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## Out of Failure, Hope Rises A Story of Transformation



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Migration for a poor family means leaving behind your family, your support network, and the town you know. It can mean traveling to a neighboring district or even to a new country, but most often you leave your village for the first time in your life. It isn't always a decision made happily, but you and your family are basically forced to leave because of money: migration means following the money and hoping for the best, and failure can cost you more than the trip was worth. Failure can have both short- and long-term consequences.

Mrs. Chek Koeung and her husband Chhay Song began their married life in Cambodia with very little money. They were drawn to migrate to Thailand by the promise of higher wages from working in construction. However, their living conditions there were sub-standard, and they constantly struggled to save money. The difficulties they faced as immigrants outweighed the benefits of the little money they could save.

Dreaming of returning home to Cambodia with their growing family, the couple heard of an opportunity to farm cassava, an increasingly popular cash crop in Cambodia. Taking their limited savings, Chek Koeung and her family moved to the Paylin province. Having grown up as farmers, growing cassava could have been an easy way to earn income, but the couple's knowledge of agriculture was limited and their project started to go astray. With several children to feed and a failing farm, their eldest girl had to drop out of school to search for



*Chek Koeung and her husband began their married life with little money and dreamed of building a future together.*

work. Chek Koeung's dream of educating their children was fizzling away.

But in the midst of this economic crisis, God provided an opportunity for World Renew to minister to this family.

Their village in Cambodia, Soksan, was battling the government in a land concession. It is not uncommon for the government to lease land in rural communities to private businesses, and this works out well for the companies and the government--but it results in local residents suddenly losing their agricultural livelihood along with the land. When a resolution was finally agreed upon, Chek Koeung's family won back a small parcel (30mx40m) of their land and they could then finally return home. But unfortunately, they had even less money and resources than they started with.

Recently, Living Water Church became established in Soksan, and it has become a beacon of hope to poor families like Chek Koeung's. The church began to offer agriculture training to community members at

a farmer field school (FFS) through World Renew's involvement there. Chek Koeung became a regular member of the school and was quickly identified as a potential community leader. She was asked to join the FFS committee, and in her role she has been a motivator in compelling other farmers to participate in the training.

Chek Koeung is not only an able leader, she is also a role model to her neighbors and community. Her successful use of the techniques she has learned to grow many kinds of vegetables in her small garden has been a major influence in the success of this program throughout the region.

Chek Koeung is now earning a stable income from her growing farm, and she has replaced the small shack her family was living in with a real home that she has been able to afford to build. She can also afford to send all of her children to school again.

By leading by example, Chek Koeung's transformation has led other people to the FFS and to Living Water Church, which is a key organizer in the development of the local community in Soksan.

*Through a farmer field school, Chek Koeung learned how to use the resources available to her to make natural fertilizers to grow her own home garden.*



## Prayer Items

**We give thanks for many blessings in the first quarter of 2015.**

- Kathleen was thrilled with a first-time visit to Asia with her sister Sharon, brother-in-law Paul, and nephew Ruari. It was wonderful to be able to show her family World Renew's work and to be received so wonderfully by everyone at Angkley village: the children, the community-based organization leaders, the savings group members, and the farmer field school leaders.
- We give thanks that all eleven pilot projects that emerged from the multi-stakeholder partnership workshop in October 2014 are well underway and are resulting in growing partnerships between the commune council and the community members. This success has led to a plan for three additional workshops with our other NGO partners in March, April, and May of 2015. Please pray that these workshops will go smoothly. Pray that they will result in improved trust and stronger partnerships between the community, businesses, and the local government in the target areas.
- After a careful search, we are thankful to have begun relationships with two new partners. We will start by working together on initiatives to improve income from agriculture and animal-raising in 10 communities over a two-year period. We pray that the partnerships will go well and that the relationship will be fruitful, providing more opportunities for outreach in poor and vulnerable communities.



• With sadness we are saying goodbye to our wonderful administrative assistant, Seng Kimhuoy, pictured at left. She is spreading her wings to get more experience with another NGO. We pray for continued success in her career. We also pray for a good decision in recruiting her replacement.

- We give thanks for our new finance assistant, Sous Navy, pictured below, who joined us in January. We pray that she will continue to grow in her position at World Renew.



*Kathleen's family is welcomed in Angkley village by children and community leaders.*



*Partnership continues after a workshop in October 2014 as the police, commune council, and villagers work together to repair a road.*