



2022

Monitoring and Evaluation Report



Samrong Education Centre, Cambodia

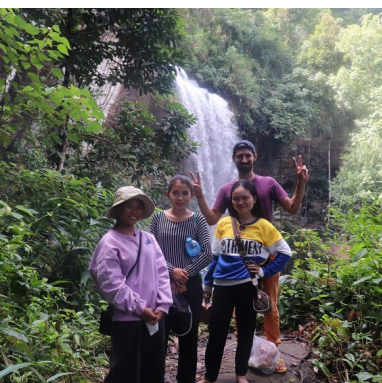
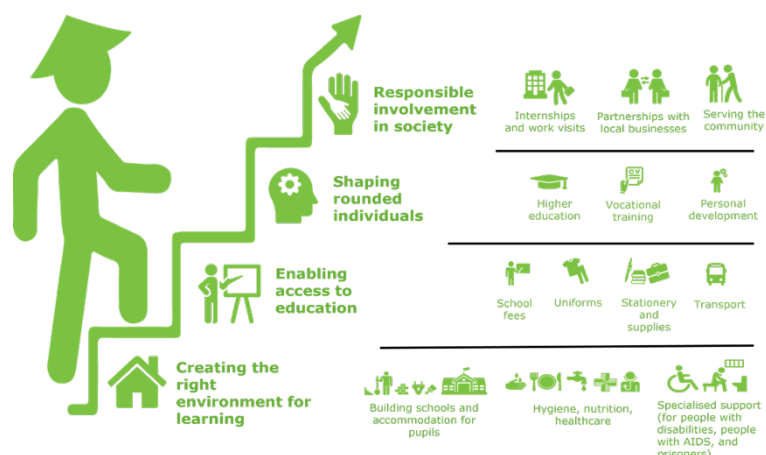


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Children of the Mekong	3
Samrong Education Centre	4
Impact of the Samrong Education Centre	5
What is in the Centre?	6
Our Staff	7
Profile of the Beneficiaries	8
Achievements in Studies	10
Aims, Activities, and Indicators	11
Successes and Areas of Improvement	13
Student Profile	15
Year 2022 in Pictures	16

CHILDREN OF THE MEKONG

Children of the Mekong has operated in Cambodia since 1991, and with the Ministry of Education since 2002. We are the UK Branch of *Enfants du Mékong*, a French charity founded in 1958 and are a **registered charity** with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (No.1116375). Education is at the heart of what we do, and we work with local communities to improve access and quality of education in Southeast Asia.



VISION

Poor and suffering children can be **models of responsibility** for their countries.

MISSION

Providing education, training, and support; we help youth and children to improve their standard of living and to **grow intellectually, emotionally, and morally**. We accompany them **as far as possible**, according to their abilities and desires, until their professional integration.

VALUES AND FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

- Establishing **inherent respect** for all, regardless of circumstances, culture, or religion
- Seeing unique individuals in each suffering child and **responding in the best fit** for their needs
- Building **trust in communities** we serve
- Helping sponsors and the children they support to **develop personal and amicable relationships**; the meeting, the exchange, and the bond that is woven from person to person
- Facilitating concrete and humble **action**
- Instilling **long-term** loyalty
- Supporting structured and individualised educational projects; helping each child or youth **overcome academic, emotional, and moral shortcomings**; allowing them to shape their personality

Children of the Mekong supports child education in 3 ways:

1. Individual **child sponsorship** programmes.
2. Management of **education centres** and **foster houses**.
3. **Development projects** to enhance living and study environment.

Our programmes in Cambodia:

In 1993, Children of the Mekong opened 4 educational centres with boarding houses, tackling the prevalent issue of school dropouts which is particularly rampant near the Thailand border. In **2022**, our activities in Cambodia included:

2760

children
supported by 103
sponsorship
programmes

534

students benefiting
from full boarding
houses in 6
education centres

19

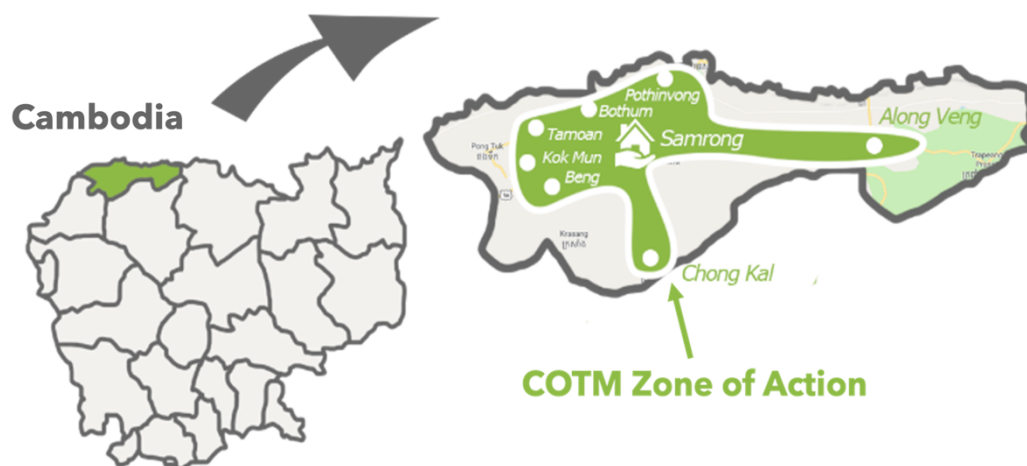
local employers and
12 overseas
volunteers

181

development
programmes
(in 2020*)

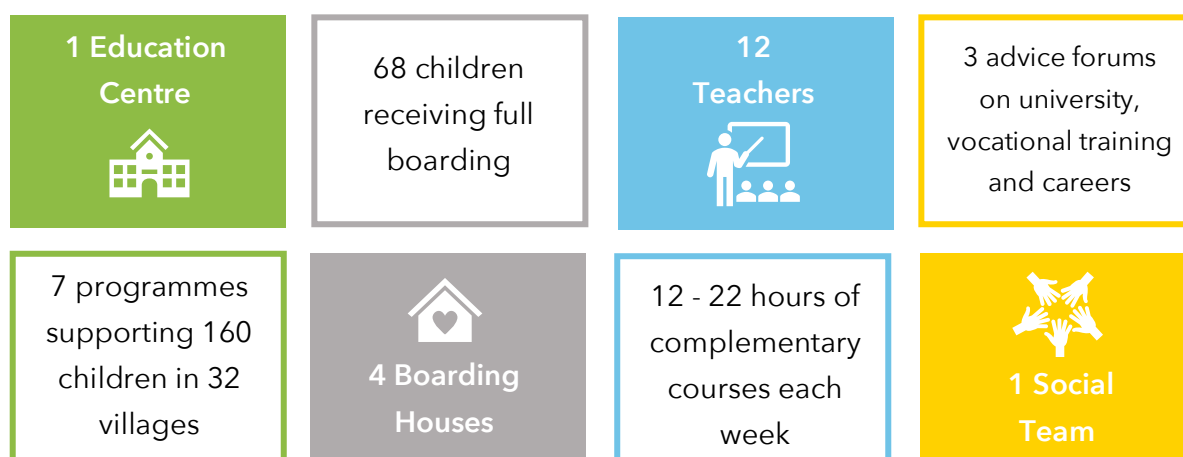
SAMRONG EDUCATION CENTRE

Samrong is the capital city of the **Oddar Meanchey province** in Northwest Cambodia, where the **educational opportunities for children are severely limited** and there is typically a **50% dropout rate** from the 218 primary schools to only 28 secondary schools. As such, many children must convince their parents of the importance of education when schools are scattered and family income is the priority.



Driven by extremely low wages, some teachers coax students to pay extra fees for after-school private tuition to make up for deficits, an ingrained practice in these communities that **keeps disadvantaged children systematically destitute**. In turn, many children are thrust into the workforce by families who don't see the value of education when their income relies on small-scale farming. It is also common for children to travel across the border into Thailand and work in the tourism industry to create more income for their families, an unsustainable and often exploitative endeavour. These factors create a **need for sustainable and high-quality education** for those in the Oddar Meanchey Province. The Samrong Education Centre helps Cambodian children achieve secondary education amidst restrictions from low-income backgrounds and sparse schooling options by providing **boarding houses, tuition, extracurricular activities, and various types of material support** such as food, hygiene products, school uniforms, school supplies, and medical care. Applicants to the centre are selected based on their family's economic situation, their personal motivation, and their academic achievements.

IMPACT OF THE SAMRONG EDUCATION CENTRE



In 2022, the Samrong Education Centre had a huge impact on its 68 direct beneficiaries and the 160 children in our programmes in the surrounding villages. We also believe that there are at least twice the number of indirect beneficiaries, namely siblings and family, who benefit from food distribution and health costs reimbursement. With regular classes on mathematics, Khmer, English, chemistry, physics, biology, and computer technology, alongside complementary courses and extracurricular events, **we are empowering students with the tools to give back to their community and actualise their dreams.**

The centre aims to provide these students with the means to:



Achieve a more **sustainable future** for all by actively developing solutions to improve the environment.

Allow brilliant pupils coming from underprivileged families to **have a good education** in order to enrol in the best university courses of the country.



Supply these students with all the means and instruments necessary to **succeed in their future** working career.

Beyond university education, provide the students with complete humanist training that will **foster intellectual, interpersonal, professional, and moral growth.**



WHAT IS IN THE CENTRE?

The Centre consists of 6 classrooms, 4 boarding houses (two for girls and two for boys), a library, sport facilities (a football and a volleyball pitch), an I.T. room, an office, a kitchen, a bicycle shelter, a pond which serves as swimming pool, and a vegetable garden.



The vegetable garden was created in association with Green Shoots Foundation, a partner organisation specialising in an agriculture skills training programme. The vegetable garden aims at teaching the children sustainable organic gardening techniques that they can replicate at home. Now, the centre works on it independently, transmitting knowledge through the older students and staff.



Laetitia Capocci

French Overseas Volunteer



Sochea Mour

Social Worker



Ratha Soeung

Cook



Gabriel Capocci

French Overseas Volunteer



Sopheap Tes

Social Worker



Sophornn Bin

Guardian

The Samrong Education Centre's day-to-day is helped managed by our dedicated and passionate team of two French overseas volunteers and two Khmer social workers, with a guardian and cook also living onsite. In many cases, the local team act as a second family for our students. They are responsible for the welfare and assistance of the children and ensure a clean, safe, and tidy environment, enacting the centre's aims of encouraging well-rounded students that can focus on studies without financial problems. In addition to providing the necessary support needed for the children, they also help organise various extracurricular activities related to arts and sports to help enhance students' sense of confidence, community, and purpose.

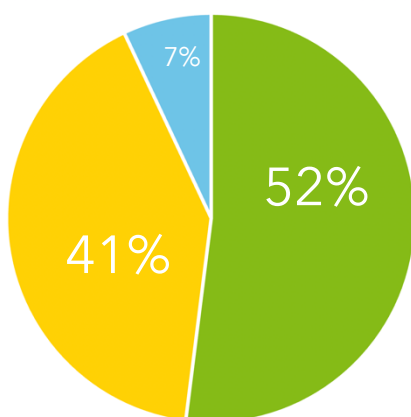


Profile of the Beneficiaries

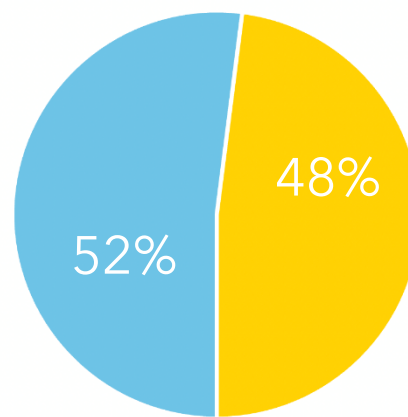
68 children reside in the centre and receive accommodation in addition to educational support. Students staying in the boarding houses were already being sponsored and were chosen from extremely low-income families with little to no educational history. The sponsorship programmes run in the more situated villages and benefit 160 children and their families. The selection process for the programmes is normally competitive, however, with the novelty of post-COVID schooling, there were fewer applications than pre-pandemic years. As such, a high rate of 80% of applicants were selected. In the following graphs, “**Sponsorship Programmes**” refers to the 160 students who live with their families in the 32 surrounding villages, while “**Education Centre**” refers to the 68 students who live in the boarding houses within the Samrong Education Centre.

Level of Studies

■ Primary School ■ Secondary School ■ High School



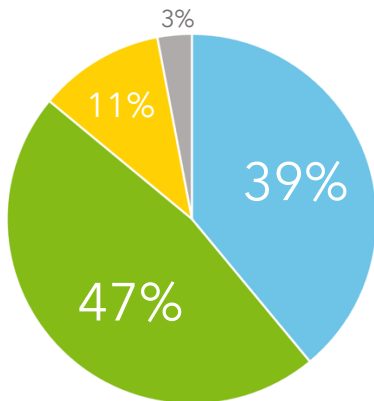
Sponsorship Programmes



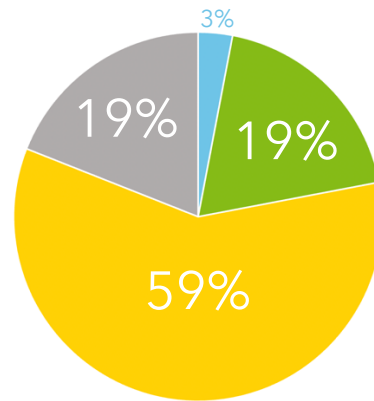
Education Centre

Age of Students

■ 11 or Below ■ 12 to 14 ■ 15 to 18 ■ 19 or above



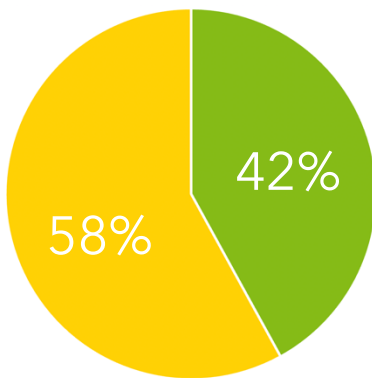
Sponsorship Programmes



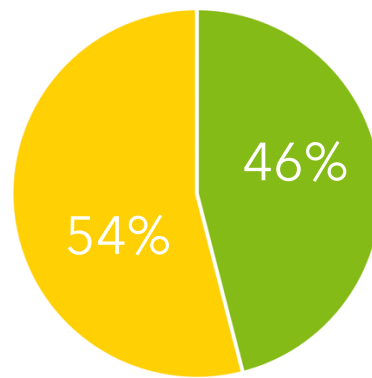
Education Centre

Gender Ratio

■ Boys ■ Girls



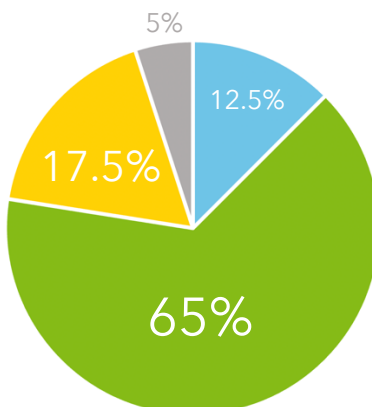
Sponsorship Programmes



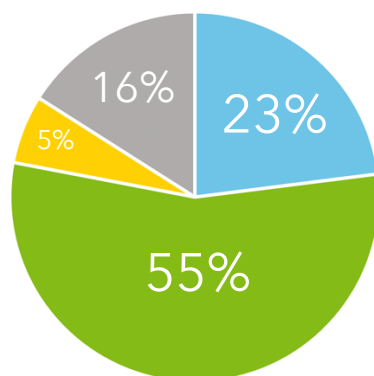
Education Centre

Occupation of Parents

■ Soldier ■ Farmer ■ Workers/Builders ■ Others



Sponsorship Programmes



Education Centre

ACHIEVEMENTS IN STUDIES

Of the 14 children in Grade 12, 13 passed the Baccalaureate. This 93% pass rate **greatly exceeded** the national average of 70%. All 14 students are **furthering their education** at universities or special skill training centres in studies surrounding information technology, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, electrical engineering, general engineering, history, hospitality and catering. Many of these institutes are in **larger metropolitan areas**, namely Battambang, Siem Reap, and the country's capital city of Phnom Penh.



The centre also encourages students to attend university forums, vocational training forums, and job forums. All grade 9 to 12 students, both those staying within the centre and those from the surrounding villages, attended each of these forums.



JOB FORUM

General professionals explained their job, the qualifications required, the expectations of an employer, and showed screenings of careers videos.

Representatives of vocational schools, partners of Children of the Mekong presented training courses and opportunities available.



VOCATIONAL TRAINING FORUM



UNIVERSITY FORUM

Visits to universities, talks about life at the university and advice on how to best succeed were conducted.

AIMS, ACTIVITIES AND INDICATORS

*Our overall aim is to improve the material living conditions of young people and enable them to develop **intellectually**, **emotionally**, and **morally**.*

Result 1 – Get a Qualification

Outputs	Inputs	Indicators
OBJECTIVE 1: <i>Get a degree</i>	ACTIVITY 1: Increase access to education with sponsorship programmes in villages.	Individual and overseas sponsors help support 160 children in 7 sponsorship programmes in 32 villages, managed from the Centre in Oddar Meanchey. Every month, the children received financial and material support enabling their education. Chosen children are assessed in the poverty of the family, motivation to pursue studies and their grades.
	ACTIVITY 2: Improve access to education with education centres.	13 out of 14 students in Grade 12 passed the 2022 Baccalaureate Exam, surpassing the national passing rate of 70%. This exam is a portal to university education and a properly paid job or vocational training depending on choice of the individual and their family. All 14 Grade 12 students have been successful in continuing their education journeys through either university or vocational training.
	ACTIVITY 3: Social support and monitoring of the children and their families.	Our trained overseas volunteers and social workers organised the distribution of sponsorship donations to the children 12 times throughout the year, which allowed them to pay annual visits to all the families of the sponsored children. In doing so, the overseas volunteers and social workers were able to find out if families were supportive of their children. The social team also helps students visit families that are sometimes over an hour away by travelling with motorbike. Social workers spent 80% of their time bringing social support to families, and 20% of their time doing administrative work in their offices.
OBJECTIVE 2: <i>Have a high enough level of education to be successful</i>	ACTIVITY 1: Quality supplementary courses in the centre.	Between 12 and 22 hours of supplementary classes are given each week depending on grade level. About 60 children, in addition to the students at the center, attend these classes every day of the week.
	ACTIVITY 2: Evaluation exams in the centre.	Public school education in Cambodia is very poor and as such sometimes students can have difficulties adjusting or adapting to a more intense programme. Children of the Mekong organises regular exams in the centre to monitor the level of our students and take action if students are having difficulties. Children of the Mekong also runs several other centres in Cambodia and our centre in Sisophon is the biggest of them all. Every 3 months, exams written by Sisophon teachers are given to students across all centres to monitor the level of each centre. This regular monitoring of progress aims to determine the best orientation for the students, according to their capacity, towards university studies or vocational training in metropolitan cities.
OBJECTIVE 3: <i>Focus on studies without financial problems</i>	ACTIVITY 1: Accommodation and food in foster houses.	68 students receive full accommodation at the Samrong Education Centre. They live in 4 boarding houses (2 for boys and 2 for girls). These houses have rooms with bunk beds, so each person has their individual space. The cook provides 2 meals per day 6 days a week, for a total 565 meals.
	ACTIVITY 2: Medical support	The medical budget this year was \$1650, including for vaccines. This support extends to helping students' families with health insurance at public hospitals.

Result 2 - Prepare to Get a Job

Outputs	Inputs	Indicators
OBJECTIVE 1: <i>To build one's future</i>	ACTIVITY 1: University, Vocational Training and Job Forum	Children of the Mekong organises 3 forums every year in our biggest centre in Sisophon, Cambodia. These forums aim to help provide students with information about future education and employment opportunities. In 2022, every student from Grade 9 to 12 in Samrong participated in all 3 forums. It was a great opportunity for them to learn more about the studies available in the country and the required academic skills. It also gave them insight into employment opportunities for the future.
	ACTIVITY 2: Support from alumni	Alumni visited the centre on a regular basis when they returned to the province to visit their families. They are always very grateful to Children of the Mekong. For the 30 th anniversary of Children of the Mekong's arrival in Cambodia, alumni helped organise a large event to bring together old and new sponsored children. Over 500 people participated and ate together in a large Khmer-style buffet.
	ACTIVITY 3: Organic vegetable garden and rice paddy	The Samrong Education Centre partnered with the Green Shoots Foundation in 2020 to train students' agricultural skills for maintaining the vegetable gardens, organic farming techniques with which they can replicate at home. Now, the centre works on it independently, transmitting knowledge through the older students and staff.

Result 3 - Become Responsible, Helpful and Well-Balanced Young Person

Outputs	Inputs	Indicators
OBJECTIVE 1: <i>Get involved in society</i>	ACTIVITY: Teamwork, chores, tutoring and gardening	Every Sunday, the students take part in 'pulakham', which is a general cleaning of the Centre and of the garden. Those who do not live in the Centre also help with chores in the classrooms. Once a month they change the mats, bedding sheets and mosquito nets. Every 3 months, two of the elder students become the new hygiene leader and discipline leader. In this system, the students are given experience in leadership, and an emphasis is placed on older students helping younger ones. Students also take turns to shop at the market and cook on Sundays. Everything is organised in teams, with there being 14 teams in the Centre. Additionally, 1 team every Sunday goes to Ou Badav village to help tutor other underprivileged children. These activities encourage students to be involved in society and give back to their communities. This also shows them that nothing should be taken for granted.
OBJECTIVE 2: <i>Knowing myself and be open to the world</i>	ACTIVITY: Self-development activities	The overseas volunteers and social workers organise activities year-round and on the weekends for all students staying in the centre. Activities range from movie nights to improve English to outdoor games and musical classes. Trips to Cambodian heritage sites are also organised to promote culture and community. There were also many workshops organised around health, hygiene, environment, arts and crafts, and indoor games, with Sochea, the social worker, also leading a Khmer confectionary workshop. Interviews with social workers also help detect areas for improvement.

SUCESSES AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

Successes

Samrong Education Centre has opened back up fully following the ease of COVID restrictions. Even if there are some cases in the country, none have been detected in the centre and things are as normal as they can be. With this, we have welcomed back 68 children to board at the centre and 60 additional students for regular and complimentary classes every day. Additionally, following the Baccalaureate exams, every single Grade 12 student is continuing to learn more at either university or vocational training.

We continuously upgrade the centre, and this year we have been able to improve several aspects. For one, **Wi-Fi** was set up in the centre to assist the social team to work more effectively in the office so they can spend more time with the children. As smartphones are not available in the centre, the social team monitors usage and helps teach students computer and internet skills. This also supports the IT classes. **Fans** have also been added to the terraces of each boarding house so that students can have a more relaxed and fresh air environment when studying or simply spending time together. Within the boarding houses themselves we have installed **bunk beds** which allows each person to have their own individual space, and also respects the government's social distancing guidelines. A **common space** has also been developed from the building that used to be for parking bicycles, allowing an environment for convening for presentations, taking part in events, or just for the students to spend time together. The bicycles are now kept in a new area behind the building. The **electrical system** has also been improved, limiting blackouts and breakdowns as much as is in our control. In line with this, the **water system** has also been upgraded with two pumps being installed and working more efficiently than previously.



Areas of Improvement to be implemented in 2023

1. Installing an ecological incinerator

The Samrong city council wants to ban NGOs and guest houses from burning their garbage, charging \$150 per month for collection fees instead. The most sustainable alternative is creating an on-site ecological waste treatment area.



2. Improving classrooms and buildings

Classrooms are only separated by simple wooden planks, some of which are missing. With over 130 attendees every day, it hinders teachers and students from having lessons to the best extent. It would be beneficial to redo the partitions and ceilings to allow better soundproofing and lesson conditions. The centre's ceilings in general age quickly due to Cambodia's high humidity and harsh rainy season. To prevent leaking it is necessary to renovate them.



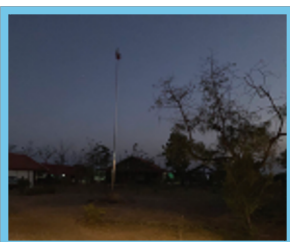
3. Enriching the library



Content in the student library still needs to be improved. More books with different genres, and to replace worn ones, and more furniture can help create a comfortable environment that cultivates a love of literary and academic culture.

4. New football field and light installation

The existing football field is small and cannot hold all 70 students if they want to play at the same time. There is an unused outer part of the centre which is fallow and can be transformed. The current football field can then be used for other sports or as a general play area. Additionally, there are few exterior lights in the centre.



Cambodia gets dark early, between 4-6 pm all year round, and students sometimes have classes until 7 pm. It would help safety and security to add some between classrooms, outside foyers, on paths, and in the outdoor fields.

STUDENT PROFILE



Tchieng Cheath, 18 years old, Grade 12 (Year 13)

"My name is Tchieng. I am 18 years old, I've been living in the Samrong Education Centre for 5 years, and this is my story.

I was born in a small village made up of rice and cassava fields called Tumnop Chas in Oddar Meanchey, a one-hour drive from Samrong. My parents were low-income farmers at the time, and we were living in a small house made of wood without electricity or running water. What they earned from harvesting was not enough

for our daily needs, so they became construction workers in Thailand. As a result, I moved in with my grandparents—I was just a baby. When my two younger brothers were born my parents spent some time in Cambodia then promptly went back to Thailand for work. Even so, my grandparents took good care of us and worked hard on the rice fields to feed us. I started primary school at age 6, going by foot everyday with friends; when I wasn't at school, I helped my grandparents on the field as much as I could. Even if life was hard, I still keep fond memories of this time.

At the end of grade 6 my family told me I couldn't continue my education as there was no secondary school near my home. We barely had enough money for basic needs, so money for a motorbike or gasoline to the nearest secondary school—a 20-30 minute drive away—was out of the question. I was extremely upset: my future seemed dim. One day, I heard about an NGO called 'Children of the Mekong' that helps people like me to access education. My grandmother and I contacted them eagerly, and that's how the adventure started! I was soon sponsored by a family in France, and in grade 7 I was welcomed into the Samrong Education Centre. I won't lie that at the beginning it was extremely difficult to be far from my grandparents. The urge to cry when I first arrived was strong, but my will to study and make a better future for myself was even stronger. Step by step, it became better and better. I made best friends and connections with the local team: I had a second family.

Today, I still live in the Samrong Education Centre. I am in grade 12 and next year I would love to study electronic engineering in Phnom Penh—my favorite subject is physics! Studying and getting a good job to help my family has always been my motivation, as our lives in the villages are so difficult. My grandparents are now 78 and 81 years old, they cannot work anymore and as such their lives are still very hard. I dream of being able to offer my family a better situation. I want to thank 'Children of the Mekong', and especially Sochea who is one of the centre's social workers. With their help I have a second family and a bright future."



Singing Classes



Heritage Site Visits



Sports Events



Cooking Workshops



Communication Workshops



Angkor Marathon



Pchum Benh Celebrations



Birthday Celebrations



Thank you for
your support!

