



Newsletter October 2017



No stars again shall hurt you from above but all your days shall pass in peace and love.

William Shakespeare (The Tempest)

[Our Vision and Mission](#)

[View our Video](#)

Dear Friends and Followers of UAC

Please be welcomed to celebrate our third anniversary together. There are indeed great reasons for a celebration! UAC is, thanks to your kind support, developing and growing to maturity. On our way we learned a core lesson that we would like to share with you: the only people who can sustainably support

Repair and remediation of house buildings and wells, installing drinking water systems and ensuring the school attendance of children and adolescents.

The sustainability of the programme is ensured thanks to regular control visits, training and, in this case, even more focused presence by **our tireless employee Nil Chomno**

the Cambodians are the Cambodian women and men themselves.

We as Swiss can provide know-how, advice, guidance and - yes - occasionally some funds. But it will be nothing more than a drop in an ocean without empowered people in Cambodia who help those in need. It starts with our local staff identifying disadvantaged but motivated people in the rural areas and ultimately yields a well-run, self-sustained village with effective communities and contingency planning procedures. A process 'owned' by the locals themselves.

This expansion of self-help is the key of sustainable development work. All of what UAC is planning and doing from outside Cambodia is in this spirit and with this very intention.

One of our three ongoing programmes in Education, Sanitary and Construction is UAC's Community Development Programme in Kouk Srok. With many organisations departing we are one of the few that have stuck with the people's challenges, yet are making progress. The support is concentrating on three areas where we believe that a change can be accomplished with a moderate financial scope, typically USD 50 to USD 1000 per initiative:

("Mr. So"). He has earned great trust from the people of this community. Our team, Mr. So, Mr. Pisey, Miss Khan Ra, have now spent many hours of follow-up work, the bread and butter of the work we are accomplishing. The link to the Video above is a visible and audible testimony to this passion.

Since September 2014, 173 people and 37 households have lifted themselves out of poverty by means of UAC support with water, sanitary, school and construction work as well as training. They in turn have started to help their neighbours. A village community is emerging gradually. This without touching or changing local and religious customs.

In an effort to monitor and evaluate progress, regular interviews are conducted. Let us summarise two of those and share with you in this newsletter. One interview was held with **Mr. Bunteoun**, village chief of Kouk Srok. The second with **Naen Synan**, a village citizen and mother of three. Mrs Synan belongs to one of six families in Kouk Srok who, thanks to your support, received school uniforms and school kits to three children who are now studying in Kouk Srok Primary School.

Impact Story Kouk Srok - Interviews with Village Chief and a Courageous Mother



Interview with Naen Syan

Do your children go to school regularly? Do the children have clothes and kit as well as other equipment that the school expects them to bring?

As the school is so close to my house and my children are no longer required to help me with my work, they go to school every day unless they fall sick. I want my three children to receive good education for their future. I don't want my children to follow my footsteps. I have only few skills which makes it so difficult to find a good job. Therefore I was not in a position to buy good school uniforms and school kits for my children because all money that I have earned I am allocating to the whole family, notably food. I really thank Miss Speiser (the big-hearted and generous donor) and UAC for their support for these uniforms and school kits. Now they can attend classes. My children are



Interview with Mister Bunteoun

How many people live in Kouk Srok and how has population developed in recent years?

Kouk Srok is one of the poorest communes in Siem Reap, with a rather stable population of 1301, of which 628 male, 673 female and with a total of 274 families.

Are there, besides UAC, other NGOs present in this area?

UAC is extremely visible in Kouk Srok village and has been with us for three years now. Villagers tell me that you show up regularly. We are all aware of your mission and focus on water, sanitary, construction and renovation, education and agricultural issues. UAC is not the only NGO that was present here. Other NGOs like... [A, B and C] ...used to engage in projects in our village, particularly in the area of healthcare. However, it seems that

very happy and they do love, take care of and keep clean their new uniforms. I advise my children to respect the opportunity and I encourage them to study much.

In your mind, are they doing well in school or do they struggle? If they struggle - where do you think is that coming from?

My children are rarely absent from school because they are not required to stay home and help, so what they have to do is to go to school and try to follow the teachers' advice. Every month, the teachers provide an evaluation form for transparent communication of study performance to students so that parents can track how the kids are doing. My children's results track a medium level since they joined. They lack attention and concentration sometimes because being in school is an unfamiliar environment for them. However, I continue to encourage my children.

What is your personal impression regarding the quality of teaching?

In a rural area like Prasat Bakong District, an inferior quality of education is provided because of 1) missing school infrastructure 2) shortage of trained teachers 3) lack of solid teaching equipment and 4) low salary for the teaching staff. Teachers at times do not have a roof over their heads and sleep in Pagodans or in the open space. Often, the monks have to help with teaching. These are the reasons behind the slow progress in the

they have stopped existing or at least have stopped following up on their work in our village. They don't show up any longer. NGOs are helpful, very helpful in fact to get things going, but can be inconsistent. With UAC, so far so good, I am genuinely impressed with your organization and for countless support for villagers such as Hing Yat's family and all the other families that you already supported. I would like to extend my most profound gratitude to UAC, its friends and donors.

You as the village chief - do you have support from other people? How do you organise the work in the village and is there a council responsible for this work?

Yes, I do have some support. I carry the main responsibility but I do split the relevant work with my one co-worker and some volunteers of the community. I communicate to the village via a commune council for village work. I typically welcome villagers' proposals concerning their problems and aspire to help to solve them.

How many primary schools are there in the village itself or close to Kouk Srok?

There is only one primary school in Kouk Srok for the students in Kouk Srok village. No secondary school or high school has been established here yet. If students finished primary school, they can continue studying at Bakong Secondary School which is 3

educational development in Kouk Srok village and other urban areas of Cambodia.

How happy are you with the sanitary facilities and are they used regularly?

We have a toilet which was built by my family under the surveillance of UAC. The whole family can use it regularly and we share the facility with three other families in the neighbourhood. I learned about hygiene from UAC and health promotion on television. I also made friends with a hospital nurse who I can ask for advice. All of this hygiene and sanitary knowledge I can use to apply to my family and teach my children how to keep clean.

How important is washing hands for you?

I am very strict now. I advise my children to clean hands after using toilet and before taking a meal. I went with them at the beginning, the same way UAC went with me at the beginning. I now teach my neighbours, especially those that we share the sanitary equipment with.

Where do you get water from and what do you use it for?

Nobody here had water until three years ago. Fortunately, there was a non-profit organization (remark: not UAC) that worked on water projects and helped some families who did not have access to and use of water. This organization helped my neighbour drill a well. I took courage

km away from Kouk Srok. It can be reached by bicycle or motor bike. There are two secondary schools and one high school in Bakong village for students.

Do you think children attend school regularly or do they have to stay at home and help the family?

Students are attending school more regularly than in the past. Out of ten, only one child gives up school. This used to be three out of ten 4-5 years ago. Teachers are more aware and have become more rigorous with respect to their responsibility expected from them by the school director. For example, they ask for parents' phone numbers which - in a joint effort between families and schools - makes it easier to monitor student attendance. UAC has been helpful by liaising teachers with parents, especially for disadvantaged families or students at risk. NGOs, such as UAC, visit our primary school to teach students about hygiene so students can learn more on top of the subject knowledge that they are taught in class.

What percentage of population cannot read or write on your best estimate and who is doing better, children or adults?

There is a clear difference by age: People under 40 years old can read well and people over 50 years are generally illiterate. Nowadays,

and asked them for one, and then I received a well for my family too. They did not ask for money but just asked for lunch for the workers. Since then, we have got a well and a biosand water filter to use. The NPO left soon after installation. However, all of us did not have much knowledge of how to keep water clean, use and repair well and, to be honest, we were all a bit careless for how to maintain it. With the help of UAC, the installation has been fixed. They show up often to check that we are handling the installations with care. I am grateful to both NPOs, one for building, one for taking care and teaching.

Do you think the water is clean enough for family use?

Now that we have a well, a biosand-based water filter and training how to use it, we have plenty of clean water to use.

Who maintains your house and in case of damage, do your family members undertake necessary repair work by themselves? Do you have access to spare parts?

When I have a problem with a broken roof or a broken wall, my husband can repair it by himself using our own spare parts. But we are the exception, not the rule. Take our neighbour, Vong's grandmother. When her roof is broken, the grandmother repairs the roof by herself because her husband cannot help (he got sick), her grandson Vong cannot be expected to climb at

children have more opportunities to go to school than in the past. They can read, write and calculate by their own. At least they get the opportunity to do so. In general, our illiteracy rate is gradually improving, maybe by 0.5-1% of the total population per year.

What is the main reason for students to discontinue the school?

It is for economic reasons. As Kouk Srok is still the poorest community in Siem Reap, some students, whose parents cannot afford their studies, lack school material as well as clothing, cannot afford travelling and paying school fees. Moreover, there is this lack of school density around here (only one primary school).

What should NGOs like UAC try and do to improve the situation in education?

I think NGOs play an important role for supporting poor communities like Kouk Srok especially if it comes to education. I see three ways of potential support: 1) develop an English school 2) send over English teachers to teach teachers and students after class (extracurricular activity) and 3) improve sanitary facilities, toilets, access to clean water in order to reduce absences due to illness.

Do Kouk Srok citizens appreciate access to toilets and if so, is

the age of 10, and her direct offspring are living far away from her with their own families. I think this is a difficult situation for an old woman like her to do this kind of work. There are also still many many families who lack access to materials and spare parts for repair. We work with both NGOs such as UAC and the Kouk Srok village chief to improve. It will take time.

Thank you one more time for making yourself available for UAC.

(The interview was conducted in Khmer and translated by our staff)

sharing of communal generally accepted?

If I am not mistaken, thanks to UAC, every family in Kouk Srok has now in some way access to a toilet. 70 percent have no toilets for using for themselves only but they share it with neighbours which is fine. The situation has definitely improved but there is still work in progress. The poorest families cannot even afford any repair work (materials purchase) and that often causes a big problem.

Can people provide for simple repair work in case of damaged toilets and do they have access to spare parts?

People have now more knowledge regarding self-help works if it comes to water installations. But repair work is still an issue for poor families who cannot afford spare parts.

Leaving their broken house is then the only way until they earn enough money to fix it. Alternatively they do something which is unusual in our Buddhist culture: they ask for help from their neighbours.

Thank you for making yourself available for UAC.

(The interview was conducted in Khmer and translated by our staff)

New Country Manager - First Audited Annual Report Published



We are very pleased to announce exciting internal news.

Shaukhchann Peich (in the middle) has joined the UAC team in August as Country and Programme Manager. He will also chair our Cambodian Executive Board. Chann holds a Master in Business Administration / International Development (MBA ID), from the Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE) in Phnom Penh.

He has gained great experience in strategic planning of social businesses and programme management since 2009. Together with Somalita Keo (Head of Finance, second from right), Pisey Chin (Senior Project Manager since UAC's founding days, first from left), Khan Ra (Junior Project Manager and Junior Accountant, second from left) and Nil Chomno (Junior Project Manager, "Mr So", first from right) we have set up a powerful team to support the Cambodian people on the rurals. Support is provided in a structured, professional and effective way, following the founding spirit. The UAC Board in Switzerland looks forward to accomplish the UAC mission with the team.



and lays out future plans to the benefit of the people of the Kingdom of Cambodia. We very much hope that our loyal donors recognise their own invaluable effort and that this stepping stone in the strive for best possible transparency convinces new joiners for our cause.

Most of us have been blessed to be born into a first-class country with caring families and the chance to lead a self-determined life.

If you feel like sharing this with others less fortunate, we may be able to encourage you to take a look at our website, discover the work of UAC and maybe even support projects.

Why not visit Cambodia and join 'Mister Pisey', 'Sister Khanra', 'Sister Sarith', 'Mister So' and 'Mister Chann' on a renovation project, a water programme or accompany them to visit 'completed' projects.

Especially a must-see 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

Last but not least we proudly
**published our second Annual
Report and Performance Review**
(for 2016) in July - which is our first
fully audited one. It showcases
mission, vision, programmes,
governance and risk management

donations - and here '*small*' in one's
imagination can mean '*tangible*' in the
real world - in various ways.
SUPPORT NOW!

Yours sincerely

**Thomas Gilbert | Chann Peich |
The UAC Executive Board**

SUPPORT NOW

