow and develop him "on the job" into this important leadership position. Alongside him we are also set in place a Senior Leadership Team of very capable operational directors, both expat and Khmer. These are Jared and Emily Reid and Pao Bunthoeun. Experienced local and overseas mentors will also coach Piseth and this team. The Board, of course, will continue to oversee, review and support this dynamic leadership development process. At the end of 2017, along with Piseth, we will evaluate his and the ministry's progress and then decide on a longer term appointment.

Piseth has worked with AOC for six years as a project manager for our church development program. He is a committed Christian who is passionate about engaging, equipping and empowering the church to be transformational agents in their communities. Piseth has traveled overseas and is respected as a genuine advocate, networker and communicator for the ministry of AOC. He has a Bachelor degree in Commercial Management, a Masters degree in General Management and is presently completing his Masters degree in Business Management.

As you know, choosing and promoting someone within the ranks of staff often means we all need to see potential beyond existing duties and to give extra grace and support. Yet there is something very satisfying and right about making room for the "sons and daughters in the house" to reach their God-given calling and potential.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers as we move into a new season to help reach and transform this amazing nation.

**From Bruce Taylor, AOC Chair**

# ORGANIZATIONAL & OPERATIONS UPDATE

## PERSONNEL UPDATE

Sam Darby is returning to New Zealand after serving with us in Stung Treng for a year. Sam, with his ability to adapt quickly, played a variety of roles to help fill the gaps. His main responsibility was to research and leave us with a business plan to generate an income from our farm. With his warmth and outgoing personality, he also hosted many visitors and teams.

Sam's contribution in a short time was invaluable. We are grateful for your commitment and service!

Levi and Kristy Norris, also from New Zealand, came to us for three months. The timing was perfect with the Jared and Emily Reid, the Stung Treng Co-Executive Team Managers, on leave during that time. They provided the necessary leadership with Levi on The Hope Centre construction and Kristy in an administrative capacity and hosting visitors. A huge thank you to Levi and Kristy!

5



## TEAMS AND VISITORS

Over the last six months there has been a steady flow of guests coming to Stung Treng. In terms of teams, one from New Zealand Elim Church served at The Hope Centre. Hungry for Life brought a team from Westside Kings Church in Canada to see the work of AOC. We also recently had a team from Mission One Eleven from Canada that stayed in the village with an unreached tribal group for two weeks. Here they shared various stories from the Bible – they left greatly encouraged by several individual responses to the Gospel.

In October, we hosted a Neverthirst Team from Alabama in a village in Stung Treng where the AOC team installs bio-sand filters (BSF) and wells. They stayed at a local pastor's house and enjoyed village life. They worked hard helping us install BSFs and were thrilled to see how a well is drilled!

Russell Kay-Hards from New Gen City Church Melbourne visited us in Stung Treng to assess a potential partnership with AOC in the future. Peter Roebbelen, along with his daughters and assistant from the Charis Foundation in Canada, dropped by as well. He had previously visited Stung Treng in 2011 and shared of how much has changed in five years with the infrastructure development in the Stung Treng city and a sense of hope in the people he did not see before.

Judith Rotherham, from New Zealand, came on a scouting trip to assess if we are a fit for her and for us to evaluate her as a potential English teacher for The Hope Centre!

Mitchel Oud and Michel Stevens from New Zealand helped us with the first stage of electrical wiring for The Hope Centre, which has been an answer to prayer!

## AOC BOARD MEETING

With the major leadership transition, the Board met for the third time in October in Phnom Penh Cambodia to discuss the upcoming changes. Interviews of short-listed candidates for the National Director position were also conducted over three days.

## NEW FINANCE SYSTEM

Since the last AOC report sent out in July, we have a new accounting system and process in place. We recruited a local firm, Fontamilao, to assess, update and do an overhaul. Like anything new, we have some challenges in the transition, but it will no doubt benefit us and our donors in the long run.

THERE IS A TIME FOR  
EVERYTHING, AND A  
SEASON FOR EVERY  
ACTIVITY UNDER THE  
HEAVENS ECCLESIASTES 3:1



# WATER & SANITATION

KANDAL & STUNG TRENG

## Overview

The Water and Sanitation team has worked hard over the past few years in Thala Borivath commune in Stung Treng to give its people clean water and proper sanitation. We want to exit well next year by passing on valuable knowledge and instilling full ownership in the leaders.

In September, we met with the Village Development Committee (VDC) where we shared our ideas on how to build their capacity so they can become the key leaders to work with families on water and sanitation solutions. We explained this as one of the main objectives of our project. We trained them on the installation of bio-sand filters and latrines, as well as the maintenance so they can assist their own people.

Each member of the VDC is now taking responsibility to look after and monitor bio-sand filters for 12 households. In this mentoring process, we are teaching and expecting them to solve their own problems without any outside help.

## Story of Change

Mrs. Buth Samrath is 56 years old with five children. She lives in Chvang village, Stung Treng and makes a living as a farmer.

Normally, Samarth's family goes to rice fields to get water from the wells to drink when they have no bottled water. They also find water from a lake or canal. As a result, they frequently suffer from stomach pains and diarrhea which require medicine Samarth cannot afford.

AOC's Water and Sanitation Health Promotion Team visited Chvang village and the village leader to educate the people on water-borne diseases and introduce healthy water and sanitation practices. After many positive discussions, 56 villagers registered to get the filters.

Since Mrs. Samarth's family received their bio-sand filter they have been using it daily for cooking, drinking and washing. Her family rarely gets diarrhea anymore and are so happy! The BSF has made such a difference in their lives.

AOC taught Mrs. Samrath how to maintain and fix the filter so that she does not have to rely on others if a problem arises.

# WELLS PROJECT

STUNG TRENG

## Overview

We have recently completed our project goal of 52 wells in Stung Treng Province. We have a very strong partnership with our donor, Neverthirst, and are looking to expand our operations to 62 hand pumps in both Stung Treng and on the border of Preah Vihear Province. This is exciting as we create new relationships with local pastors and officials and work together to make the best decisions for the communities.

## Story of Change

Phnom Krahorn is a village in Siem Bok district which sits along a Muslim village in Stung Treng province. It is 31 kilometers from Stung Treng city.

The local pastor and village leader of Phnom Krahorn is a 65 year-old man named Mr. Bun Seng Hay. He is a man of influence within the village, which has a population of 605 people with 184 families. He also spends his time farming the fields. His family consists of his 58 year-old wife, Chhom Vanny, and seven children. They were the first ones to become Christians in the village in 1993. He now hosts the local church, with an attendance of eight to ten people, in his home every Sunday evening.



# COMMUNITY HOPE DEVELOPMENT

KANDAL, PREY VENG & STUNG TRENG

## Overview

In most poor villages AOC works in, we strive to bring sustainability through four dimensions: economic, physical, spiritual (role model of leadership, building godly character and attitudes) and societal (peace, relationships, and ownership by the communities).

The goal was to work towards planting mature, indigenous reproducing churches. All Christian leaders worked to incorporate new believers into the life and ministry of the church, establish local leadership and equip its members to make new disciples and establish new church groups. They avoided using methods that foster dependency, but encouraged Cambodian Christians to look to God to supply for all their needs within their local contexts.



## Story of Change

As a quiet and soft-spoken middle-aged man, Yan Bunsan is not a typical Christian leader in his rural village. In June 2014, he wanted to get involved in ministry, but most of Christian leaders said he is too quiet and so will not be of much help. Yan Bunsan was so disappointed with the response, but instead of giving up, he approached AOC to assist him to find facilitation skills training and on how to build a strong network within his community. He wanted to show how committed he was!

Yan Bunsan has since been an active member of his church. In two years, he and three other pastors have successfully established a thriving mushroom growing livelihood program, a cow bank for the poorest families in his village, a credit scheme and a gender-based violence support network.

Yan Bunsan told us, "Many people though I wouldn't be able to do anything to help my church or village, but the training equipped me to identify needs and develop solutions. Before I was an ordinary church member and only took care of my family, but I was convinced that we are called to tell others about Christ, to baptize and teach them to live a godly life. I was not brave, but now I am a leader in my church. I help to solve problems in my village! I am really proud and want to thank AOC for strengthening indigenous workers like me to help our own communities".



# AGRICULTURE

STUNG TRENG



9

## Overview

As we begin to partner with new organizations and local governments, this signals a new season for us at AOC, especially in regards to the Agriculture project. In moving forward, we wish to become a training facilitator not only for our own beneficiaries, but a resource for new NGOs moving into the region. They will be able to capitalize on the local knowledge and expertise we have gained through the years.

## Story of Change

My name is Chek Sarin and I have now worked for AOC for 4 years. My responsibility is to look after the animals on the Model Farm. We raise them so we can teach local farmers on techniques that will benefit them. As a result, I have learned a great deal about animal raising methods I was not aware of before. I now know how to treat animals when they are sick, give vaccinations and breed healthy pigs. I love using the skills I have learned every day on the farm!

Recently, AOC bought a feed milling machine and now I know how to mix feed for our pigs. This enabled us to lower our costs and teach farmers the right ingredients to use. I am excited because we recently bought goats, so I have many opportunities to learn additional skills on how to take care of them. I am happy to work at AOC.

# THE HOPE CENTRE

STUNG TRENG

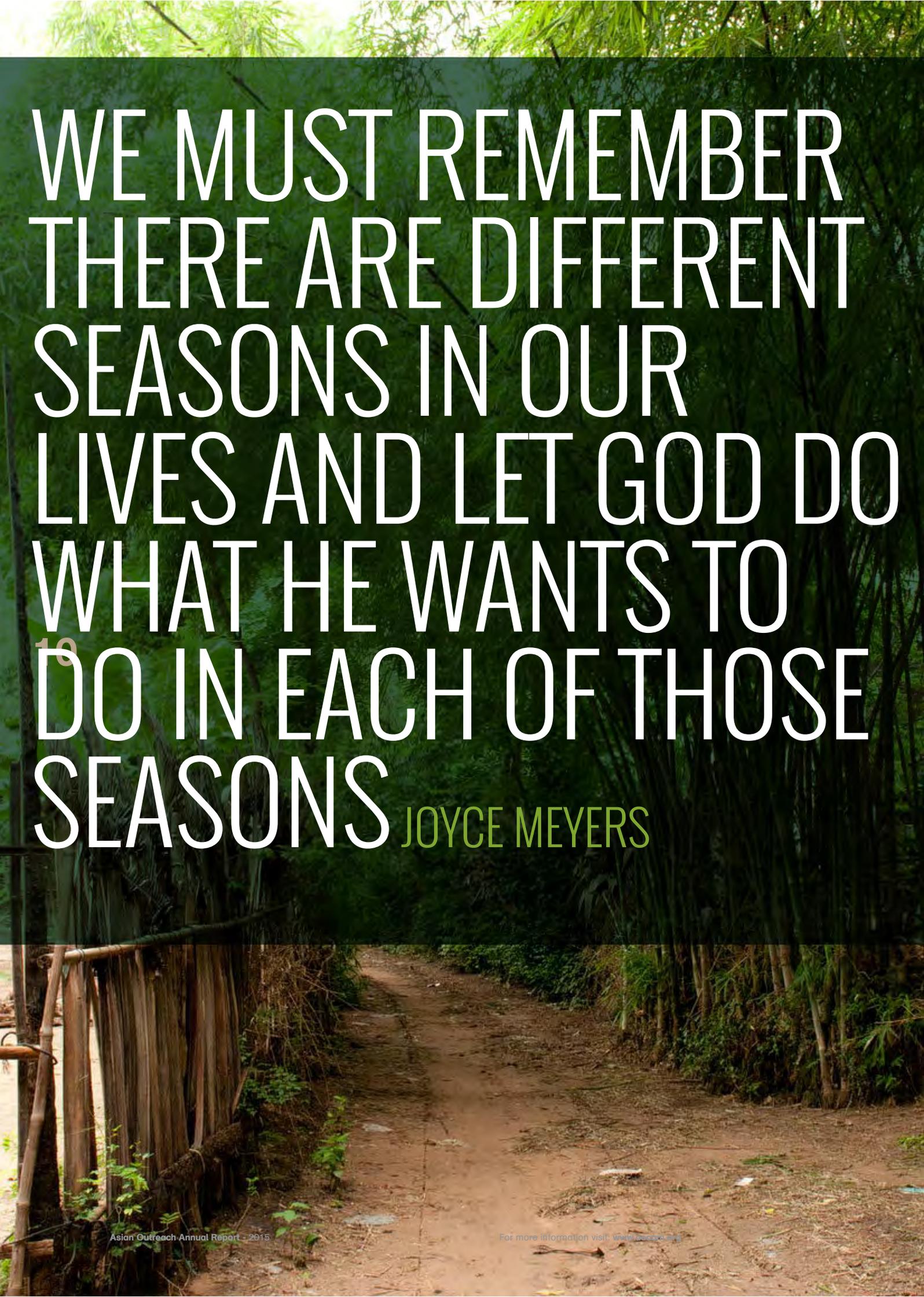
## Overview

This past year has felt like a new season for The Hope Centre in Stung Treng. As we near the end of 2017, it is with great anticipation that we look forward to the New Year and all that is in store.

From the outside you can see a fresh coat of paint and landscaping around the building and inside, chairs, desks, white boards, fans, tables, kitchen equipment, tiles and paint! While in the background there have been numerous changes you don't see with your naked eyes. We are in the process of finalizing a contract with an English teacher from New Zealand to join us in the New Year, along with more international teams to assist with the internal fit-out. Also, we have been finalizing curriculums for both the English and Computer classes.

The past six months have been exciting getting things in place with the goal of starting classes on January 30, 2017. However, I believe the best is yet to come as we roll into another new season with the official opening on March 30th. Please let us know if you want to join us! For more details, write to Emily at [emilyreidaoc@gmail.com](mailto:emilyreidaoc@gmail.com).





WE MUST REMEMBER  
THERE ARE DIFFERENT  
SEASONS IN OUR  
LIVES AND LET GOD DO  
WHAT HE WANTS TO  
DO IN EACH OF THOSE  
SEASONS

JOYCE MEYERS

# ASSISTING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL

KANDAL, PREY VENG & STUNG TRENG



## Overview

11

The new academic school year for 2016 and 2017 started on November 1st. ACTS supports 307 children across three provinces. One hundred and fifty of them are attending the Happy Children's Club where they learn about the Christian faith and enjoy activities that most kids love like singing and active games.

We have worked in Kandal and Prey Veng provinces for a long time and one of the very positive outcomes is the birth of house churches. The primary goal of ACTS in 2017 is to build their capacity to implement our project activities. Therefore, we will be looking for and hiring three church workers in the early part of the year. With training and mentoring, they will take over the responsibilities of our field staff.

## Story of Change

Lun Sokly, an eight-grader, goes to Beoung Krom High School on her old bicycle every morning. She has a six year-old brother studying in grade one. Her parents work in Thailand as construction workers, so Sokly lives with her 65 year-old grandmother in an old house. She earns an income of \$1/ day peeling the skin off corn; sometimes Lun Sokly helps her grandmother when she has free time after school.

Sokly loves studying which is evident in the award she receives every month as the smartest student in class. She wants to be a teacher to help the children in her village. She said, "I love children and I want them to avoid drugs. I want to give knowledge to the next generation".

Sokly is not only committed to her schooling, but to her church as a Sunday School teacher. She told us, "I received Jesus when I was six years old. Even though my parents are not here with me, I always feel close to them because God is with me. And I always pray for them and never lose hope because I have God".

ACTS has now supported Sokly for five years, paying for her study materials, school uniform and extra tuition classes. She said, "I hope that all donors who live overseas will continue to support me and many other children in Cambodia".



# STARS OF PEACE

KANDAL



Stars of Peace has reached the end of its timeframe as a three-year pilot project. This update will give the summary of the lessons learned, what is next, and how we are moving forward into our new season.

12

In review of the three years, we served 119 children in our preschool; some have been with us for the entire duration and others for a year with the shortest for three months. There were 36 pregnant mothers and babies in our care, 150 children on the soya milk feeding program and approximately 25 parents and 45 children in our monthly parenting and health and hygiene classes in the first two years of the project. Over 200 people benefitted from special events like the International Children's Day Celebration, Mother's Day, Family Day, and outings to the Royal Palace and zoo. The project also helped repair five houses.

In partnership with AOC, there were five toilets built and 100 water filters distributed to the community. Thirty older children were given support to go to the state school.

There were many lessons gained along the way. We tried our best to follow the plan, but we had to adjust to numerous unforeseen changes in order to best serve the people in our target group. It was a blessing to see children accessing early childhood development and care, pregnant mothers learning to take care of themselves and their unborn babies, adults coming to value children as they grow in their awareness of child development and older children getting the support and encouragement for their schooling.

There were things we planned that did not happen, but there were also things that were unplanned that we implemented! In reflection, if we started this all over again, there is one thing we would do differently and that is to tell people about God. Showing our Christian life in our actions is not enough, we have to tell them. We promoted holistic childhood development because our desire was for the fullness of life for children. However, we cannot ensure holistic development without God in the picture because he is the only one who can transform lives from the inside out.

In our new season, the Stars of Peace preschool will be one component of the Prek Ho project under iLive Cambodia, a new local NGO formed by my husband, Thong Romanea, my close friend, Edith Watt, and I. The mission of iLive Cambodia is to edify and equip young Cambodians to become agents of love and hope who will transform their society. Our vision is simply "A generation of change". We will, therefore, extend the breadth of the work in Prek Ho to focus on discipleship and developing leadership skills in some of the youth we have gotten to know. We will also invite local church involvement.

We count it an immense privilege to be able to walk this journey with many families and children, the team and the Prek Ho community as the whole. We thank our partners for their kindness and generosity. We thank AOC for their commitment, not only in the last three years but for the new school term 2016-2017.

From Phin Naroth, Founder of Stars of Peace

