



## Newsletter May 2017



**"Vision is the art of seeing the invisible"**

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Anglo-Irish writer, moral critic and theologian

**We are United Asia Charity**

**How much is 'much' if there is little?**

### **Dear Friends and Followers of UAC**

One third of 2017 is already behind you and behind us, a ground-breaking period for United Asia Charity yet again. We have passed a few hurdles and milestones in these first four months of 2017.

**General Assembly- New Board - Improved Articles and Code of**

### Core-Team Cambodia:

*Pisey*: Country Head, Project Manager, Materials Supply

*Somalita*: Accounting/ Controlling

*Bella*: Administration, Accounting, Project Coordination

*Leakana*: Design/Construction Planning

*Khanra*: Trainee, Administration, Field work, HR / Coordinator

## **Conduct**

After our successful and lively information event in December at the ancient Villa Sparrenberg in Unterengstringen, our association reconstituted itself on January 12, through a general meeting and appointed an Executive Board with seven experienced, passionate members. New articles of association, a code of conduct for members, employees and volunteers, as well as the appointment of a trustee, were adopted. The Board, which has already held its first meetings, now consists of:

### Executive Board Switzerland:

*Thomas Gilbert*, President

*Enzo Sportelli*, Founder & Vice-President

*Kim Thurnherr*, Manager IT

*Jürg Baltensperger*, Legal Counsellor

*Peter Quenzer*, Board Member

*Stephan Lienin*, Board Member

*Joe Lang*, Board Member

Please join me in wishing our board good teamwork, a lucky hand, strategic skill and good success!

## **Strengthening the Cambodian Team, Adopting Working Groups**

In Cambodia UAC has also attracted new talent for important roles to fill. After a two-month application procedure for an initial placement in the accounting department, Miss Somalita Keo succeeded amongst 30 applicants. Lita has excellent university credentials, nine years of

*So (Nil Chomno)*: Community Manager, Teacher (Khmer/English)

## **Arrival Enzo Sportelli / Board**

### **Presence Secured Until Year-End**

On February 15, I have arrived after more than a year to immediately get going in the spirit of what we discussed with the Executive Board and together with our country team: manage existing projects, evaluate new ones, develop strategies, and also renovate our office (after all, I am a craftsman). After Thomas's departure in December, the Board's presence is being secured - we target and we expect that at least one of us will be on the ground in Cambodia at any given time.

Because it is only here, that we can listen, observe, understand and put the right thing into practice.

## **Preliminary 2016 Accounts Handed Over For Audit**

Finally, on April 27, our preliminary financial statements went to our trustee for auditing. Based on unaudited, provisional numbers, we were able to close our ongoing fifty-five projects with a 2016 donation volume of CHF 43'615, as well as an annual surplus of CHF 9'033. We plan to publish the Annual Report for the period right after the completion of this audit. Since our donors donate for projects, this surplus has partly cashed out at the beginning of the year 2017, and for the planned and budgeted under-takings in the Cambodian villages- as it should be.

professional curriculum including NGO experience (we believe critical in Siem Reap's 'NGO jungle'). Our team around leader Pisey Chin is further being strengthened by Miss Khanra, Miss Bella and Mister So (Nil Chomno). We were thus able to assign project leaders for different areas of duty. We warmly welcome Lita, Khanra, Bella and Nil. UAC's roots with the local Cambodian communities will be further sustained with their support.

**We would like to thank you all for your financial support, as well as for various ideas, great services and intelligent advice.** UAC relies on the support of friends, experts and partners without which our commitment to the rural citizens of Cambodia would be much more difficult.

**Project Integrated School Nimith: UAC is taking a breather**





**There is construction underway on the campus of the Nimith High School, sponsored by the government.** As mentioned several times in 2016 there is a clear lack of high schools in the province of Bantey Meanchey. Distance travelled for some of the students leaving primary school is more than 20 miles, a barrier which is at times insurmountable for most families and which prevents children from continuing with their school curriculum. A lot of things can be achieved here: fresh water supply / sanitation facilities as a prerequisite for school infrastructure measures, followed by the construction of school buildings and overnight accommodation, for both pupils and teachers. Last but not least, hygiene training in the aftermath of the construction phase, and in order to ensure sustainability.

**In the aftermath of UAC's own water installation project,** both the Provincial and the Federal



buildings are being torn down and built at the same time. As a consequence, hygienic conditions on the premises (Heaps of debris and litter) have taken a toll. As such, we are trying to come up with an intermediate concept to contain the damage on the environment.

**Furthermore, construction occurs during the dry season** (as a rule of thumb lasts from February to June), which has severely tested the capacity of the school's water towers. Here we have to undertake upgrade and maintenance work, especially as to water pressure (ie static pressure). On our estimates, this will require additional investment of appr. USD 2'000. We have decided to provide these funds.

**As a result of the considerable distance to the nearest school, many adolescents cannot attend school.** Therefore, UAC Switzerland is currently intensifying its effort to secure funding for the construction

Cambodian Government are in the process of erecting new class rooms. While this has been firmly underway since mid-November, to our standards, there is a bit of uncoordinated action as several

and maintenance of a student hostel, which would allow some additional 120 pupils access to upper secondary school. We stay tuned, hear from us soon!

### Sanitary facility for five families - a village starts organising itself

**Rural areas often lack sanitation facilities.** This is why personal business is often carried out in the open space. In order to improve hygienic conditions, we have built a toilet in Kourksrok in the district of Rolous, allowing access to it for five families.

**In the village of Kourksrok, we have already been active in the past several times.** People are supporting us almost automatically and very independently in various handicraft activities - now the people from the village are making a step towards a 'community'. We are very proud of the women and men in Kourksrok.

**As always, the project was planned together with the residents,** supervised by our project manager Pisey, who in turn carefully assembled and handpicked the construction team.

**Against an originally planned budget of USD 350, the final investment amounted to USD 470,** whereby we had planned the sanitary facility for one family to start with, but then expand it for USD 120 and thus made it accessible for five families. We still managed to hit our allocation target for time of two weeks (for construction, two months including planning).

**Since the completion of the building, UAC employees have undertaken trips** every fortnight to ensure that the installation is functioning properly - and is being kept clean. We can say that everything works as we hoped for!

**The families and UAC extend their thanks to our patrons and donors, first and foremost family Markus Armbruster,** who made possible the realization of this wonderful and sustainable project.



Education: generations and continents reach out to one another





**Wearing school uniforms is compulsory in Cambodia**, and it is hard to believe that the access to a primary school sometimes fails due to non-compliant 'equipment'. Although a uniform costs 'only' 6 USD, however, parents usually require a pair of them per child and with families in the countryside with > 3 children this constitutes a financially demanding burden.

**UAC has carefully identified intact families in the more remote villages of the Siem Reap and Bantey Meanchey Provinces**, for which exactly this burden was tough to overcome and where UAC thought the continued school access for the youngsters was at considerable risk.



**20 children and adolescents at the age of 6-15 years**, girls and boys, handicapped and non-handicapped, together with their parents are looking forward to secure sustained access to education in their respective communities.

The students, their parents and UAC **would like to extend their deep gratitude to the patron of this project, Swiss pianist Ms Margrit Speiser**, who intentionally wanted to engage with the education sector. Alas we thank the team of Villa Sparrenberg around patron Ms Aila Haavisto for material donations and for ensuring effective communication between Cambodian project team and Swiss patrons.

**A glimpse into the future - water reservoir**



### **UAC architect Srey Leak is busy yet again!**

One of our three large-scale projects is the covered water reservoir, which will be used to collect a sizeable amount of water during the rainy season. Our architect Leakana takes a lot of time for its preliminary planning. She helps us voluntarily.

In addition, she has drawn a 3D cross-section, so that our patrons and donors can also see the inner life of the reservoir.

We are planning to equip the reservoir roof with solar cells. Plans for this follow are in the making while we are carefully selecting the right location and starting to pitch for project grants. With this project, we also intend to provoke a response from the public sector.

Leakana, thank you very much for your honorable support of our common cause!

**Patrons - ever closer!**





Dear fellow global citizens, helping is one of the oldest virtues, but it is often forgotten because we simply do not have time to look after our disadvantaged fellow human beings.

Would you like to slow down your life? Then take a look at our site, visit our work and support projects, even with your own hands.

If you are lucky, you can go with 'Mister Pisey', 'Miss Khanra', 'Mister So' and 'Mister Enzo' and work with them directly on a renovation project, a water project, one of their tireless inspections of 'completed' projects



or even on a life-saving ad-hoc trip. Especially for those of you who long for a ride on a 'Töff' or a Tuk-Tuk! We see you in Cambodia!

We are very happy to accept donations - and here 'small' in one's imagination can mean 'tangible' in the real world- in various ways. SUPPORT NOW!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Enzo Sportelli". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

(Founder & Vice President UAC)

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