



seed

small beginnings

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Opening ceremony of Bech Khlok primary school

EDITORIAL

It is a warm feeling to be able to say one has built a school in Cambodia. The admiration one gets for doing something like that flatters the ego and the temptation to keep building schools is significant.

Of course, we did not build the Primary School in Bech Khlok to lift our self-esteem, but to give the children there a real chance to get a good education. In rural Cambodia, only 40% of all students finish Primary school. And on average they take 10 years to absolve what is designed to be a 6-year curriculum. This is the result of the frequent lack of teachers, and the absenteeism amongst teachers.

In the absence of control or checks by the responsible authorities, teachers use every opportunity to improve their very modest salaries, and regularly just go and perform slightly better apid work instead of going to school to teach. These frequent absences lead to big problems when it comes to teaching the planned subjects within the allocated time. As a result, many children have to repeat a whole year, or even several years, and often leave Primary school frustrated and before finishing.

This often happens before they have even learnt to read and write. This is why, instead of giving in to the temptation to build more schools, we are going to - for the time being - focus our attention and resources on the one school we have already built, and guarantee through our daily presence and support that the children receive constant quality education. When we are building a school, it is relatively easy to find donations. However, when we need funds to ensure that school really fulfills its purpose, donations are much harder to come by. We are nevertheless certain that our focus is correct, and that our efforts to provide quality education is the best way forward for now. Therefore, we are gladly taking on the challenge of finding donations for this project!

Andrea Brüscheweiler
Founder of Seed of Small Beginnings

The following annual report describes the activities of Seed of Small Beginnings between the 1st of January and the 31st of December 2017.

GOALS

Seed of Small Beginnings is a registered Swiss/German non-profit associaton with projects in Cambodia. The goal of Seed is to improve the living-conditions of suffering children and families in Cambodia permanently, and to play a meaningful part in the reduction of poverty and misery in the world through this. Seed also works closely together with the local people and authorities. We have a small budget and we need active assistance in order to reach our goals.

PROJECTS

Education

About 250 children profit from our educational offers. A primary school in Bech Khlok – a difficult to reach village in western Cambodia – and an English school at the outskirt of Battambang city, give the children from disadvantaged families a chance for a better future. Both schools also have well stocked libraries, because those who cannot read properly, have little chance of making it out of poverty.

Health

The people of Bech Khlok do not have any access to clean drinking water. With different water-filter systems we are ensuring, that no kids have to suffer from illnesses caused by infected water.

We also work together with diverse non-profits organisations and medical institutions, so that health care and emergency services are available to everyone.

Environment

Both schools are active in their communities and regularly organise various projects to the theme of environmental protection. We are trying to get the locals used to this idea by providing information and joined activities.



The Countryside Class, situated in a small suburb of Battambang, was founded by a local Tuk-Tuk driver in 2012. The school now educates 150 children from the neighbourhood in English, traditional dance, Arts and Music, and offers private lessons in Khmer (the Cambodian language) and Mathematics.

The library of the school, which was established in early 2016 with the help of Seed, has developed into an important central meeting point for all the children in the area. They can hear stories, read, play, learn and be creative here. In addition to the regular classes, Seed helped to organise two project weeks again in 2017. The themes were Environment and Music.

The July project week was fully focused on environmental protection. In cooperation with an organisation called

Plastic Free Cambodia, a diverse range of activities and workshops were offered. For example, the children of Battambang took part in a huge rubbish collection campaign, and also in a video production about one-way plastics and how one can avoid the use of such plastics, waste separation and waste combustion, always with the objective of making the children mindful of the options available for the reduction of the use plastic, in an educational and yet playful manner.

Furthermore the students worked through the edition of “Little Scientists” which focused on the “plastic theme”. This magazine is being published by the British Embassy in English and Khmer since late 2016, and is released monthly, with various "STEM Education themes (science, technology and mathematics). The Countryside Class now receives a free copy of the latest edition for every student from the British Embassy every month!

Finally, in September, a musical project week was held. A French music teacher and a New Zealand musician taught the children in four age groups with the goal of introducing the concept of music to them. The children learned about the scale, sang in a choir, and made first experiences with rhythm instruments. Some of the children since visit the free weekly guitar lessons at the school (from 10 years of age).

At the start of the new school year, in October 2017, Seed organised a course about menstrual hygiene and sexual education for the female students (from 10 years old). These are themes which are mostly taboo in their own families. An experienced social worker from Children's Future International (CFI) helped us to enlighten the girls.

Last but not least, the teachers and librarians were able to participate in a 2-day professional development seminar, offered by the American NGO "Caring for Cambodia" in Siem Reap.



COUNTRYSIDE CLASS



BECH KHLOK

The people in Bech Khlok, a small and very remote settlement in West-Cambodia, still have no access to clean drinking water, no electricity, and no medical supplies during the rainy season. The public Primary school, founded and built by then villagers themselves, was in a very bad state.

In 2016, Seed was able to start with the urgently needed renovations and enhancements for the school. In April 2017, the second, and for now final stage of the renovations was successfully completed. The school now has three new classrooms, a teacher room, a big library, solar power, sanitary facilities and water filters for clean drinking water.

The salaries of the teachers are paid by the State of Cambodia, and the Ministry of Education provides only the official schoolbooks. Seed provides all other educational materials (textbooks, stationary, and so on).

The inauguration of the new school was a major event for the small settlement of Bech Khlok. Seed of Small Beginnings was especially pleased with the official recognition of its work by the Government and the Ministry of Education, with representatives of both present at the festivities! A special mention and praise was received from the representative of the Ministry for the library of the school. Cambodian Primary schools don't usually have libraries, and in remote areas there are no libraries at all. With this library, Seed wants to awaken the joys of reading and learning in the young children. Obviously, a person who cannot read has only a very limited chance to escape poverty.

The library does not only provide reading materials, but also, games, drawing materials, handicraft works, and many other sources of valuable learning. It has become an important meeting centre for the children of Bech Khlok - a small oasis in which they can withdraw from daily chores and forget the harsh realities of life for a little while. A place where they can simply be children, full of joy for life and thirst for knowledge.

The second focus of Seed's work in Bech Khlok is on the improvement of the dire drinking water situation. DrinkPure, a spin-off from the Swiss ETH (Polytech), donated the first 40 portable water filters for all families with small children in Bech Khlok. The small filters can be screwed onto every standard PET bottle, and they are a great intermediate solution, while Seed is working on

providing big biosand filters to those families. Thanks to DrinkPure, the especially endangered small children can now drink clean water!

To prepare the families for the arrival of the big biosand filters, they were encouraged to participate in workshops about hygiene and clean drinking water. Participation is mandatory for every family that wants to receive a sand filter. The delivery of the sand filters is planned for January 2018.

A lot of education was also delivered to the people of Bech Khlok about environmental management and protection. Even though there is relatively little plastic in Bech Khlok, waste is a big problem, because there are no ways to dispose of rubbish. There is neither a system for recycling, nor a waste collection system. Waste is being burned or ends up in the water systems, gardens and fields. Apart from the basic education about waste and the reduction of the use of plastics, the main focus of the workshops was on waste separation and waste combustion. The impact of plastics on the local animals (cows, chickens and dogs eat plastic) was also highlighted. At the end of the workshops there was a Little Scientist magazine with the plastic theme for each child. A big present for the children and the first "book" they ever owned!

As the teachers of the Countryside Class in Battambang did, so were the teachers in Bech Khlok able to participate in a 2-day professional development seminar, offered by the American NGO "Caring for Cambodia" in Siem Reap.





PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SEED CHARITY IN GERMANY

With an informative website, a blog with regular articles, a newsletter with exciting reports from Cambodia which is released four times per year, and a constant presence in the social media, Seed of Small Beginnings is well represented in the digital media.

In Switzerland and Germany, there were also recitals around Seed projects, as well as a choir concert and a sponsor run. All of these events aimed to draw the public attention to Seed, and to collect donations.

Already in 2016, Seed was registered as a charitable organisation in Switzerland. Since 2017, we now have a German section, also with charitable status, and registered in Munich (see picture below).



COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS



Plastic Free Cambodia

This Australian education start-up wants to minimise the use of one-way plastic in Cambodia through education and various other activities. In the context of the "Plastic Free July" campaign, Seed of Small Beginnings held workshops in the Countryside Class and in Bech Khlok in partnership with Plastic Free Cambodia.

SALT Academy Cambodia

SALT Academy Cambodia offers sport- and leadership training to young Cambodians in the North-West of the country. The students of the Countryside Class were able to participate in a football tournament and a self-defence course organised by SALT Academy.

British Embassy Phnom Penh - Little Scientist Magazin

Little Scientist Magazine is a monthly bilingual magazine in Khmer and English. It targets children in Primary school age and aims to promote STEM education (STEM stands for Science, Technology and Mathematics). The articles are colourfully illustrated and very child-friendly. Since January 2017 our students in Battambang and Bech Khlok receive copies of each edition, sponsored by the British Embassy in Phnom Penh.

CFI - Children's Future International

CFI - Children's Future International (CFI) is an American NGO which helped enlighten the girls of the Countryside Class. An experienced social worker from CFI explained in detail to the around 30 students all there is to know about sexuality, menstruation and cycles, hygiene and fertility. Our English teacher Seavyong Yonn participated with great concentration, and will pass on her new-found knowledge to the girls in Bech Khlok.

Die Kleine Hilfsaktion e.V. - Project Eyesight

At the end of November the students of the Countryside Class and their families, and the villagers of Bech Khlok were examined and their eyesight tested by two German eye specialists. Those who needed glasses or medical treatment were provided with that. This project was sponsored by the German "Die Kleine Hilfsaktion e.V." organisation.

Caring for Cambodia

Focus of this American NGO is the sustainable improvement of the quality of education through supporting the provision of school materials, and through training and mentoring of teachers. Seed of Small Beginnings enabled the teachers of the Countryside Class and the Bech Khlok Primary school to participate in a 2-day seminar in Siem Reap.





THANK YOU!

This year, Seed wants to gratefully express a huge "thank you" to all those who donated materials, time, knowledge or courses. We were able to make a lot of poor children extremely happy thanks to the generous donations of clothing and toys by private people.

Crucially important also is the immaterial support seed receives in the form of its many volunteers. Without those, from local supporters through to the volunteers in schools (Clix Staefa, Switzerland) who collect donations in their own spare time, distributing information about Seed, and so on, we would not be able to have the succes that we are having with our Projects!

Åkhun, Merci, Thanks, Danke ...

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2017

Balance January 2017

Balance 01.01.2017 (PostFinance and ABA Cambodia) \$ 20,300.00

Revenue

Donations and Membership Fees 16,300.00
Interest-free loan for school building 15,800.00
School fees and copy costs for school books 505.00

Total Revenue 2017 \$ 32,605.00

Expenses

Countryside Class

Maintenance/Equipment 303.00
Books for library and lessons 664.00
Copy costs 338.00
Stationary 2,013.00
Teaching material 275.00
Salaries 3,450.00
Lease of land, electricity 1,250.00
Miscellaneous 331.00

Total Countryside Class \$ 8,624.00

Bech Khlok

Total construction costs 2nd school building 14,500.00
Maintenance/Equipment 1,630.00
Transport 563.00
Books for library and school 172.00
Stationary 234.00
Monthly supplementary payment for the teachers 1,200
Miscellaneous 464.00

Total Bech Khlok \$ 18,824.00

Both Projects

Salary Project Manager Kim-Desiree Knorr 5,250.00
Reimbursement Heang Ho (temporary assistant) 292.00
Reimbursement Meas Sambath, Construction Manager 1,060.00
Workshops and university fees for teachers 694.00
Student support (bicycles, school uniforms) 142.00
Travel costs (inclusive annual visa for Kim-Desiree Knorr) 1,261.00

Seed miscellaneous 590.00
Bank account fees 55.00

Total Expenses 2017 \$ 36,792.00

Balance December 2016

Balance 12.12.2017 (PostFinance and ABA Cambodia) \$ 16,113.00



ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT



OUTLOOK

After the succesful completion of the construction of the Primary school in Bech Khlok, we will in the coming year concentrate on the quality and sustainability of the education, and on active participation of the students with extracurricular offers in the library.

A local Cambodian Project Manager will look after the school and the library from January 2018. Additionally, he will teach English in the afternoons, and he will offer courses about environmental themes, water and hygiene. He will be an important liaison for the first 25 families who will receive a biosand filter.

The most important objective for the Countryside Class for 2018 is to further develop the educational competencies of the teachers and the completion of the curriculum. In addition to English classes, in 2018 the school will also offer various creative- and musical activities.

And there will be further workshops and activities around the theme of environmental management.



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