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Geography lesson at Bech Khlok's primary school

EDITORIAL

In order to better the education of the children in the remote village of Bech Khlok for the long run, we decided to make our presence more known from the beginning of 2018. This step definitely paid off because, thanks to us, the primary school teachers now teach 2-3 hours daily. This is a big step forward compared to other schools in remote areas. Therefore I am sure that by the end of the 2018/2019 school year, a few more students will make the important move into secondary school.

Thanks to our passionate engagement in Bech Khlok, we have also gotten to know their everyday issues and problems within the families. This has shown that we will have to put in a lot of educational work in order to improve these families' situations for good and to ensure the schooling of their children. One problem is the large debts some of the villagers are in. Since most of the parents don't know to do math or write,

they are vulnerable to credit companies that offer them loans to very high interest. In order to find new victims, these companies are willing to drive out to such remote villages as Bech Khlok. Unfortunately, it is not always emergencies which force these families to get loans. These days, the money is being used for unnecessary things more frequently. Since they have no savings to fall back on, an unexpected event (such as injury, crop failure etc.) will quickly lead to financial disaster. In order to then pay back the ever rising interest, many children will have to drop out of school and help earn money for their families. To prevent families from falling into debt and taking away their children's future because of it, a lot of education and guidance is needed.

We are planning on taking on this challenging task and hope, that in the future we will see less and less kids saying goodbye to their school life.

Andrea Bruschweiler
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 2018.

GOALS

Seed of Small Beginnings is a registered Swiss/German non-profit association 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 outskirts 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 in a suburb of the provincial capital Battambang was founded by a local Tuk-Tuk driver. The school now offers tuition in English, Khmer (the local language) and Mathematics, asking only for a small token contribution from the student's parents.

The large number of students demanded an extension of the school by one further classroom. After eight years of operation, several maintenance projects had become necessary as well. In 2018, the bamboo walls and the entrance door were replaced, the floor was renewed, and the blackboard was renovated. Finally, the Countryside Class got its own bathroom. The school is looking shiny and new and is offering perfect conditions for the beloved and valuable education. The increase in student numbers also required more teachers. At the end of 2018, two further English teachers – Theara and Sammanal - were employed for course-related classes. While Theara will only be with us for a short period of time, Sammanal is planned to be a permanent member of the teaching team. Sammanal studies English at University, and Seed of Small Beginnings is supporting him with that.

All teachers completed a training course in phonetics, methodology and pronunciation with Nick, a New Zealand English teacher, and they will all be able to participate in further courses next year.

Apart from the actual school, the library which was developed with the support of Seed of Small Beginnings within the Countryside Class early 2016 has meanwhile become an important meeting point for the local children. In the library, they can listen to stories, read, play, learn and be creative. Since 2018 a laptop with educational games and videos is now also available for

them, and we are very grateful to Labdoo.org e.V. for donating it. The laptop is also being used to maintain an inventory of the books in the library, so more technology is finding its way into Seed of Small Beginnings!

Furthermore, the inventory of the school was increased by many new books, but also by some parlour games and other games. Those were donated by private persons and by the French charity Toutesa l'ecole, or they were manufactured by the school itself from the freely available texts by Let's Read Cambodia. In addition to the regular education, multiple projects were completed in 2018. Environment, Health Care and the creative and musical development of the children were the themes of these projects. For example, the pupils had a three-day course we did in cooperation with Plastic Free Cambodia, where they learned how their actions impact on the environment, and how sustainable environmental protection can have a positive impact on their own health and wellbeing. Throughout the year, the lessons learned could be applied to the cleaning of the river Sangke from plastic rubbish and by participating to the Plastic Free July and World Cleanup Day initiatives.

Informative meetings about Health and Wellbeing included workshops about dental hygiene in cooperation with HYDROPHIL, a manufacturer of innovative sustainable hygiene products, and also workshops about body hygiene and puberty for the older students, as well as the foundations of the structure and the functions of the human body, with support from the magazine Little Scientist's Mag.

Lastly, the students of the Countryside Class were challenged to further develop their personalities by using creative activities. The idea is to help them to grow into open minded persons with worldly views, while at the same time strengthening their roots within the Cambodian culture, for instance with the Sunday courses in traditional dance.



COUNTRYSIDE CLASS



BECH KHLOK

The people of Bech Khlok, a small and remote settlement in West Cambodia, still do not have access to clean drinking water, no electricity and no medical care during the rainy season. The public primary school which had been built by the villagers was in very poor condition before Seed of Small Beginnings started the urgently needed full rebuild and extension.

Now that Seed of Small Beginnings has built two new schoolhouses with a total of three classrooms, a teachers room and a large library, and has also been able to finance solar power, sanitary facilities and water filters, Heang Ho, who is the local project manager for Bech Khlok since January 2018, can now start focusing on the outside sections around the buildings. Together with the students he installed a garden with vegetables, fruit, flowers and small trees. The garden does not only serve as self-supply, but also as a show-and-tell for educational purposes. The garden also makes the outside area look very pretty.

The most important task in Bech Khlok this year was the improvement of the drinking water supply situation for

the villagers. In January, the first 20 families received bio-sand water filters from Bareebo for a very small price. For the required transition period of a minimum of 45 days, needed to build the biological filter layer, all families with small children were additionally provided with DrinkPure water filters. The bio-sand water filters will remove most of the harmful pathogens and the people are already suffering from far less diseases.

Heang teaches the pupils English - in addition to the regular curriculum – and manages any daily problems in the village as the local project manager. Through Heang's work, Seed of Small Beginnings has been able to develop the school into a village centre, where initial information evenings have been held about clean drinking water, environmental protection and the importance of proper education. Making parents and children aware of the importance of education has led to us being able to convince the first five parents of graduating primary school students to send their children to secondary school, rather than sending them to work in the rice fields straight after finishing primary school. Seed of Small Beginnings supports these secondary school students through grants, thus helping those students and their families to be able to carry the costs. A sponsorship program has been created, and sponsors were found who donate regularly to enable these students to continue with their education.





PUBLIC RELATIONS

The charitable organization Seed of Small Beginnings uses several channels to inform interested parties about newest project developments, and to find new donators:

A website reports about all the activities of our charity. It also includes a blog with regular updates about projects. The blog can be subscribed to in the form of a newsletter.

Furthermore, both Seed of Small Beginnings and the Countryside Class have their own Facebook pages. Photos and short video clips are also published on Instagram and Vimeo.

In addition to the publications in the electronic media, both the Swiss – and the German Seed branches have held events (video presentations, information stands at traveler meeting, and so on), where the activities of Seed of Small Beginnings have been presented and new donations have been sought.



COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Plastic Free Cambodia

This Cambodian Education spin-off from an Australian NGO wants to minimize the usage of one-way plastics in Cambodia through multiple measures and activities. A three-day course was organized at the Countryside Class around the protection of the environment, and, like we did in 2017, we again participated in the Plastic Free July initiative this year.

CFI – Children’s Future International

In 2018, the American organization CFI helped us with the sexual education for the girls in the Countryside Class. An experienced CFI social worker told the around 30 students all there is to know about sexuality, menstruation, cycles, hygiene and fertility.

Labdoo.org e.V.

Labdoo is a charitable support project, which enables children access to IT and technological education. By providing multiple laptops and ipads, the children of the Countryside Class and Bech Khlok’s primary school now have the opportunity to get to know technology firsthand. Our teachers Heang and Seav Young use the computers for research, preparation of teaching material, and to play educational games and cd’s in class and in the libraries.

Anglican Missions

Anthony McCormick, a social worker from New Zealand, taught our teachers Heang and Seav Young how to do social work. Both have now finished their basic courses, and they are using their newly gained skills already in Battambang and in Bech Khlok.

Bareebo

Bareebo is a Cambodian Support Organization, which is aiming to provide sufficient water and food to all rural areas of Cambodia. Bareebo helped us with the water filters for the families in Bech Khlok.

Die Kleine Hilfsaktion e.V. - Project Eyesight

In the context of project “Augenlicht”, this year the villagers of Bech Khlok were again examined by two German eye specialists and had their vision tested. This German charity also donated spectacles where those were needed, and this year they even provided sunglasses for all the children of Bech Khlok! This charity also always helps out in emergencies, for instance when it comes to paying for necessary operations.

Furthermore, Kleine Hilfsaktion e.V. held two so-called Fundridings (guided scooter tours across Cambodia), which stopped at the Countryside Class in Battambang. The tour participants staged a dance workshop and three juggling – and life kinetics courses at the school.

British Embassy Phnom Penh - Little Scientist Magazin

The Little Scientist Mag is a magazine which is published every month in Khmer and in English, and which is distributed to the children of the Countryside Class and of Bech Khlok thanks to the generous sponsorship of the British Embassy. The articles are colorfully illustrated and target children in primary school age range, to provide education in sciences, technology and mathematics.

The Handa Foundation & Operation Smile

Our local Manager Kim organized medical surgery for a Countryside Class student with a lip-jaw-palate cleft, which could be performed thanks to the support from Operation Smile, der kleine Hilfsaktion, and the Handa Medical Center.





THANK YOU!

A huge “thank you” to everyone who generously donated materials in 2018. It was because of the many clothes and toys and games we received from private persons that we could conjure up a sparkle in the eyes of so many children.

A special “thank you” to the company Westernacher Business Management Consulting GmbH, who donated a big amount of money to enable us to build a Kindergarten in Bech Khlok next year.

Awesome!

Of utmost importance is the immaterial help Seed of Small Beginnings receives on a regular basis. Without the countless volunteers, the local supporters, and everyone who collect donations, or provides information, in their own free time, no project would be possible!

Åkhun, Merci, Thanks, Danke ...

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2018

Revenues	Seed Switzerland	Seed Germany
Donations and membership fees	54,888 USD	6,023 USD
School fees Countryside Class	1,268 USD	
Total Revenues 2018	56,156 USD	6,023 USD
Expenses		
Project Countryside Class		
Books for library and teaching	180 USD	190 USD
Copy costs	574 USD	
Running costs (lease of land and salaries)	4,107 USD	1,450 USD
Supplies, Equipment	643 USD	322 USD
Transport	41 USD	
Teacher trainings	60 USD	
Study fees for CSC teachers	360 USD	
Total Countryside Class	5,965 USD	1,962 USD
Project Bech Khlok		
Maintenance and construction costs	731 USD	1,033 USD
Bicycles for students	129 USD	
Books for library, stationary	351 USD	662 USD
Copy costs	88 USD	
Water project	63 USD	
Supplies	956 USD	
Equipment	550 USD	172 USD
Reimbursement commuting expenses Heang Ho	571 USD	
Support secondary school students	1,218 USD	
School trip secondary school students	173 USD	
Monthly supplementary payment for teachers	1,180 USD	
Reimbursement Project Manager Heang Ho	6,250 USD	
Miscellaneous	68 USD	110 USD
Hygiene and healthcare		111 USD
Total Project Bech Khlok	12,328 USD	2,088 USD
Reimbursement Seed Country Manager Kim-D. Knorr	8,255 USD	
Back-payment interest-free loan for school building	15,000 USD	
Seed miscellaneous (travel, stationary, marketing etc.)	3,473 USD	256 USD
Bank account fees	334 USD	
Total others	27,062 USD	256 USD
Total Expenses 2018	45,355 USD	4,308 USD



FINANCIAL STATEMENT



OUTLOOK

After the successful completion of the school-building projects in Bech Khlok, Seed of Small Beginnings is looking forward to the start of the construction of a Kindergarten in Bech Khlok. That project has only become possible thanks to a most generous donation by the German company Westernacher Business Management Consulting GmbH. Their contribution will also cover the running cost for the new childcare and our project manager Heang. The childcare service will enable many school kids who have to take care of their smaller siblings during school hours, to now focus completely on their education.

At the same time, another big donation by the Kleinen Hilfsaktion e.V. will facilitate further improvement to the clean drinking water situation in Bech Khlok. For 2019 we have planned to provide up to 25 families with bigger water tanks, which will enable them to gather more rainwater and thus to have clean drinking water available even in the dry season.

At the Countryside Class the focus for 2019 is completely on the handover of the running of the school from the local Seed managers to Seav Young Yonn. Seav Young is an experienced English teacher who has worked at the Countryside Class for several years now, and she will take over overall management responsibility from Kim Knorr. Kim will dedicate herself to new tasks and challenges, after she has been Seed of Small Beginnings' local representative for many years now, and after having successfully coached Seav Young and several other new teachers at the school to become professional teachers.





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