

worldrenew.net/cambodia

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## News from House #81, Street 456



**Kathleen Lauder**  
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I thought the last quarter of 2013 was busy! It was quiet compared to the first quarter of 2014. I am telling myself this was an exceptional quarter, with the Regional Assembly and rare visits. But who knows. Maybe this is just life at House #81, Street 456, and we'd better get used to it. Here are some of the highlights from the last three months.

**Hosting 111 participants at the regional assembly in Siem Reap.** Yes, it was a lot of work for many, including our staff in Cambodia, to prepare to host the World Renew regional assembly in Siem Reap. Fortunately, the return on that investment was outstanding. Meeting together with World Renew partners, friends, colleagues, and donors from the Philippines, Laos, Bangladesh, India, Australia, Canada, and the U.S. was much like a family reunion. The "World Renew Asia family" is a large one, with a great depth of experience in community development and a commitment to serve the poor in a way that reflects the love and joy of Jesus. We were lucky to be able to include students from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA and King's University in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, among our participants. The time together provided for teaching, worship, sharing our experiences with each other in small - and medium-sized groups, and a lively and cultural poolside evening where we were able to entertain each other according to our respective national heritages.



*Regional assembly participants share their experience and insights.*

**Visit of Norwegian Mission Alliance Board.** We received the full board of Norwegian Mission Alliance (NMA) on its first trip in 113 years traveling as an entire board to see development work it supports. What an honor for World Renew in Cambodia! The NMA board spent time with us in



*Arnt, secretary general of Norwegian Mission Alliance, chats with community members in a World Renew target community.*

the office and in the field and was able to provide useful reflections on our work. They left, encouraging us to expand our work, suggesting areas for expansion, and assuring us of their support for expansion.

**Showing our work to the senior management of World Renew.** The same week that the NMA board visited our work, we were privileged to be able to show our work to the U.S. director of World Renew, Andy Ryskamp, and the director of constituency relations, Tom McWhertor. Fortunately, Tom Post, team leader for World Renew in Asia accompanied Andy and Tom on this visit. It was enriching for Sovann and Kathleen to accompany Andy, Tom, and Tom to see our work in the field and to draw on their vast and rich experience as we shared ideas on our current and future work in Cambodia.

**Streamlined and online.** Gradually, the building where we work is being transformed and that transformation is now pretty well finished. Last quarter saw unused documents, filing cabinets, and furniture removed, the entire exterior painted, and electrical wires managed and hidden. This quarter included adding new landscaping, emptying the garage so staff *motos* can be stored there, removing old draperies and installing blinds, and decorating our office space with professional photos of our work and some

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indoor plants. We also made good headway in getting a new information management system up and running on the Google drive. Our documents are now organized so that all staff can share documents easily, manage meetings, manage booking our resources, and ensure that our documents are protected and safe.

**TFUK evaluation:** Tearfund U.K. supports World Renew's work with eight churches, each of which does community development in an average of two communities. They have also supported World Renew's work with a Christian learning network of 31 pastors and other Christian leaders who are involved in community development. As our three-year agreement with TFUK is ending, they have requested an evaluation. We sent out a request for proposal, selected a consultant, and the results of that work will be ready for us in the first week of April. We're anticipating good input for our proposal to TFUK for continued support for our work in the coming three years.



Getting input from the community in Takeo for the TFUK evaluation.

**Strategizing:** World Renew has been working in Cambodia since 1996. Since then, the work has grown and improved, and the capacity of the staff and our partners has been greatly enhanced. However, the thrust of the work—to do integrated community development with and through local partners—has remained constant.

With a rapidly growing economy in Cambodia, political unrest, high corruption, a very young population, and a rapid shift of population from the rural communities to urban centers, we are taking a critical look at the way we are working. We are considering how we might evolve into the next decade. We are reviewing research on socio-economic, political, and demographic changes. And we are interviewing people in Cambodia who have their fingers on the pulse of change and who are, like us, reviewing their priorities and programming strategies. There are many good ideas coming from this work which we will consider and evaluate in the months ahead.

**Immersion Khmei and community integration:** Struggling to learn to speak Khmei through private lessons three hours per week (on a good week) has pushed me to find a more creative approach. Toward the end of February, I travelled to one of our communities and spent three days living there with the family of the Community Based Organization (CBO) leader.

With no road into the community and no electricity, it was a rich cultural experience. And since no one in the community

could speak English, I was highly motivated to express myself in Khmei! It proved to be a great way to accelerate my language learning, but even more valuable was the opportunity to experience the simple community life and the warmth and hospitality of the family with which I stayed. I was thrilled to be able to teach English to a group of 50 or so children who gathered at the learning center each morning and afternoon. They taught me Khmei. I taught them English. We sang songs and had a lot of laughs.



My host in Ang Khley village cooking my lunch.



Taking a break from our English lesson to take a photo of some of the eager students.

## Prayer Items

- Thanks that the political unrest and demonstrations have mostly been contained and have not directly interrupted our work.
- Thanks for the rich way in which our work in Cambodia is being blessed with funding and support from World Renew and its wonderful donors, and also from our partners, especially Norwegian Mission Alliance, Tearfund UK, and Foods Resource Bank.
- Thanks for the stimulating discussions which we are having with other organizations, leading thinkers, and activists in Cambodia and the good ideas that are being proposed for World Renew to adapt our work to reflect the changing context.
- Thanks for the volunteers who have come forward to support our work including:
  - *Deanne H, an accountant from Michigan, who will spend two months in Cambodia to help us with our financial management while our financial manager is on maternity leave;*
  - *Carol Van Klompenburg, an editor from Iowa, who is helping us virtually to edit and improve our documents.*
- Prayers for Ruth Ambion, our finance manager, who has returned to the Philippines with her husband, to give birth to their first child. Pray for a healthy delivery.
- Prayers for the political situation in Cambodia. Pray for the 16 people who have been detained and one 16-year-old youth who has been missing since the police crack down in January. Pray that the frustration over the aborted and apparently fruitless talks between the government and the opposition can be resolved.

# Vegetable Growing Cultivates Better Life

## A Story of Transformation

Just a few years ago, Man Khorn, age 58, was a poor farmer. He grew rice and a few kinds of vegetables near his home in Trach Khpuos village, Cambodia, but he and his wife could not earn enough to support their family. Four of his five children, therefore, had to drop out of secondary school and migrate to the city to work in a garment factory.

Since 2008, Mr. Khorn has been involved in various development activities that are supported by a World Renew partner in Cambodia, Community for Transformation (CFT). He has especially been involved in agriculture training and exposure study trips. In 2011, he got a job looking after a mango plantation near his house.

Step by step, Mr. Khorn has improved his knowledge and skills in agricultural techniques. He applied the system of rice intensification (SRI), and in 2013 he started growing many kinds of vegetables such as loofah, wax gourd,

pumpkin, morning glory, cucumber, herbs, and lemon grass.

Besides using these for his family's own consumption, he sold them and earned 4000 to 6000 riel per day (\$1 to \$1.50 US). Since he started growing these vegetables, he has sold them for a total of 1,460,000 riel (\$365 US). His expenditures for seeds were 40,000 riel, so he has earned a profit of 1,420,000 riel (\$355 US). With this success, Mr. Khorn can expand his vegetable garden in 2014. Currently, two of his children work in the garment sector, one farms, and he expects to support two of his children through high school.

Mr. Khorn says thank you very much to CFT for providing him with both knowledge and experience to improve his family's living conditions. From his heart, he shares this with other farmers: "Life will not change if you only decide to do something in your mind—and then do



nothing; but if you act, I am sure your life will be improved."

*Written by Duong Chandim,  
translated by Sok Kao*

# A Farmer With a Smile

## A Story of Transformation

In Basak village, Cambodia, Kao Tith, age 62, is known as a model farmer and a leader in the Community Based Organization (CBO). He is an active, committed, and hard-working man. Kao and his wife have five children (four daughters and a son).

Kao is considered a very important man in his family, and now lives with them full-time. In years past he had to leave Basak for many months in order to find work to support them.

Then in 2010, a World Renew partner organization in Cambodia, Khmer Angka for Development of Rural Areas (KADRA), selected Kao to become a model farmer. Because of this new position, Kao received training in agriculture technique improvements through various non-government organizations (NGOs).

Kao became competent and confident in applying his new knowledge and skills. He invested some of his own capital to apply the new techniques even though the starting investment was a significant sum for him and his family.

And he succeeded! Kao earned a good income for his family by farming just the plot of land next to his house. He earned 800,000 to 1,000,000 riels (\$200 to \$250 US) during the last vegetable harvest. He is happy with his income-earning activity.

The living situation for Kao's family has also changed. He is very happy not to have to leave his family alone while he looks for work as he did in the past. Now that he can remain with his family, Kao feels he can save even more money because he has fewer expenses.

Kao said with a smile that he would like to thank all of the NGOs who invested in



him, especially KADRA. KADRA worked in Basak village to help families like Kao's increase their income at home and improve their living conditions. Kao recommends that other farmers work hard too and use their time wisely to make money in their own community rather than migrating outside of it to earn money.

*Written by Douen Choub and Dara*