



# LATEST NEWS

Samrong Education Centre, Cambodia

APRIL 2023



**Children of  
the Mekong**





# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

## Course guidance

Orientation is a major topic for Children of the Mekong. Access to education, made possible by sponsorship and corporate partnerships, opens up a world of possibilities for them. This is a great opportunity, but also a source of deep questions: What will I do in the future? Who do I want to become? What are the strengths that I can rely on to build my future?

These are legitimate and important questions that Children of the Mekong assists within a variety of complementary ways.



Orientation day at the centre

## Inspiration from alumni

A former student of the Samrong center, currently in his 3rd year of computer science studies, came back to share his experience. He is still sponsored by Children of the Mekong, but now lives at the Merieux center because the school where he is studying is in Phnom Penh.

Sokun was able to give his advice to the children of the center, and to reassure those who are about to go to Phnom Penh next fall. He was able to tell all the good moments spent at the Mérieux center of Children of the Mekong. He was also able to show what he was doing in practical work, in particular... the construction of a robot! The children were all very impressed and admiring his work.

## Discovery of possible courses of study

Speakers from the Sala Baï school, a hospitality and catering school in Siem Reap, came to present the curricula offered by its institution, and the opportunities for the diplomas obtained by their students.

The team present included two former students in Grade 12: Reaksmey and Sreyppet. They are now in Siem Reap, at the Spoon School, and are following the catering course. They are an inspiring example for the children!



## Support of local programme managers

Some of the local programme managers of Children of the Mekong came to the center one afternoon to discuss orientation and vocation. A test was proposed to the children: the "Holland" test. It allows them to know more about their vocation.

Their presence was also an opportunity to talk about the choice between a scientific baccalaureate and a baccalaureate in social sciences. It is indeed an important choice that the students of Grades 11 and 12 have to make.





# AND OUTSIDE THE CENTRE

## What is happening?



### *A afternoon of games in the village of Kok Ampil*

The small village of Kok Ampil, located a few kilometers from the border with Thailand, has an elementary school. The children have school only in the morning. They spend their afternoons at home. From time to time, teachers open the doors of the school so that the children can play.



The center's team joined them for an afternoon! Ready with equipment such as balloons, music, and board games, everything is ready to share with the children a moment of lightness and fun. Children and adults were delighted with this day!

With so much laughter and smiles, it seems wise to renew this kind of activity, so that the joy of the center irrigates the surrounding villages, and reaches all the sponsored children.







## *Tutoring classes at Obadav*

On Sunday morning, some of the high school students of the centre go voluntarily to the village of Obadav, one of the sponsorship programmes in the region. This is an opportunity for the youth of the centre to get involved in their community and give their time and knowledge to the younger children.

The children of Obadav are fond of these tutoring sessions, especially English, a subject that is sometimes difficult to teach in these remote villages.



The students of the centre are teaching the younger ones





## 8 MARCH: **WOMEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

International Women's Rights Day is a public holiday in Cambodia!



This day was an opportunity for young people to discover the origins of this holiday. On that occasion, the boys cooked, and the girls encouraged them by dancing!



During this day, the students discovered portraits of women who have changed the course of history and science.

These moments of sharing and discussion were very appreciated.

The girls also took the opportunity to present a very important Cambodian historical figure in Khmer culture: Princess Indradevi, wife of King Jayavarman VII, who lived in the 12th century. She was an artist and poet. Particularly remarkable for her time, she had created a village to welcome poor women and children and help them access education. Carved portraits of Princess Indradevi can be found in the temples built and commissioned by King Jayavarman VII, such as the Bayon for example.





# THE CENTRE IN FULL BLOOM

But what are the sponsored children up to?



*Chaul Chhnam Thmey!*

With the approach of the Khmer New Year, which takes place this year on April 14, 15 and 16, the children of the centre can't wait! The most important festival in Cambodia, **Chaul Chhnam Thmey** celebrates the entry into the lunar new year. The first day of the traditional festival, called "Songkran", is devoted to traditional games with water and flour that all Cambodians love.



The students of the center will return to their families from April 6 for the vacations. A big party will be organized before their departure, on Sunday April 2nd.

On the programme: traditional games and a festive evening! The teachers will also be there. The centre is preparing for this event, notably by making decorations:



Sewing workshop:  
Making of pennant bunting





## DIY workshop : Making bamboo stars



Each Grade will also present a small show: singing, dancing or acting, the talents of the children will once again be honored! This type of activity allows young people to develop their artistic sense, gain confidence in public, and above all, have fun!



**See you in the next newsletter  
to see the children in action!**



# MEETING WITH CHILDREN OF THE CENTRE

## Portrait

### VAKHIM

Last February, a national competition organized by the Ministry of Education was held at Samrong Public High School. Several tests were scheduled: reading, singing, and writing.



Vakhim, one of the very talented children of the centre, **won the writing competition** with a beautiful poem about the importance of reading and what it brings to life. He came first in the province of Otdar Meanchey, what a pride!

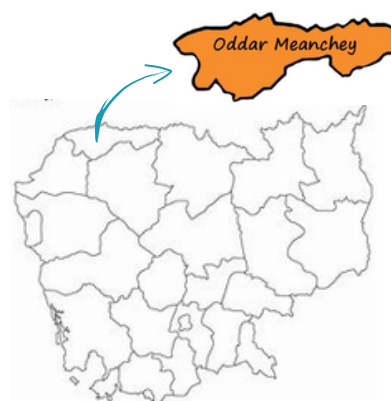
This great victory allowed him to participate in the final that took place in Phnom Penh, the capital of the country. It was the first time that Vakhim went to Phnom Penh! He was very impressed but also very happy. He came 9th out of 25 young people. It was a great experience for him, which made him grow and proud! Pride shared by the whole center!

Vakhim comes from a very poor family, he was abandoned by his father when he was still very young. Separated from his brothers and sisters, he was taken care of by his aunt and uncle. He then joined the centre to finish his schooling. He is a bright and motivated student, always ready to help and assist the younger ones. **Vakhim is an exemplary young man, to whom a bright future is promised.**



# Interview

## TCHIENG



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*My name is Tchieng, I am 18 years old. I have been living in Samrong centre for 5 years. Here is my story.*

*“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 could earn from harvesting was not covering 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 every day 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.*







# **SAMRONG EDUCATION CENTRE SAYS THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

[www.childrenofthemekong.org](http://www.childrenofthemekong.org)  
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