

## In this newsletter:

- The L'berk village hygiene and sanitation project.
- Postcard from a HHC team member.
- Some quarterly highlights.
- Contact us and how to donate.

*Brian Kuhl, one of the original supporters of Helping Hands Cambodia (HHC), has written this newsletter. Brian, who is Australian, comes to Siem Reap at least once a year to volunteer and also provides valuable*



*administrative support.*

*Chanty, Brian and Deborah*



*At risk*

## L'BERK VILLAGE HYGIENE AND SANITATION PROJECT

### The Backyard Dunny\*

(\* Australian slang for an outdoor toilet or outhouse.)

The photograph on the right is a typical Australian dunny, circa 1940. In fact it is in the backyard of the house near Kempsey, NSW, where the legendary country singer/songwriter, Slim Dusty, spent his childhood about 70 years ago.



Most of us in the "lucky countries" have progressed in those 70 years to now possess comfortable internal bathrooms, in many cases two or even more. However, there continues to be millions in our world who do not even possess the "luxury" of what Slim had as a boy all those years ago. Included among those millions are the people in the villages in which Helping Hands Cambodia (HHC) works in Siem Reap Province.

### An Urgent Need Identified

Lack of toilets and poor sanitary practices are responsible for the high incidence of diarrhoea throughout Cambodia; identified by UNICEF as one of the major causes of the unacceptably high rate of child mortality. The number of sick children who presented at the very first health clinics organised by HHC four years ago, convinced Deborah and her team that correction of the situation in our villages must be a high priority.

An informal survey conducted by Helping Hands in the village of L'berk towards the end of 2008 discovered that there were NO toilet facilities in the village at all. People would just 'go' anywhere convenient and cover up their waste with sand or leaves, a practice termed 'open defecation'. Open defecation is one of the main causes of contaminated drinking water and consequent numerous health problems.



Lack of sanitation is one of the biggest killers of children in the developing world. It is estimated that 74% of all deaths in Cambodia come from waterborne diseases, a situation that could be improved through better sanitary conditions and education.

*A big thank you to Global Development Group for supporting our Hygiene and Sanitation project.*

*A quick note of thanks to MSAVLC (Medical and Scientific Aid to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) for their amazing donation. Thanks to them we can continue to save lives by offering emergency medical aid to people in desperate need..... more on that in our next newsletter.*



## Project Development and Planning

When HHC facilitated the construction of the Iqbal School at Prasat Char Village four years ago a toilet was considered an essential component. Planning and construction of this building provided the first experience for members of the HHC team in “toilet technology”. It also proved to be an important first step in the process of educating the villagers, through their children, on the importance of good hygiene practices.



*The Toilet at Iqbal School – When First Completed and Now*

The HHC Hygiene & Sanitation project is now well advanced; but has been several years in the planning. HHC determined not to make the mistakes observed in similar projects conducted by other organisations. Consequently a lengthy process was undertaken involving:-

1. Community consultation through meetings arranged with the support and co-operation of Village Leaders and the Commune Leader.
2. Discussions with officials at relevant Government agencies.
3. Meetings with other NGO's to seek advice and learn from their experience. Particular thanks to staff at Plan International (Cambodia) and the guys at Resource Development International in Phnom Penh for their time and valuable advice.
4. Many field trips to inspect other projects; and hours of input by HHC staff and numerous volunteers in order to determine the appropriate “model” toilet to suit the conditions in our villages.
5. Determining when, where and how the project would be implemented and managed.
6. Not least, costing the project and identifying funding sources.



*Close of a Successful Community Meeting*

### But why do we need a toilet???

***“Stories about flies making our children sick are nonsense”. “The spirits of the children’s ancestors make them ill because they’ve been cheeky to their parents”***

These are just some of the comments the staff from HHC encountered during the consultation phase. There was very little understanding of basic sanitation and the link between poor sanitation and ill health. So it became evident that, in order to succeed, our project must include an up-front, user friendly and culturally sensitive education programme on health and hygiene issues.

As he has done with the whole project, Director Chanty took the lead; designing a Health and Hygiene Course, modelled on aspects of similar courses employed by other NGO’s; but modified to suit the needs of our client audience. It is an imperative that to qualify for HHC assistance to install a toilet each family must have a representative complete the course. The HHC Health and Hygiene Course is comprehensive and involves three hours of instruction over a period of 14 days, finishing with a verbal comprehension test.

The courses, delivered by THEA, our medical co-ordinator, have been a resounding success. They have changed attitudes and perceptions. Participants now understand the need to have a toilet facility and to employ proper hygiene practices. Unlike some similar projects in the region we can be confident that HHC toilets will be properly used and maintained.



*Chanty & Students – Talking Toilets*



*Thea teaching the Health and Hygiene Course*

### Design and Construction

Research by our team revealed that the best toilet design option for the conditions in the region around the Doun Keo Commune is what is commonly referred to as the “pour-flush squat” model. A number of less expensive dry-system toilets had to be by-passed as unsuitable for several reasons, including the nature of the terrain (i.e. the water level in the ground is simply too high).

In the adopted model, waste is transferred by manually flushing the toilet with a bucket through a system of pipes to one of two tanks at the rear of the building. When the first tank is full the second comes into use. The first is allowed to rest until it is needed again, by which time the material therein is safe to remove; and may be used as fertilizer for tree crops.



*Under Construction*

HHC provides the materials for the construction of a toilet to the agreed basic design. As shown in the following photos, this is a corrugated iron structure, built on a concrete pad. In addition to the squat pan the building houses a concrete tub, which serves as a water reservoir. Thus a supply of water is readily available for flushing purposes. The building is also suitable for use as a bathing area. This is an added bonus, particularly for the women, who now have a place to bathe with privacy and a relative degree of safety.



*External View*



*Standard HHC Toilet*

*Internal View*

In accord with the HHC “hand-up not hand-out” policy, participating families are required to input to the project. The agreed process is that HHC provides the materials for the construction to the agreed basic design. The cost of any embellishment, for example, use of bricks, cement render etc., rather than iron, must be borne by the householder. Construction is carried out by the householder, assisted, where required, by fellow villagers as a co-operative community project. Co-ordination and monitoring is provided by Chanty, as Project Manager, and the Village Leader.

## Progress To Date

The village of L'berk was chosen as the first target for the project. A survey conducted in 2008 found that there was not a single toilet in the village. The aim is to have every one of the 340 households equipped with a toilet.

HHC is blessed with financial support from many regular donors, who enable HHC to maintain a range of ongoing programmes. Initially it was feared that maintaining those programmes and taking on this major project with our existing resources would result in it being a long time in the completion. However, thanks to a brilliant effort by Chanty and volunteer Natalie in preparing a wonderful proposal, HHC was successful in gaining a significant funding allocation through a partner NGO, Global Development Group, which has enabled the project to move ahead more rapidly.

At the time of writing the situation is:-

- 160 participants from L'berk Village have successfully completed health and Hygiene Courses.
- Construction of 125 toilets has been completed in the village.
- A further 35 toilets are currently under construction.
- Each toilet costs approximately \$120.00 usd.



*Project Manager, Chanty, recording progress - Standard HHC Toilet, bricked by family*

## Community Impact

The beneficial impact of the new amenities is already apparent. One indicator as to how successful our training course has been is the fact that almost all families choose to use some of their own money to “upgrade” their toilet with brick and concrete walls. Here are just a few selected comments from some of the proud new owners:

*"Before I did the training I did not realize that going to the toilet just anywhere was making people sick. With the new toilets and the health and hygiene training I hope people won't get sick so often."*

*"Before I had a toilet I was scared at night of ghosts and snakes. Now I feel safe to go to the toilet and I don't care if I need to go to the toilet at night."*

*"Before I had a toilet I just went behind my house and dug a hole. Sometimes the chickens would dig it up and the smell would be very bad."*

*"Before I had a toilet I was always worried about the safety of my daughter when she went to the toilet."*



*Happy Families Showing off their New Toilets – The Pictures Say it All !!!!*

### [A Long Way to Go](#)

HHC cannot change the world. Nor indeed are we a major player in the Cambodian scene. But ***we can make a difference*** to the thousands of people in Doun Keo Commune, one of the poorest in the country. When the current Sanitation Project is completed in L'berk Village our dedicated team will not be "resting on their hands". There is a determination to push on into the next most needy village.

With your support HHC is committed to the ongoing delivery of existing wide-ranging programmes across health, education, agriculture and village infrastructure. "Runs on the board", in the form of a highly successful sanitation project completed in L'berk, will hopefully provide the necessary evidence for mounting future successful funding applications with major organisations, such as Ausaid, UN agencies etc, to enable us to move forward with this vital health and hygiene programme.

## Postcard From a Staff Member

### [Chanty – Director](#)

Hello,

I am Chanty Ho, HHC Cambodian Director, age 34 years. I was born in the little village of Preytatrav in Kampong Thom town; and spent my time there until finishing high school. Because I have tried so hard, since I was little, to study English my life continues to get better and better. Because of my good English I got a job with Helping Hands that has led to me now being the Director.

This job is so important to me because of what HHC is doing. It is exactly what my heart has been longing for. The areas and people that we work with are exactly like where I came from. This is the reason I can work well in many projects, even though I have not been to university yet. I understand the people and their needs. The life of the children and the villagers is exactly like I had when growing up.

All the best wishes,

Chanty Ho.



*Addressing Combined NGO's Meeting*



*Discussing Issues With Village Women*

## SOME RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

### L'berk Community Centre



*The old building*



*The new building*

The residents of the village of L'berk were in desperate need of a new building to house their Community Centre. Over time they managed to raise most of the money themselves. However the project had stalled for want of a shortfall of about 25% of the funds needed. They approached Helping Hands to ask if we could assist them.

The Centre is a vital amenity in the village. HHC itself uses the facility on occasions as a venue for courses, including Health & Hygiene classes. Hence we readily agreed, feeling that the people had really taken the Helping Hands philosophy to heart – *helping people who help themselves*.

### A Heartwarming Encounter

A highlight for me, Brian, on my most recent visit was a chance encounter and a chat with Dun Un Village resident, Keb Toch. I was visiting the village with Chanty to inspect progress on the road being constructed by the villagers. (More on that project next issue).

Many thousands of desperately sad stories have emerged from the terrible Khmer Rouge period. Keb's story is inspirational. Her life's journey has taken her through family tragedy and personal loss, harsh living conditions, hunger and poverty. But she has emerged as one of the most positive, cheerful and wisest individuals one could wish to meet. In excellent, self-taught, English she recounted how she:

- is now 42 years of age, born 1968
- was orphaned by the Khmer Rouge at age 7
- at age 11, at least once a week, walked 60 kilometers round trip to the mountains to gather wild fruit and vegetables.
- every other day walked 15 kilometers to the market town of Pouk, carrying loads of 40-50 kilograms. (Note this is a tiny, undernourished, 11 year old girl)
- married happily at age 16 and has had 5 children; losing one, her only girl, at an early age. Her husband is a farmer and they manage to grow enough rice to feed themselves.
- suffers a "little" arthritis and is now unable to undertake the daily 60 kilometer bicycle ride to work in construction in Siem Reap (where she was earning about \$1.50 per day). Currently part-time administrative assistant to the Village Leader.
- is very grateful for HHC for helping her community; and happily worked on the Dun Un road project with other villagers in order to earn a bike from HHC; 6 days on the road surface, 15 days building bridges and 5 days planting grass on retaining embankments.



In my words “ ***Keb Toch is an inspiration. It is a privilege to be associated with HHC in their endeavours to give people like Keb a ‘handup’***”

### **Our contact details:**

Deborah Groves - Founder  
092 442 669 (in Cambodia)  
0412 665 656 (in Australia)

*Email contact is the best way to get in touch initially.*

Ho Chanty - Director  
012 286 382 (in Cambodia)  
+855 12 286 382 (from outside Cambodia)

Web: **www.helpinghandscambodia.com**

Email: **grovesphotography@yahoo.com.au**

*This newsletter has been written by Brian Kuhl.*

---

**DONATING - The Aussie dollar is now at record highs. That means your donation goes much further, so it's a great time to donate!**

*Please remember to let us know if you want a tax receipt. Details on how to donate are below.*

---

### **HOW TO MAKE DONATIONS**

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

There are a number of options for making donations. Simply choose the option below that suits you best.....

Do you want to deposit <b>directly to our bank accounts</b> ?	Please go to OPTION 1
Do you want to donate via <b>Paypal</b> ?	Please go to OPTION 2
Do you want to post a <b>cheque</b> or money order?	Please go to OPTION 3
Are you an <b>Australian</b> and require a <b>tax receipt</b> ?	Please go to OPTION 4
Are you an <b>American</b> and require a <b>tax receipt</b> ?	Please go to OPTION 5

#### **OPTION 1 – Deposit directly to our bank accounts**

##### Australian bank account details:

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

##### Cambodian bank account details:

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

#### **OPTION 2 – Donate via PAYPAL**

- ❖ This method allows you to send money to an email address.
- ❖ Just go to [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)

- ❖ The relevant email address to send the payment to is:  
[helpinghandscambodia@yahoo.com.au](mailto:helpinghandscambodia@yahoo.com.au)

### **OPTION 3 – Sending a cheque or money order via post**

You can send a postal order or cheque, made out to *Helping Hands Cambodia*, to:

Helping Hands Cambodia  
PO Box 3870  
Caloundra D.C., Qld, 4551,  
Australia.

### **OPTION 4 – If you require an Australian tax receipt**

**Global Development Group** is an umbrella organisation that we partner 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.

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

- A. By secure **CREDIT CARD ONLINE** at [www.globaldevelopment.org.au](http://www.globaldevelopment.org.au).
- B. By **CHEQUE**: Post to Global Development Group,  
56 Goorari Street,  
Eight Mile Plains, Qld, 4113.

Don't forget to include a note containing:

- a). the total of your donation
- b). that your donation is for Helping Hands Cambodia Project J213
- c). the name and address to mail (or email) the receipt to.

- 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

Don't forget to email us your donation details. [info@globaldevelopment.org.au](mailto:info@globaldevelopment.org.au). Please include:

- a). the details of your deposit
- b). Helping Hands Cambodia Project J213
- c). the name and address to mail (or email) the receipt to.

### **OPTION 5 – If you require an American tax receipt**

**Global Development Group** is an umbrella organisation that we partner 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.

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

- A. By **CREDIT CARD ONLINE** at <https://www.globaldevelopment.org.au/usa/donations.php>

B. By **CHEQUE**. Post to Global Development Group USA Inc.  
1314 Longwood Oaks Blvd  
Lakeland, Florida 33811 USA

Don't forget to include a note containing:

- a). the total of your donation
- b). that your donation is for Helping Hands Cambodia Project J213
- c). the name and address to mail (or email) the receipt to.

C. By **DIRECT DEPOSIT** to Global Development Group's bank account:

Global Development Group USA Inc  
Routing Number: 263179804  
Savings Account Number: 39599501

Bank Information:

Mid Florida School FCU  
6040 South Florida Avenue  
Lakeland, Florida 33813  
(863) 688-3733  
[www.midflorida.com](http://www.midflorida.com)

Don't forget to email us your donation details. [info@globaldevelopment.org.au](mailto:info@globaldevelopment.org.au). Please include:

- a). the details of your deposit
- b). that your donation is for Helping Hands Cambodia Project J213
- c). the name and address to mail (or email) the receipt to.

Thank you for caring!