



KAMBOO PROJECT

Supporting Cambodians

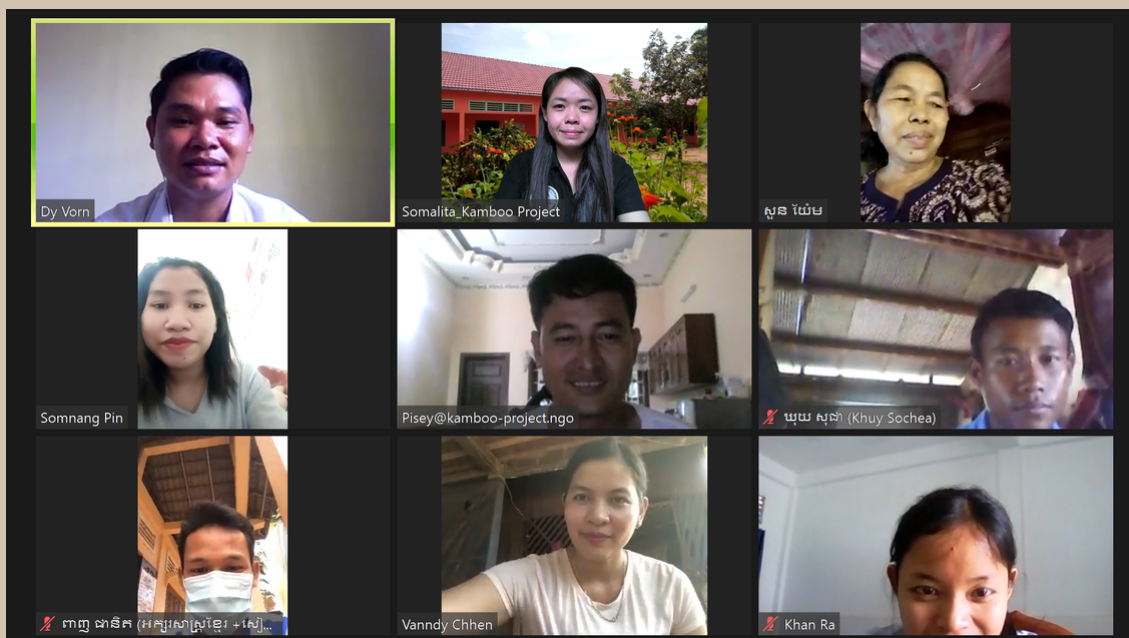
Kamboo Project Newsletter September 2021

Dear friends of Kamboo Project

2021 is one of those years that is hard to plan for. That can be disappointing, because the long-term, carefully planned programs simply can't be implemented as intended - and planning ahead is indeed one of Kamboo Project's trademarks. Of course, it is the pandemic that is throwing a spanner in the works. But things can be different when nothing is as it should be. Where are the chances, how can we still make it work, we asked ourselves. And it really is possible!



Our two-year **hygiene program SHIP** (School Hygiene Improvement Program) continues, under slightly different circumstances, but without interruption. The program is based on the water, sanitation and hygiene strategy WASH of the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and helps with its concrete implementation. We were able to carry out many planned activities before the pandemic-related school closures; since then, it has been important to us to maintain continuity and not to let the programme and the contacts break off. We have been able to do this partly through online meetings with the teachers who have taken responsibility for the programme in the schools, and partly through personal visits to the families of the schoolchildren, naturally only where the situation and the current regulations allow.



During the visits, for example, the focus is on individual small hygiene exercises - this helps a lot to maintain awareness and to consolidate the daily routines. Just over 3,000 school kids have now taken part in the SHIP hygiene training, and more than 100 teachers have undergone training that enables them to work with their classes accordingly.

Not unlike in Europe, the authorities in Cambodia are trying to keep the number of Corona cases as low as possible. Around the middle of the year, **schools** had to **close** again, and in the regions affected by Corona, strict travel and movement restrictions are also in place again on an ad hoc basis. We had already tried in 2020 to seek contact with the pupils and their families in other ways, and this worked very well. We were able to build directly on this experience in 2021.

Already at the beginning of the year, the supply situation was very bad in many places in Cambodia, because the measures to combat the pandemic cut off the population in the villages from work and earning opportunities and from access to basic food supplies. Right away in January, we put together 30 care packages for students at Boeun Chum Primary School and brought them to the school. The primary school belongs to the village of **Beong Chum** and is located about 40 kilometers from the nearest town.



The financial cost of the parcels is not very high, but the help provided with them is valuable and highly welcomed by the families. In addition to the food, we distributed portable hand-washing utensils and used our day at the school to provide extensive hygiene training for the school children and families. Large green and blue water containers with a tight-fitting lid and tap make it much easier for families to follow basic hygiene rules using a small supply of water where infrastructure is lacking. These low-tech measures are certainly effective.

We have repeated similar actions in the villages of **Momeanh** and **Anlong Pi**. In both villages there are schools supervised by us, so the necessary contacts were available. Anlong Pi in particular was affected by severe restrictions, including travel bans. Thus the way to the daily food support was also blocked. Since our local team was of course not allowed to travel in the region, we handed over the food for the neediest families to the local authorities, who then took care of the distribution. For this, our great thanks also go to the staff there, who are on the front line and do not have an easy task.

No longer quite as low-tech as our mobile hand-washing devices are the **bicycles** that Kamboo Project has given out for the third time to students at Phum Steung Primary School. We can see what the bikes mean to the children in the many positive feedbacks we get. The distances to school are shorter with the bike, the children are more rested and therefore perform better at school or attend school regularly in the first place, and even away from the routes to and from school, the bikes are extremely helpful in everyday life. Public transport and school buses are practically non-existent in rural Cambodia, and if a family owns a bike, the parents usually need it themselves for their work. Of course, not unimportantly, the children are very proud of their bikes, which they can use through primary and secondary school. Last but not least, the bikes are a very clear sign of how important school education is.

By the way, the bicycles are always procured **locally**. This is much cheaper than transporting donated bikes to Cambodia; we calculate with about 50 US dollars procurement costs per bike, so that we can achieve much more with the available funds. It also keeps more donated money in the region, but probably more importantly, the bikes don't require spare parts and maintenance expertise that are hard to come by in Cambodia. Everything needed to keep

the bikes in good shape is available locally. After all, they should give the schoolchildren pleasure for a long time and make their lives easier.

Even though what is most important to us in our work is what we achieve on the ground, we are happy when we are seen and recognized. [GlobalGiving](#) is a nonprofit organization that brings together, connects and supports many large and small aid organizations and projects. In 2021, GlobalGiving recognized and awarded Kamboo Project three times: first, for being a particularly engaged organization within the GlobalGiving community; second, for being particularly effective in achieving its goals; and third, for its earmarked use of funds, which GlobalGiving has audited to standards. In other words, GlobalGiving gives us a very good report card, which makes us very happy.

We have one change to report on the Board of Directors. **Joe Lang** has left the board at the end of March 2021. We would like to thank him for his work and commitment! **Stefan Pfister** has taken his place. Stefan is a pastor of the Protestant Methodist Church in Davos, Switzerland and knows Cambodia very well. On behalf of his church, he was in the country several times a year between 2009 and 2019 to support the continuing education of pastors there. He has been loosely connected to Kamboo Project since 2018 through an acquaintance with our President **Thomas Gilbert**, after reading about Kamboo Project and Thomas in the Davos newspaper. At the end of 2020, we asked Stefan Pfister if he would consider joining the Kamboo Project board. "I still feel very connected to this country and these people. That's why I was happy to say yes. I am happy to be part of a great team and to provide practical help for self-help in this still very poor country," says Stefan himself. Welcome to the board!



The conclusion for the first three quarters of 2021 from our point of view is: Everything is a bit smaller, everything is a bit more decentralized, but we are on the way. We don't let our projects fall apart even under pandemic conditions, continuity is just too important a factor in our work with and for the people in Cambodia who really deserve support. Our thanks go to our supporters who make our work possible in the first place!

With warm regards
Your Kamboo Project Team

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