

worldrenew.net/cambodia

Kathleen Lauder
Country Consultant
klauder@worldrenew.net

World Renew Canada
3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8
1-800-730-3490
Fax: 905-336-8344

World Renew US
1700 28th Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508
1-800-552-7972
Fax: 616-224-8060

News from House #81, Street 456



Kathleen Lauder
Country Consultant
Cambodia Team

Increasing Access to Water in 32 Communities for 633 Families: Every year drought in some parts of Cambodia leads to severe water shortages in some of our communities. This can substantially reduce agricultural yields. It also places an enormous hardship on our community members who have to travel long distances for water or pay high prices to vendors who bring water to sell in the community. This year World Renew was able to offer our communities an opportunity to apply for a grant to cover 70% of the cost of building a family pond or restoring a community pond. Applicants were required to justify the need for a pond, show that they could contribute 30% of the cost, and demonstrate that they had a sound construction plan. The response was overwhelming. Through this program, World Renew supported the construction of 61 family ponds and 1 community pond. The ponds now serve 633 families in 32 communities. It is a



New Pond in Chumpu Prek Village

testimony to the leadership and organization in these communities that their members, despite high rates of illiteracy, were able to prepare the proposals, raise their contribution, and construct the ponds in less than two months' time.

Exit Strategy Workshop Enhances Sustainability of our Work: When partners start to work in our communities, it is easy for the community to fall into a state of dependency on them. Our community organizing process empowers community mem-



bers to provide leadership in their development and to ensure that every aspect of the process is owned by them. However, they also build a strong relationship with the partner staff that are facilitating the process. One of the challenges faced by all partners is to know when their job is complete—and they can begin to exit the community. To address this concern, Cambodia partners met at the World Renew office in Phnom Penh for three days to share their ideas and experience in developing this strategy.

Volunteer Deanne Hoeksema Makes Lasting Contribution to Systems: With our finance manager on maternity leave and the country consultant traveling to North America for seven weeks in May and June, the stewardship of our finances was a great concern. Through good cooperation with staff in our home office, a highly-qualified volunteer was recruited to spend two months in the World Renew Cambodia office. Deanne Hoeksema drew on her qualifications as a chartered accountant and her extensive experience in finance and human resources to make a lasting contribution to the work here. She helped with financial management, and she also did a complete review of our financial and ad-

(Continued on page 2)

Prayer Items:

(Continued from page 1)

ministrative systems, policies, and procedures. Her 40-page report provided excellent insights and recommendations to improve all aspects of our operations.



Deanne with finance and admin manager, Ruth

- Thanks for a chance for Kathleen to relax and refresh at her cottage near Ottawa, Canada, while she was in North America.
- Thanks for the resources and a successful process to support 633 families in improving their access to water through the construction of family and community ponds.
- Pray for peace in Cambodia and a resolution to conflict that has prevented opposition party members from taking their seats in parliament since the July 2013 national elections.
- Thanks for the safe delivery of the baby boy of our Finance and Administration Manager Ruth Ambion.
- Thanks that God is blessing World Renew in Cambodia with an opportunity to grow our program. Pray for wisdom as we conduct an environmental scan in preparation for an evaluation in November that will be followed by a strategic planning workshop.



Kathleen's cottage in Canada.

Family Improves Farming Skills—and their Lives A Story of Transformation

Mr. Chann Noun, 60, was a hard-working farmer, but his family had only .2 hectares (a ½ acre) of farmland for growing rice and vegetables. The farm is the main source of income for him, his wife, and their seven children. However, their land near Prey Pon Village in Prey Veng Province lacked a water irrigation source. Noun and his family also lacked knowledge about good agricultural techniques. As a result, they faced food shortages for nearly a whole year.

In 2012, Noun became a member of a Self-Help Group (SHG) right after New Light of Unity (LNU) staff introduced the concept in his community. He attended many SHG training sessions about growing vegetables in drought conditions, and raising pigs and chickens. Noun also made an exposure visit to the Farmer Field School in Tameas Village. And because he and his family played active roles as farmers who liked to improve their yields with new techniques, they were selected by local

Community Based Organization (CBO) leaders to receive financial support to build a family pond.

Noun began raising fish and chickens for his family's consumption. By applying what he learned at his SHG, Noun could grow different kinds of vegetables in both wet and dry seasons. Besides growing food for his family's consumption, he also began to earn extra income—from 5,000 to 10,000 Riel (about US\$2.50) per day.

Before he made changes based on his training, Noun's family spent at least 1,500 to 4,500 Riel (\$.38 to \$1.12 US) per day to buy vegetables and meat from the market to eat. Now he can even save some money for buying rice and other important supplies for his family.

Noun says he is very grateful to LNU and the CBO leaders who have helped improve his family's living conditions.

*Written by Sao Som Orn,
Edited by Chen Dechorith*



Sovann Helps Communities Measure Improvement

Staff Profile

*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day;
Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.*

—Anne Isabella Thackeray 1885

The choice Anne Thackeray offered in her 19th century fish adage works well for improving the life of one person. But improvement is a little more difficult to measure when you work with a whole village, province, or country.

How can you know you helped?

Measuring the size, quality, and quantity of the fish in multiple nets and then planning how to increase future fish catches is a perfect metaphor for the job of World Renew Program Manager Sovann Neth. Trained as an economist, Sovann helps World Renew program staff, NGO partners, and partner churches create tools to measure progress, use those tools, and then plan program improvements. The success of programs in governance, occupations, health, and education is evaluated regularly. “We want programs to be cost-effective,” he said.

At 34, Sovann was born in 1980, just after the killing-fields of the Khmer Rouge regime had ended. He did not witness the mass killings of poor people—executions which no Cambodian dared oppose. However, like others in his generation, he still feels the regime’s effects. Even now, he fears rich and powerful Cambodians, and is hesitant to confront them. And, although he did not see the fighting and killing, they inhabit his nightmares—and those of his wife.

Sovann and his wife Dilen have two children, a 13-year old daughter Vatey and a 4-year-old son Vannith. Although in Cambodian culture, child-care is traditionally a woman’s job, Sovann takes a major role in caring for Vannith. “I help him dress, bathe, and brush his teeth. I iron his clothes and bring him to school. I

feel a big responsibility for him.” Sovann said he learned about this option while he was a student in Russia.

At 17, Sovann was awarded a scholarship to study at an international school in Russia for six years. “In Russia, everyone was equal—that was the mindset,” he said. In Russia, he first conversed with his teachers in French—the language he had studied in Cambodia. But he soon learned to speak Russian. He also learned English from the English-speaking students in his dormitory. “We met, read the Bible together, and prayed together.”

But it wasn’t easy. “I was very young and very isolated. I had to live independently in a country where I did not know their culture. It was very hard, but it gave me a strong confidence. It built my foundation to be independent.”

The oldest of four children, Sovann had grown up in a rural village in Prey Veng province, sometimes rising at 4 a.m. to help his father—who was both a teacher and a farmer—in the rice fields. Other times his work was after school, on weekends, and on “labor days”—days when school was dismissed so the children could work. “It was not easy work, but I enjoyed it.”

After rice harvest he led cows to walk circles atop the harvested rice to “stamping”—to separate the grain from the stems and hulls. He started with only the strength to lead one cow, but as he grew he could lead several at once. After the stamping, the hulling process was completed by pounding the rice with wood. In high school Sovann and his friends worked together on their jobs. “We have a culture of helping each other,” he said.

When Sovann returned to Cambodia from Russia at 24, he learned that a younger brother had died. His family waited until his return to tell him.



“My father did not want to hurt me or disturb my concentration.”

In Cambodia, Sovann began working for a private company. “I saw all the profit going to the company. That was not really what I wanted.” He saw others working for Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and decided that was the work he wanted. “I wanted to help people, rather than a company. I wanted to be a blessing for people.”

He began working part-time for a Christian NGO and part-time as a translator while continuing to work with International NGOs. Then, one night Dilen received a text message inquiring about her interest in working for World Renew. She liked her current job; she wasn’t interested. But Sovann was. He sent a resume, had an interview, and was hired by World Renew.

“God called. I decided to come,” he said. “I like my work. I thank God that everything worked out. I can see this is his plan.”

For one of his current projects he has been meeting with 25 other team members to create a process by which an NGO exits from a community. “When we exit, we want a community’s sustainability to be intact,” he said. “This is new to us and we are learning together.”