



Leng started this Education NGO (Non Government Organisation) 11 years ago to support children to better opportunities for their future. Too many children – even today – cannot afford an education. Many things, like malnutrition and not being able to buy a uniform, stops them attending school.

Leng’s Aunt and Uncle knew his father had been killed by Khmer Rouge so after the war they set about finding Leng. He knows that without this, he would have grown up scavenging on the street, like so many children still even have to do today. As an adult he befriended 5 starving street boys and decided he must do for them what his Uncle & Aunt had done for him – so the beginnings of ODA started to roll out.

Read on to view some of the events of the last six months.



Mountain Girls Project – Extension on top of an existing ODA English School to house the girls from the nearby mountain region so they can attend Secondary School.

For those of you who ask me to keep you informed of projects you can help support. Please read item no 1 and 2 next page – two very exciting projects under the ODA umbrellas.

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1. ODA construction – 1st building under ODA’s own management



The school is Solar powered with a water well and 2 toilets



They are very ‘quietly’ proud of their achievement.

Thanks to very kind donors from Canada, USA and Australia this building has been made possible. Trai Vet is in his 4th year of Civil Engineering so Leng decided together they could build an ODA Outlying Village school to save money and hone their construction skills. We had been renting a covered area, but now the owners wanted it to start a shop very soon. Leng found land nearby and with the wonderful help of Terry – a retired Engineer from Australia – they designed, costed, sourced materials and labour. and set about building the ODA school for this village. A great milestone for ODA and a wonderful achievement for Leng and Trai Vet.

With the building complete ODA now has the task of raising funds for desks, IT equipment and many general educative materials.



With 2 hours of Kindergarten (52 tiny tots) each afternoon and English school (58 students) 2 hours each night - the teachers and their students are eagerly awaiting moving in when it is outfitted

Some kindy kids

2. Mountain Girls Project – assisting Mountain Girl students to attend Secondary School



Taking shape day by day



Steel frame workers now erecting the upper storey

Mountain Commune and Village Chiefs approached Leng 18 months ago to find a way to provide accommodation and food to support mountain students so they could attend the closest Secondary School at Wat Village where ODA has one of it's English Schools. It is almost a day's bicycle ride away from their home villages.



Leng decided boys could live with monks at the nearby pagoda but girls needed much more security, so agreed to take 5 intelligent and keen female students.

He found a local widow for them to board with, but this year when he went to choose the next 5 girls – he came back with 10! He said “How could I say no? They all have good marks and all wanted to continue their schooling. Luckily for ODA, Go Philanthropic USA and their kind supporters, had very kindly supported the first 5 girls.

Leng is always looking for ways to make projects at least partially self funded, so had the idea of building 2 rooms over an existing school to house them and having the Mountain girls taught tailoring, so they could make uniforms for the ODA yearly uniform fund, and also earn money to send back to help their families. Studying secondary school is hard as most families need their children to be earning by age 12 or 13 to help support the big families. The remaining funds will eventually go to support the project and allow more girls to gain a higher education. Who knows – Leng hopes it may even help them to attend university if they wish that in the future. One step at a time and sometimes miracles can happen here!

Again Terry the Australian Engineer – worked with Leng and Trai Vet to draw suitable plans, cost the project and source all required materials. Leng then approached Go Philanthropic to see if they would be interested in supporting this project, and able to help with the building costs. The estimated construction costs are \$25,000USD. Go Philanthropic along with Greg Kadel a major supporter of theirs, have fund raised \$16,000 so ODA is currently working at raising the additional \$9000 to complete the project. We have already had several contributions and also 2 sewing machines at \$200 ea donated. So as always – step by step – Leng will somehow make it happen.

There are 2 large rooms being built and a toilet block. One room is for the girls sleeping and the other is to set up a sewing workshop. ODA will pay a village tailoress to teach the girls to produce a quality standard of uniforms, and another lady to sleep with the girls for security.

The 15 girls are very excited to learn more skills and are all working hard at their secondary school studies, with some girls topping their class or in the top 4 - and learning well at the ODA English school. They are so keen to make the most of this opportunity.



Pic 2nd hand sewing machines will be fitted with pedal and elect. on tables

3. Holiday fun for ODA students. Volunteers Terry and Sylvia from Australia decided to take the ODA students on some field trips in their holidays.

Silk Farm – they visited a silk farm and viewed all the processes from the Mulberry Plantation, the life cycle of the silkworm, the spinning, dyeing and through to the weaving processes. They finished up with a Blu Pumpkin locally made ice cream – not sure which they enjoyed the most - but they do love experiencing their cultural industries.



There is a wonderful library in Siem Reap – donated by King Sihanouk and housed in the Wat Damnak Pagoda area which the children visited another day. The children enjoyed pouring over so many wonderful books including art books which they created some lovely sketches from.

There was a day of craft activities with leaf painting and mask making with hilarious fun painting the masks! The kids always have big smiles but this day they were so very happy!! Think the little tots had more paint on them than on their masks but that's half the fun isn't it?

With her teaching background Sylvia comes up with so many activities that the kids think are games, but they all involve motor coordination, measuring and math related or other educative benefits.

Maureen also with a school, background is another valuable returnee yearly, for close to three months. We are very lucky to have skilled and committed returnee volunteers - especially good for the students as there is no settling in period.

A very exciting day was a visit to the New Cambodian Arts Dance Group.



First they viewed the dancers performing then they put on a workshop for the children and broke them into groups training them in 4 different dance sequences. Then the ODA kids performed these dances for everyone! As you all saw when you visited ODA the girls and boys alike absolutely love dancing so this was a very special treat for them.

PHARE Cambodian Circus.

Many of you may have attended a performance of the Phare Circus while you were in Siem Reap. It's developed into a major tourist attraction and the ODA kids were very privileged to attend a workshop where two performers demonstrated acrobatic activities which our kids duly practiced under their watchful eye.



Our kids couldn't quite manage this pose!



They also tried juggling up to three balls. It was a fun challenging experience for the kids and they are often seen still trying to master the somersaults at ODA.

Very lucky children to have such a safe happy place to live, plenty of food, a full education and wonderful volunteers who widen their experiences so often with the activities they hear about in and around Siem Reap, and plan for the children. Leng and I wish we could include some fieldtrips for the ODA Village English school students – many have never even seen the city of Siem Reap with big buildings, traffic lights, automatic opening doors, and the big markets. However with close to 700 students – it would be a major and very costly exercise. Maybe as a reward the top students from each school could have a field discovery trip to the museum – again step by step we will make it all happen.

4. Computer classes in outlying village schools



Despite 2-3 students having to share a computer, these keen young village children continue to flood in with increasing numbers. It's not an easy task as Tola the teacher has to work teaching at each individual student's level – some zoom ahead, while others take quite a time to master the 'How To's'. An amazing sight to see these kids practicing touch typing and mastering computer tools and concepts, surrounded by farming fields and palm leaf thatch houses. What a jump start for them when they seek employment in the future! Cambodians take up technology very quickly, despite not having seen anything apart from mobile phones before. They somehow fit these classes around their Government school classes and hate to miss any sessions.

There are so many discarded laptops with good batteries sitting in homes and schools in the western countries, that would be so useful to our classes - but unfortunately for us they need to be hand delivered as they would be very expensive to mail – unregistered mail disappears en route – DHL type companies are

good but very costly for the sender. Anyway we have been very lucky to attract as many as we have, and these 4 classes a day steam ahead in spite of getting only around 20 mins a session hands on ea.

If you know of a good discarded laptop (must have good battery as charging isn't always easy) and know of anyone coming to Siem Reap - we would be very, very grateful to be able to share them with more children. Like everywhere – computers are the future in Cambodia, and if they have these skills they will be very employable in better positions in their future.



ODA feels very privileged to be a conduit through which educational benefits can flow on through to so many bright, very keen remote village students. Many have already landed good employment because of their English skills and in the future even more will gain improved opportunities as a result of their combined English and computer skills. The university courses many of our 'teachers' are attending will certainly also give them a massive head start.

The uniform fund that so many of you support each year, ensures many children can start or continue at government school and while it isn't an outstanding education, it keeps them out of child labour, and certainly educates them in many subjects they wouldn't know anything about otherwise. With the very low pass rate for government schools year 12 last year, the government is talking about making more funds available to improve teachers education and associated materials and hopefully over time things will change when those funds manage to filter through to the coal face.

Leng thanks you all so very much for your kindness and the part you play in helping these students to a greatly improved future – they are like sponges and absorb everything they can get access to.

ODA obviously couldn't do a great deal without your wonderful support and assistance. Tom Tom Akun (Thank You Big Big) from all the students under the ODA Umbrellas.

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