

In this newsletter:

A lot of heart-warming stories!

"We can do no great things, only small things with great love."
Mother Theresa

Khoi's father had a stroke some years ago. She has 9 brothers and sisters.....

Hello from all of the team at Helping Hands,

As I mentioned in my cover email, the media is bombarding us constantly with the woes of the economic crisis. It's hard not to get caught up in all the doom and gloom. This newsletter letter shows that it's not all bad, that there are still good things happening, and that a little hope and a little help can go a long way.

Sorry if this newsletter seems long, but it does have lot of photographs.

INTRODUCING THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE HELPING HANDS TEAM – THE KRAMA KIDS

We are constantly trying to think of things that the villagers can make or produce with a view to selling them to the tourists, thereby giving them an income.

Coming up with an original and marketable product is not easy. Thanks to Sandra, a volunteer from Holland, the Krama Kids have come into existence.



They are hand sewn by young women from the village out of kramas. A krama is a colourful checked scarf used by all Cambodians for a multitude of uses. Amongst other things, they are used as headscarves, as belts, as towels, as hammocks for babies and to carry things.

Currently they are sold in Deborah's photo shop at Angkor Night Market in Siem Reap and are selling extremely well.





Khoi Oddom is one of the young ladies who makes the Krama Kids. She is 17 years old and attends high school – she is in grade 7. When Khoi finishes school she would like to be a teacher. Khoi is from one of the poorest families in Prasat Char Village. There are 10 children in her family, 4 sisters and 6 brothers, 8 of them still live at home. Khoi's father had a stroke some years ago and is paralysed down one side. Khoi is the first one in her family to go to high school. Only one other of her siblings has also been able to go to school.

The family's very meagre income comes from growing rice on their small plot of land, selling fruits they collect in the forest, making straw brooms and Khoi's mother makes rice noodles which she sells to other villagers.

Khoi loves making the dolls, she says it is a fun job, it takes her about 8 hours to make each one. Khoi says the little children in the village also

love the dolls and want to play with them all the time.

The money Khoi makes by sewing has been spent on food for the family and she has also bought some books and pens for school. She is very happy she had the chance to make money this way to give her and her family a bit more security in knowing where their next meal is coming from.



Khoi and Sandra

OUR ONGOING BICYCLE PROJECT

We continue to expand our bicycle project and at the moment we are implementing it in the village of Peam. Each household can earn a bicycle from us by doing 5 days work building a road within their village. To date, Helping Hands has provided over **630** bicycles to poor households!

*Helping Hands has provided over **630** bicycles to poor households.*

This is Chut Jeit, she is 24 years old. Chut lives in Peam village with her husband and 3 children. This is the first bicycle she has ever owned. Chut and her husband work as labourers on construction sites in Siem Reap. That is, they would work when they could find a ride on the back of someone else's bicycle. It takes an hour and a half to ride from Peam to Siem Reap. Now that they have their own bicycle they won't have to rely on others to get to work and will be able to work more regularly.





This family also lives in the village of Peam and have just received a bicycle from Helping Hands. The household consists of mum and dad, four children, 2 mother-in-laws and one father-in-law. This family are so poor that they don't have any land for growing rice. They earn their money buy collecting palm leaf branches, which they sell to other villagers as fuel for cooking. Having a bicycle means they can collect and sell larger quantities.

Both of the ladies in this photo require medical care, the mother has a problem with her eyes and her mother has a problem with her leg. We will be getting them help for these problems very soon.

THE ROAD THEY BUILT.....

The village leader designates which road is going to be worked on. We ask the villagers to work for their bicycle because we believe it builds up their dignity and gives them an opportunity to help themselves, as opposed to being recipients of charity.

This road is 550 meters long and 4 meters wide.





THE SUCCESS OF OUR AGRICULTURE PROGRAMME

Interested in volunteering?

*For information about volunteering please go to the **“Volunteering”** page of our website.*

In our last newsletter we told you about our agriculture training programme whereby a young Cambodian lady, university educated in agriculture, comes out to our target villages to conduct agriculture training.

We are pleased to report that this programme is proving very successful. The villagers that have completed the programme are now growing an abundance of vegetables, enough for their family to eat and have plenty left over to sell. Vegetable growers from markets in the bigger villages are now seeking them out to buy their vegetables.

This family used to only grow morning glory, an Asian vegetable also known as water spinach. Now they grow beans, lettuce/cabbage, tomatoes and cucumber. Though they haven't yet finished the course they are already selling vegetables to other villagers.





This lady is one of our original agriculture course participants from the village of Prasat Char. Before the course she used to sell a small amount of produce to other villagers, now she grows enough to be able to take it to Siem Reap to sell. She has made a huge compost pit. She used to make compost in the past, but using a different technique. She says the new way is far more effective.



Interested in donating?

For information about donating please go to the last page of this newsletter.

ENGLISH CLASS EXCURSIONS

A simple question from one of our volunteers, Gina, to some of our students made us realise that though we were teaching them English they didn't really understand the opportunities that would be open to them if they could speak English. Gina asked the class that she was teaching "who has actually been to Siem Reap?" (Siem Reap being Cambodia's main tourist town located only 20 kilometres from their village. Furthermore their village is only 10 kilometres from the famed temples of Angkor Wat.) To our surprise none of the students in that class had ever been to Siem Reap. This made us realise that they couldn't possibly know the opportunities available to them if they studied English and worked hard on their other studies.





We decided to hold a monthly English competition involving all students over 13 years of age. The 8 students who scored the best are then taken on an excursion to Siem Reap. They visit tourist markets, guesthouses and hotels, restaurants and other places that tourists frequent and where Cambodians who can speak English are employed.

They have to take photos during their day out and then do a talk to the rest of the students about what they saw. It is proving to be a very useful exercise as the student's start to see new opportunities opening up to them. Eventually, all the older students will have the opportunity to go on the excursions.

A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

The normal and instinctual thing to do in "times like these" is to hold on to what we've got, after all, according to the media - its only going to get worse. But please, remember, Helping Hands can only continue to operate because of the generosity of people like you. And in Cambodia, as you can see below, a little really can go a long way.....

	<i>USD</i>	<i>AUD</i>	<i>EURO</i>	<i>GBP</i>
<i>Breakfast for 100 children for one day</i>	\$20.00	\$30.60	\$15.45	\$14.00
<i>Bicycle</i>	\$32.00	\$48.90	\$24.70	\$22.40
<i>School uniform (2 tops and 2 bottoms)</i>	\$4.00	\$6.15	\$3.10	\$2.80
<i>20 Cambodian story books</i>	\$36.00	\$55.00	\$27.80	\$25.20
<i>Agriculture trainer salary for one week</i>	\$25.00	\$38.80	\$19.40	\$17.60

Currency calculations from Yahoo Finance 30/1/09



Thank you for taking the time to read this and thank you for caring.

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HOW TO MAKE DONATIONS

The work that Helping Hands does is only made possible by the generous financial support of our donors.

There are a number of ways you can make a donation.

1. Deposit directly into our Australian St George Bank account.
2. Via Paypal.
3. Through the organisation we partner with in Australia and America – Global Development Group. This partnership enables us to offer tax deductibility to Australians and Americans.
4. By cheque or money order to our P.O. box in Australia.
5. By money transfer to our Cambodian bank account.

1. Australian bank account details:

With these details you can go directly into your own bank, to a St George bank or, if you do online banking, transfer via the internet.

Bank: St George
Account Name: Helping Hands Cambodia
BSB No: 114-879
Acct No: 419 526 714

2. Paypal is Ebay's online payment system.

This method allows you to send money to an email address. Just go to www.paypal.com The relevant email address to send the payment to is: grovesphotography@yahoo.com.au

3. Global Development Group

IMPORTANT NOTE: When making a donation via Global Development Group you must make sure you mention that it is for project J213.

Global Development Group is an umbrella organisation that we have partnered with in order to be able to issue tax-deductible receipts to Australians and Americans. There are several options for making tax-deductible donations via Global Development Group:

- A. By credit card online at www.globaldevelopment.org.au.
- B. By cheque or credit card. Post to 56 Goorari Street, Eight Mile Plains, Qld, 4113.
- C. By direct deposit to Global Development Group's bank account:

Account Name: Global Development Group
Account number: 10200094
Bank: Commonwealth Bank of Australia
BSB: 064-118

- D. If you live in America, by posting a cheque directly to Global Development Group's US office, making sure you quote the J213 number.

Global Development Group USA
Colin and Paula Armstrong
1314 Longwood Oaks Blvd

Lakeland, Florida
33811-2346, USA

4. Postal orders/cheques.

You can send a postal order or cheque, made out to Helping Hands Cambodia, to
PO Box 3870
Caloundra D.C., Qld, 4551,
Australia.

5. Cambodian bank account details:

This can be an expensive option unless you are in Cambodia, due to the transfer fees.

Account Name: Helping Hands Cambodia
Account Number: 743105
Bank: ANZ Royal Bank (Cambodia) Ltd
Swift Code: ANZBKHPP

Tax deductible giving

Helping Hands is now able to issue receipts for tax deductibility to both Australians and Americans. This is done through Global Development Group. You can donate directly to them or simply let me know via email when you make a donation if you would like a tax deductible receipt sent to you.

Thank you for caring!